**Important changes to the appointment system starting from 2nd July 2018**

***FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS***

***Why does Open Surgery have to stop?***

Due to the increased patient demand this system is becoming unsustainable for the surgery. As a surgery, we have tried starting the morning sessions earlier to accommodate the numbers, we have also implemented a 4th GP to the *usual* busiest morning surgeries, but it is still an issue. There is also no way of currently prioritising a patient’s medical need with this system, not to mention the added problem of patient’s waiting up to 3 hours to see a doctor.

***What do I do if I have a medical emergency?***

If you have, or think you have, a life-threatening emergency (e.g. heart attack, stroke) dial 999 and ask for an ambulance.

***Can I still book routine appointments in advance?***

You can, and should, still book appointments in advance. Call, preferably after 11am, or alternatively book in person at reception. You can also make appointments, cancel appointments and order repeat prescriptions online, via your home computer or smartphone. Please self-register at <https://www.myhealthonline-inps2.wales.nhs.uk> and then collect your authorisation code from reception after we have verified your ID.

***Is there going to be a long waiting list/backlog now for Doctor appointments?***

We are aware that there may be a slight added delay for a routine appointment compared to what there is available now. We will be actively reviewing this to ensure that there is not a lengthy delay for a routine appointment.

***Which Doctor will I talk to when I speak to the “Duty Doctor”?***

If your usual Doctor is there on the day you ring, or if there is a specific Doctor you wish to see, and a call is necessary, then that Doctor will normally call you. If that Doctor is not available then you will be offered a call from the Duty Doctor. The Duty Doctor is one of the existing Doctors at the surgery. They will take it in turns to carry out this role.

***Are telephone appointments safe?***

During your call with the Doctor, they will ask questions to help them make a decision about whether you need to be seen in person or not. Often the matter can be dealt with by phone. However, if the Doctor needs to examine you, you will be asked to come to the surgery for an appointment. Please note that this appointment will be with the most appropriate healthcare professional for your medical need.

***What if I have trouble using the telephone?***

If you have difficulty using the telephone it is best to get a friend or relative to help you. However, if this is not possible you can still come to the surgery to request an appointment. If it is a same-day appointment request, please be aware that you will be added to the Doctor’s call list and they will telephone you and advise you in the same way as if you had phoned in.

***Will I be seen more quickly if I come into the surgery?***

Unless your problem is a serious, life-threatening emergency, you will not be seen more quickly if you come into the surgery to make an appointment. Therefore, if you can phone for an appointment it will usually be more convenient for you.

***Can I still telephone to make an appointment for a home visit?***

There is no change to the arrangements for home visits. When you request a home visit the receptionist will pass your request to the Duty Doctor. The Duty Doctor may ring you to discuss what is wrong. If the Doctor thinks that you need to be seen at home they will then arrange this.

***I’m not comfortable telling the receptionist what is wrong, do I have to?***

Knowing a little bit about your medical problem helps medical reception staff at the surgery to ensure that those people with urgent problems are seen more quickly and to ensure that you see the right person to help you. You don’t have to give the receptionist lots of detail, just a few words are usually enough.

If you’re not comfortable giving any details, simply say, "It’s personal", or "I’m not comfortable telling you that", and the receptionist will respect your wishes. Please note that if you do not provide any information to the reception team and your problem is urgent, it may not be prioritised.

***If I can’t get through to the surgery first thing in the morning - what will happen?***

This should not be an issue as with the new appointment system, the Duty Doctor is available until 10:00am for telephone consulting. The Duty Doctor also has same-day appointments spread out throughout the day to help prioritise your medical problems.

We will also be increasing the number of staff answering the phones first thing in the morning to help you get through more easily.

If all the telephone lines are engaged, please be patient and call back. Don’t worry about ringing a bit later in the day. If the Doctor assesses that your condition is medically urgent, you will still be offered a same-day response.

Please bear with us when the new system starts – we will all be getting used to this new way of working.

If you have any queries or feedback, then please discuss them in the first instance with the Practice Manager by either telephone or by writing a letter marked **FAO Practice Manager** and dropping/posting it in to the surgery

***Thank you for your continued support.***

***Dr Helen Herbert Dr David Evans Dr Tom Havard***

***GP Partner GP Partner GP Partner***