

Dear Patient

Important information about General Practice and your GP

We know that most patients trust and value their local GPs despite what you might see or hear in the media or from politicians.

The facts about general practice in 2013 are somewhat different from those which are frequently reported.

The NHS is not perfect and can always improve, but for every episode of poor care there are thousands of positive experiences.

GPs are committed to provide high quality, patient-centered care. We hope we achieve this for you and your family.

The current life expectancy in England is 80.27 years and is significantly better than, for example, the USA. Over the last 10 years the average life expectancy in England has increased by 2 years. It has been acknowledged that the excellent care provided by GPs and their practice teams has made a significant contribution to this.

Please work with us to provide the best level of care we can for you and your family.

General Practice the facts

General practice is seen by many as the “jewel in the crown” of the NHS yet the media coverage would suggest that everything that goes wrong in the NHS is now the fault of the GPs.

In 2013, a US Healthcare Think Tank, the Commonwealth Fund, praised the NHS for offering the best primary care services in the world.

Interesting facts about general practice

- In 2012, a national GP survey reported 88% of the populations' experience of general practice was good. Over 89% of people with chronic conditions reported their experience of general practice was good. The vast majority of patients were satisfied with practice opening times.
- In 1995 there were 218,000,000 consultations in general practice by 2009 this had increased to 300,000,000.
- The average patient consulted their practice 3.9 times per year in 1995 by 2009 this had increased to 5.5 times. It will have increased even further since then, despite the fact that general practice has had no increased funding since 2006 and a significant funding cut in April 2013.
- Please understand some of the reasons why it is occasionally difficult to get an appointment for non-urgent problems. The practice understands your difficulty and is always doing its best to improve the care and service it provides its patients.

- Over 1 million people have an appointment with general practice every day.
- A full time GP will carry out about 10,000 consultations every year.
- Looking at general practice consultations in 1995, 86% were seen at the surgery, 3% had telephone consultations and 9% had a home visit. In 2009, 82% were seen in the surgery, 12% had telephone consultations and 4% had home visits.
- In 1987 the average length of consultation times in general practice was 6 minutes; it is now 12 minutes- many last much longer than this as your doctor will give you as much time as you need. As well as time spent with patients your doctor has to spend lots more time writing referral letters, arranging blood tests and investigations, dealing with letters from specialists, as well as dealing with the smooth running of the surgery and helping to manage the NHS locally through the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).
- Over 90% of all patient contacts within the NHS occur in general practice.
- There are 10.5 million people in the UK who are aged 65 or more and this is expected to increase by 50% in the next 20 year, this will result in significant additional demand on the NHS and on your GP surgery.
- In the UK, 18 million people have long-term illnesses, and this is expected to increase by 30% in the next 10 years—the majority of chronic conditions are managed in general practice.
- In 1996 there were 1.4 million patients with diabetes in the UK; in 2011 this had increased to 2.8 million.
- General practice receives less than a tenth of the NHS budget to take care of you and your family. General Practice provides many services for this small amount of the total budget. We believe we could do far more with a fairer share of the total budget.
- The media suggests that practices are only open from 9—5 on week days, the truth is practices are responsible for your care from 8am—6.30pm on week-days.
- Latest media reports suggest GPs do not work “Out of Hours” i.e. when practices are closed. Is this true? **No, it is not.**
- GPs do work Out of Hours, in your practice area there will be a provider of this service who has an NHS contract and they employ GPs to provide this service. Many local GPs work for this service.
- In addition many GP practices locally choose to retain 24 hour responsibility for the care of their patients.

Between 2002 and 2011 the number of Consultants has increased by over half, but GPs by less than a quarter, whilst general practice workload has doubled.

- A full time GP in England works an average of 50 to 60 hours per week.
- On an average day a GP will see 30 – 40 patients in the surgery, under- take 2-3 home visits, and carry out anywhere between 5—20 telephone consultations. On top of this they have to do a huge amount of paperwork and much other important work.
- The vast majority of newly qualified GPs are female. This has had a positive impact on general practice in terms of offering patients choice.
- More GPs are now working part time. This may be due to family commitments but may also be because they have other roles outside the practice.

We are always seeking to improve our services to meet your needs but we need your help and support.

Please read our leaflet about what you can do to help us provide a better service.

If you would like to help the practice in improving its services to patients please contact reception for information on how to get involved in the surgery's patient participation group.

This leaflet has been produced for patients by Birmingham Local Medical Committee, the statutory body that works on behalf of your GPs and surgery to help and support them in providing the best possible care for you and your family.



Birmingham
LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE

Supporting the Business of General Practice