



The Swanage Medical Practice

Sit & Wait is changing

The UK has a severe shortage of GPs, a lack of investment in general practice & rapidly growing demand by an ageing population being treated for long-term & complex conditions. General Practice is dealing with 90% of all contacts in the NHS but receives only 8.39% of the budget. Until more resources are made available we at Swanage aim to do the very best we can by offering a twice daily surgery to see a GP for urgent conditions. However patients have been taking advantage of this service to see their own Doctor for non urgent, routine matters & minor self-limiting illnesses; **this is no longer sustainable**.

The high level of demand has resulted in a situation where it is **impossible for us to guarantee a safe S&W service**. Due to this unprecedented situation we are having to introduce a limit to the number of patients being dealt with in each session. Once this limit is reached, to add any more patients, the Duty Team will be contacted for authorisation. This applies to both phone calls and face to face appointments.

Doctors choose to become GPs because continuity of care is a key component of the role. The GPs & the team here find the current situation as frustrating as you do but have to ensure that they can practice safely despite the demand and that means putting 'safety controls' in place.

Please be assured that patient access is still at the core of our work. This updated service will be regularly monitored & reviewed. *Please see Dr Jason Clark's message overleaf.*

The new more focused service will now be known as the:
Medically Urgent S&W

Operational details for the Medically Urgent S&W (MUSW)

- This will be a twice daily service, as before, from 9.00-10.30am and 3.00-4.00pm.
- We are now able to book appointments at alternative venues so ring the surgery first as you may be offered an appointment at Swanage Hospital or Poole General Hospital which may be more convenient for you. (read overleaf 'More Choice for Patients')
- Patients will not be able to register until 8.50am and 2.50pm; you'll not be able to queue until these times as other patients will be booking in for pre-booked appointments.
- There will now be limited space available for medically urgent cases only. Once the quota is full those remaining in the queue will be asked to return another time. Depending on the severity of your condition the receptionist may seek authorisation from a GP to include you on the now closed list - however the GP may respond by asking you to book a routine appt. fully aware that there may be a long wait. This applies to both telephone & face to face appointments.
- You may be called by a Nurse; this is just as good as seeing a Doctor.
- You will not be able to request your own GP. The only way to be sure of consulting with your own GP is to book a routine appointment with them.
- If you miss your telcon you will NOT be rung back. You'll have to rebook on another day.
- The reception team will have a GP approved list of criteria for appropriate use of these limited appointments. If you are offered alternative sources of support this is at the GP's behest.
- The GPs stipulate that you MUST give the nature of your problem to the receptionist. If you do not want to 'voice' your issue you'll be able to write it down & pass to the receptionist. If you still don't want to advise reception you can book a routine appointment with your GP.

More choice for patients! As part of a local 'Improved Access scheme', there are now timed appointments available for us to book patients at Swanage Hospital MIU (between 4-8pm) to see a Nurse Practitioner (a prescribing nurse) and with Health Care Assistants for dressings. In addition there are timed appointments that we can book at Poole Hospital (between 10am-8pm) for blood tests, ECGs and to see a GP - particularly useful for those of you that work over the water.

So ring the surgery first before coming down to the Medically Urgent S&W as the reception team may be able to offer you a more suitable & convenient alternative.

A message from Dr Jason Clark, Senior Partner

Dear Patients,

Re: Medically Urgent S&W

The medically urgent surgery will still be on a sit & wait basis. Patients are listed in order of arrival. We ask our staff to record the medical problem to ensure appropriate provision and prioritisation and initial management can be made.

We continue to allow patients to book routine appointments with their own doctor however far in advance (we are aware this may mean a long wait, but for routine issues this is acceptable). This can be best done by registering for online booking; this is also the fastest way of getting your repeat prescriptions.

Since June 2013 when we started the Sit & Wait surgery the numbers and complexity of cases has steadily increased. To cope with this we have increased resources available; all doctors present help on Monday and Friday mornings and a third is available for part of the time in the afternoons. We also have 2 nurses with advanced skills that are also helping at certain times. However quite often only 2 doctors are available and one may have to leave the building for emergency visits.

Despite the above initiatives the partners and I feel that provision of care on the S&W surgery is at the point of becoming unsafe. Many of the consultations seen in the S&W cannot currently be deemed medically urgent and we therefore now have to stipulate that to be seen on the new MUSW, the nature of the problem should be medically urgent, the reason should be given to the receptionist and that you cannot request your own GP.

Fortunately, the CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) have, as previously mentioned, made available some extra resources in alternative locations, to reduce waiting times and increase capacity in General Practice.

I would kindly ask that if you are thinking of attending the Medically Urgent Sit & Wait surgery (MUSW) you consider calling the surgery first to see if one of the new appointments, mentioned above, may suit you better.

I appreciate that these changes may initially cause some frustration, however the Partners and I must be sure that we can practice safely and fairly for all patients registered at this practice.

Thank you for your understanding,



On behalf of all the Doctors at Swanage Medical Practice