

## SUMMARY OF OPEN LETTER TO OUR PATIENTS ABOUT DEMAND

This is a summary of our open letter, which has been rewritten to provide a more accurate precis of the full letter. You can read the full, but long unchanged conversational-style letter on our website.

As part of the GP contract, we have had to offer an online consultation service. Unfortunately the adoption of this service and its open availability has contributed to a significant increase in demand to unsustainable levels whilst still remaining deeply unpopular with a substantial cohort of patients who have continued to ring into the surgery.

The increased level of online submissions has been as a result of various issues, including: low uptake of self-care, self-help and self-referral opportunities, resulting in the GP surgery having to increasingly signpost patients to more suitable services; poorly or inappropriately completed submissions resulting in patients being ejected from the system and having to ring the surgery instead; multiple daily online submissions and other causes.

Our staff have been busier than ever before due to: increased demand for our services resulting from the effect of the pandemic and lockdown: the phones being busier than ever before; regularly having to deal with minor issues on an urgent basis; having to deal with multiple problems within the one appointment slot; dealing with hospital-related matters and other issues.

All of the above has the potential to lead to unsafe working, burnout amongst our staff, mistakes being made or a reduced ability to detect serious illness. As a practice that is passionate about delivering excellent care to our patients, whilst also protecting the health of our hardworking and dedicated staff, we have reduced emphasis on online consultation services and returned to a more traditional model, whereby patients ring us with their issue, we book them an appointment, see them face-to-face as clinically necessary. And when we have reached safe working limits, we will provide further appointments on the basis of clinical urgency.

These changes are intended to keep both our patients and our staff safe and allow us to continue providing the care and giving the time that our patients need.

Thank you for bearing with us and for your continued support of the practice.

*Ivy Grove Surgery*