

## **Patient Frequently Asked Questions – Forton GP appointment changes**

### **Why are things changing?**

There is a lack of GPs across the country and this has meant that we are having problems finding GPs to come and work in our practices. Our GPs often work alone at a site, which causes additional strain on the doctors and limits the service we can offer. Also, Forton Medical Centre currently has approximately 4,000 patients with long term conditions such as diabetes, respiratory issues, and heart disease. These currently take up a large number of routine GP appointments. Our plan is to run a Long Term Conditions hub at Forton Medical Centre providing expert support for these patients - hopefully freeing up more routine appointments in due course.

### **Where is which Forton Medical Centre GP going?**

- Dr. Brook will be based at Brune Medical Centre
- Dr. Larmer at Stoke Road Medical Centre
- Dr. Carey-Jones at Brune Medical Centre
- Dr. Frisby at Brune Medical Centre
- Dr. Harlow at Waterside Medical Centre

### **What are the other sites besides Forton Medical Centre?**

Waterside Medical Centre, Stoke Road Medical Centre, Brune Medical Centre and the Same Day Access Service at Gosport War Memorial Hospital. These are all within two miles of each other.

### **Can I still collect my repeat prescriptions at Forton?**

Yes. Currently you will continue to be able to request your repeat medication and collect prescriptions at Forton as normal.

### **I still can't get through to you on the phone, what are you doing to deal with this?**

We acknowledge our phone lines are a problem and have had significant investment in this. We expect to go live with one new number for our practice this Summer. It is a complex system needed and we will of course keep you posted if there are any changes in timescales. We apologise for the inconvenience, but please bear with us as we are doing our utmost to progress this work. There are many other ways you can get hold of us – please visit the website for more information.

### **Can I go on another GPs list if I prefer going to another site?**

All patients that are registered in the Willow Group can be seen by the GP they choose at the site that their GP is based. Please do be aware that our GPs do move around our sites so this could impact on the length of time you may have to wait for an appointment.

### **I don't drive, how do I get there?**

All of our sites are on a bus route. Bus route numbers are on our website and in posters in our practices. We are within very close proximity to each other.

### **I don't want to travel to another site than Forton Medical Centre, what are my options?**

All Willow patients have been seen at Gosport War Memorial for urgent same day care for over two years and we are pleased that feedback from patients on this service remains very positive.

When the Willow Group merged we started to offer appointments across the four sites so many of our patients are used to moving to different sites for their appointment. Housebound patients will be seen in the usual way by phoning through to your surgery.



We know some patients may have exceptional medical circumstances meaning they cannot get to another site. For these patients we will put on a limited number of pre-booked routine GP appointments at Forton Medical Centre. Access to these appointments will be assessed on a case by case basis by a clinician. We will review these limited appointments after three months.

**Things seem to have changed a lot since you merged your practices. Is this change related to that?**

No, this isn't as a result of the merge. We are making these changes to support our patients and staff. We hope that we will be able to retain the GPs we have and reduce the pressure they are feeling to enable an improved service for our patients.

We have worked together as one practice for a year and have successfully launched a lot of services such as the Same Day Access Service, Home Visiting Service, Child Health clinics and more. Unfortunately, the GP recruitment and pressures on our GPs isn't improving as fast as we'd hoped. Our merge was a necessity with GP recruitment challenges we faced and we continue to be more resilient as one practice. Our recent CQC inspection – our first as one practice - was published in February and rated us as 'good'.

**How come a GP can't provide appointments when he/she is alone on a site?**

There is a great deal of pressure on GPs when they work alone. They have to manage all of the 'on the day' issues that arise i.e. paramedic calls, urgent prescriptions, coroner's office etc. It would not be safe to add routine appointments onto this workload. Due to lack of GPs we often lose out on appointments we can offer as we have to spread them across more sites.

The change at Forton will free up routine GP appointments, increasing the amount of appointments we can provide across the three sites. We will also put in place additional online and telephone consultations.

**How come you are focussing on patients with Long Term Conditions?**

Following research a new care model has been developed for patients and Gosport as it's been chosen nationally as a place to trial how we offer NHS care in a more joined up way. As part of our Extended Primary Care team, we want to ensure people will receive the right care, in the right place and time, from the most appropriate person – especially for patients with higher health or social care needs.

Evidence demonstrates that patients living with long term conditions are more likely to be admitted to hospital than patients without long term conditions.

We hope that by creating a long term conditions hub our patients can be seen by a range of specialists who can support their condition. This pro-active approach can potentially improve life outcomes and reduce hospital admissions.

**Are you the only practice in Gosport affected by recruitment problems?**

GP recruitment is a national concern with more GPs retiring and less GPs training. Gosport has its own unique issues and recruitment into the town has been very difficult for a long time.

**How do I give feedback?**

We have feedback cards in all our receptions and you are welcome to speak to any staff or email us via our Patient Experience Team on [fgccg.mywillowexperience@nhs.net](mailto:fgccg.mywillowexperience@nhs.net)