

Waterfield House Surgery

www.waterfieldhousepractice.nhs.uk

**Dr Richard Justice
Dr Victoria Minkah
Dr Justine O'Neill**

**Waterfield House
186 Henwood Green Road
Pembury
Kent TN2 4LR
Tel: 01892 825488**

06.07.2022

Dear Patients of Waterfield House Surgery,

When we look back over the last two and a half years of the pandemic engulfing our lives, we are thankful for your patience and understanding whilst healthcare settings underwent radical transformation. We will urge caution to our patients even in the midst of relaxation of all covid restrictions that have been in place since April 2022. We advise our patients to err on the side of caution and wear face masks in enclosed spaces and in all healthcare settings and wash your hands regularly.

Over the past year there have been a few changes to our staffing due to staff leaving and retiring. Dr Chinwe left us at the end of June. We are hopeful that we will fill Dr Chinwe's vacant position by the year end. Dr Chinwe's list size will be continued to be managed by Dr Justice and Dr Minkah. We are trying to find locum cover for the lack of appointments due to Dr Chinwe's leaving. We have also had two new nurses join our team.

In the last three years not only has the demand for appointments gone up, but due to the complexity of work all of our staff are working harder than ever. This is in spite of strengthening our team where possible we are finding ourselves spread thin.

We have over the past few years offered more appointments on Y2Y basis in comparison to previous years.

Year	Offered	Booked
2017	24983	23122
2018	28277	25502
2019	27163	25302
2020	28991	24089
2021	29474	25654
2022 (up to 30 th June)	14075	12445

Additionally following appointments were booked by Waterfield House patients via Tunbridge Wells PCN which are shared and booked by Tunbridge Wells practices. These appointments are for First Contact Physio, Social Prescribers, Clinical Pharmacist, Paramedics, Physician Associates and also include Covid vaccinations (at Masonic Hall).

Year	Booked via PCN
2017	-
2018	-
2019	-
2020	878
2021	4868
2022 (up to 30 th June)	1716

Due to the surge of demand and lack of appointments including in-person visits, we are aware of patient frustrations which has resulted in change of patients' behaviour towards us from outright demands, to being rude and in quite a few cases abusive. We request and plead that as we show you respect, we expect that you will treat our staff with the same respect. We will not hesitate to send warnings to patients who violate this and take them off our list if it persists beyond the warning. Please note that this gives us no pleasure but we are doing this to keep our staff safe and sane. Most of our staff are at the point of mental exhaustion and we do not want to come to point where we start losing staff to mental break downs or worse lose them altogether. Any changes to our staffing will have a detrimental effect on the surgery and eventually on wider patients.

The pandemic has changed how healthcare is operating and we will have to embrace the new technology and different modes of operating where possible. In other words, the online consultations, telephone/virtual appointments are here to stay along with in-person appointments. During the pandemic we have continued to see patients face to face where appropriate and we have now increased the number of in-person appointments as well which can be booked by patients.

We would also like to be honest with you about the workload in General Practice. Every single member of our team is working longer and harder and this is especially true for GPs who are doing more and more. Three years ago we described to some of you at the PPG AGM '*a day in the life of GP*'. Well, nothing has changed except the volume of the things we do resulting in us either coming in early or going home late or doing both which is having a detrimental effect on our work-life balance. This is not just the picture for Waterfield House but across the country. Many GPs are retiring early or just giving up their career to seek better work-life balance. There are now more GPs retiring/leaving than those being trained every year. Due to this fewer GPs are doing more and more meaning it is difficult for patients to access the help they need. We make for good villains when the NHS is down on its knees. Discussion needs to happen at a national level about what the NHS can realistically deliver with fewer GPs, fewer staff and more pressures. Please see the campaign link below.

To help us help you, please could you be ready to give the reason of your call/appointments so that we can direct you to the right staff member. Please continue to respect our staff with the same respect we offer you even if the answer is not what you wish to hear.

Dr R Justice and Dr V Minkah
On behalf of Waterfield House Surgery

Rebuild GP Campaign Letter - <https://rebuildgp.co.uk/campaign-assets/letter-to-my-patients>
To add your signature, simply email hello@rebuildgp.co.uk with your full name.