

## **Church Stretton Medical Practice.**

### **An Update from the Strettondale Patient Participation Group Committee. March 2022**

The Medical Practice Manager recently met with a member of the PPG to clarify some arrangements for patients at Stretton's GP surgery. The aim being to increase patient understanding and encourage best service.

Shropshire has a lower density of population than many other counties and will benefit from the creation of Primary Care Networks (PCN), Church Stretton being a part of the South-West Shropshire PCN which enables practices to work together in order to provide patients with an enhanced service. Digital technology is used in all areas of life and increasingly, processes such as 'Patient Access' and 'e Consult' will become normal as methods of initiating contact with a GP via our mobile phones. A number of Church Stretton's patients already use this system. E-consult is a particularly useful tool if you have online access, as the Practice is contracted to reply within 48 hours, so this is quicker than waiting for a routine appointment.

For those who prefer, there is the telephone system for contacting our Medical Practice and as Covid 19 remains a problem, this is the preferred option. The Medical Practice is well-able to respond, even though NHS England guidelines are regularly being amended which provides an additional challenge to them.

Church Stretton Practice is open Monday- Friday 8.30am – 6pm. Routine advice or appointments are available on Saturdays and evenings at one of the other practices in the South-West Primary Care Network. At the moment these are predominantly telephone appointments. However, if you are prepared to travel you could be seen in Ludlow, Craven Arms, Bishops Castle or Clun - an appointment is made through the Church Stretton Practice.

Same day appointments are available each day if patients feel they have a problem that cannot wait for a routine appointment. In order to get a timely appointment with the most suitable clinician, patients need to clearly communicate with the receptionist what the problem is and whether they can consider seeing someone other than their registered GP, in order to possibly be seen sooner. The receptionists are fully trained to listen carefully to requests in full confidence and direct a patient to the most appropriate member of staff to deal with their problem or query. The GPs do not work every day, and also have responsibilities additional to seeing patients, so they may not always be available when you need to see them. This may result in a routine appointment being some time into the future should a patient ask to see a specific person. Each doctor has a specific area of interest: eg. diabetes, mental health, minor surgery, GP training, as well as responsibilities related to managing the Practice and this can also affect availability, although the Practice works hard to try and keep this to a minimum.

Patient's general health checks will be returning in the near future as part of the Practice routine and will be carried out by a Nurse, in the first instance.

Constructive comments from patients are much welcomed by the SPPG and are shared with the Practice Manager, so do make use of the comments box in the surgery. There is no obligation to include your name, however, should it involve a specific patient's need, a name is necessary so that

the Practice can be told to whom it relates. Alternatively, the need can be mentioned to a receptionist upon arrival.

Our GP practice is a well-organised team of sympathetic, caring professionals who are committed to providing patients with the best service possible which, as patients become more aware of the system, can be increasingly successful. All patients are members of the Strettondale Patient Participation Group and therefore able to work through the SPPG committee to influence our GP service for the good of all.