**Response to patients’ comments in our *Friends & Family* test**

**Appointment System**

Patients who are ill and need to speak to a doctor can access our doctor triage appointment system – this means that the receptionist will add you to the telephone consultation list of the doctor on call that day. The doctor will contact you be telephone and, if necessary, the doctor will book you a face to face appointment either the same day, or another day, based on your clinical need. The telephone triage list can be busy, with an average triage list consisting of more than 50 patients waiting for a return call each day.

Patients can also book appointments in advance. We operate an advanced access system which means that appointments are released at different periods in the time leading up to it. This is a standard system operated across all GP practices, adjusted to accommodate our local patient need.

The demand for appointments and capacity within the system is monitored regularly, with adjustments made to accommodate peak times. For example – having two doctors on call at peak times.

A major impact on available appointments is DNAs – Did Not Attend – these are appointments that have been booked, where patients do not cancel or turn up for their appointment. We are therefore reviewing our existing systems around DNAs to implement a more robust approach to this challenging issue.

Patients may recall the open access system that we used to have, whereby any patient could come to the surgery and wait to be seen on the same day. We appreciate that this was a popular system with patients, however, the surgeries were becoming unmanageable with some of the drop-in clinics filled with 30 to 40 patient appointments where doctors time would often be taken up by the worried well, resulting in minimal doctor time available to deal with those patients whose clinical presentation required a lengthier consultation. The open access appointment system was therefore changed to the advance access system to improve patient care.

**Telephones**

We have received a number of comments about the telephone system and would like to share with patients, our plans for the future. We are currently looking at a new telephone system, which we plan to have installed later this year. The new system will manage call demand and have additional functionality to provide a better patient experience. We envisage that the new telephone system will also offer call recording – this will be particularly useful for staff training.

**Dr Iwantschak & Partners**

**September 2015**