**PRACTICE WORKLOAD**

Many of you will be aware of the huge pressure we are currently under - not only do we have the usual increase in demand due to 'Winter Pressure' but the surge in poorly children has had a huge impact over the last week.

All of our Team are working as hard as they can to manage this - dealing with this pressure is not easy.

We know that when we close access to our daily triage assessment early that this can be frustrating for patients and this decision is not taken lightly. We are aware of the knock-on impact on reception once this happens; having to tell patients we have no appointments or assessment slots available, as well as the worry for patients that they can't be assessed that day. Closing access to triage assessment early is done when we need to limit the number of patients that are expecting an assessment and be honest with them so they know they may need to go elsewhere for advice or treatment and although this isn't always as convenient as attending the surgery or speaking with one of our clinicians on the phone, we need to prioritise clinical care over convenience.

Making decisions about someone's health and treatment takes a great deal of consideration and time as does checking and signing repeat prescriptions, it is not "a simple signature that only takes a minute to do" hence we have our turnaround times and must manage this within our capacity.

We must please urge patients not to attend or phone the practice and insist upon same day or early prescription turnaround because you have for example: run out of medication having not ordered in sufficient time, or due to an upcoming holiday, as this puts extra pressure on our staff who must then explain our turnaround times, which are 3 full working days (72 hours) from receipt. Dispensing in particular is a real challenge for us at present due to higher demands, stock delivery difficulties and staffing/staffing absences. However, we are trying to manage the current difficulties.

The demand for our appointments is higher than it has ever been. We are constantly reviewing systems and processes to maximise our efficiency, but with almost 5000 patients we cannot put a system in that will suit each and every individual, but we must implement the best system we can to try and ensure we work as safely as possible.

Please can we ask that we are all kind to each other including our team of staff and understand that we are all doing everything we can to assess and see as many patients as possible and meet our dispensing demands.

We thank you for being understanding during this time of unprecedented demand.

Please remember our hard working staff can see and read comments placed on social media. We ask that if you have a genuine complaint about our service, you use our complaints process to allow us the opportunity to investigate and respond professionally and appropriately as we are unable to reply via social media.

Temple Sowerby Management Team