**COS LANE PRACTICE UPDATE – “GENERAL PRACTICE IS A-CHANGING”**

As most of you will know, much like other practices across the UK, at Cos Lane we are battling with a reduced number of GPs due to a national GP recruitment “crisis”, and an ever increasing workload.

We need to accept that this is how thing are now, so are doing our best to adapt, with what is a complete change in the way we practice and deliver services compared to even five years ago – But this IS something we have been working towards for many years, and requires some understanding and co-operation from our patients and staff.

We feel at Cos Lane that it is really important that our patients see or speak to the RIGHT person to treat them, that is why our admin staff ask you why you are making an appointment.

In some cases the best person to help may be someone outwith the surgery e.g. an optician, physiotherapist, dentist or pharmacist - they can see and treat many common ailments and depending on your circumstances supply medication under the MINOR AILMENT SERVICE without waiting for an appointment.

In the practice you might attend a variety of our staff.

The Phlebotomist/Health Care Assistant who takes blood, does BP checks and ECG.

The treatment room nurses spend the majority of their time doing dressings, running the INR clinic and dealing with miscellaneous nursing procedures.

The Senior Practice Nurses deal mainly with the management of Chronic diseases (such as Diabetes and Asthma), smears and child vaccination clinics. Many of these nurses are able to prescribe within their expertise, and our current nurses are working towards additional qualifications to enable this to happen.

The Advanced Nurse Practitioners are highly qualified nurses who see patients in their Minor Illness Clinics autonomously i.e. they see and treat their patients and where required can prescribe medication. They work very closely with the GPs and will seek immediate advice from them should they feel that is necessary.

You may also speak with or be seen by one of our Practice Pharmacists should your concerns be regarding medication.

Our GPs mainly deal with patients with complex and more serious health complaints and from time to time they may require you to come back for a review with another member of our team. This isn't a case of you being fobbed off, it’s about you seeing the best person to deal with your requirements and your GP is still responsible for your overall care.

We normally have plenty of Advanced Nurse Practitioner appointments available (particularly for “on the day requests” as unlike GP appointments, the majority of these are NOT booked days or weeks in advance). It is essential that patients do book these when at all possible

Although it can be sometimes difficult to get through to us on the phone, by planning review appointments, and booking before you leave the surgery when advised to do so by your GP, nurse, phlebotomist etc, this will reduce the congestion in the morning when phoning for a more “urgent” appointment.

Online Appointments are a good way to avoid phone queues - Whilst it may not be visible, far more of our appointments are actually now available online with our new system, which automatically shows a random selection at any given time.

If you are not already signed up for the online services which include repeat prescription ordering as well as online booking, then please pop in for an application form.

The modern GP Practice relies on ALL of the members of its highly skilled multidisciplinary team to work together to meet the overwhelming demand of an ageing society with ever more complex health conditions.

Please work with us to help provide the best possible care that we can to our patients within these changing times.

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