

General Practice in Crisis: A Statement from GP Practices in Littlehampton, Rustington and East Preston

As your local GPs and practice teams, we are sadly aware that our patients are finding it increasingly difficult to get the appointments and services that you have come to expect from us.

This is frustrating for us and we would like to take this opportunity to share with you the reasons for the current situation, and assure you that we are all trying very hard to make sure you can get the best possible care.

As you will have heard in national and local headlines, the NHS is under significant pressure; health services are seeing more patients than ever before, people are living longer with more complex health needs and there are severe financial challenges.

Over recent years the investment in general practice has reduced, whilst at the same time the workload has risen dramatically. This has now been recognised by NHS England and plans are being made to increase investment in the next 5 years.

Sadly, young doctors and nurses do not want to work in GP surgeries, and the pressures on existing GPs and the appeal of places like the Canada and Australia, mean they don't want to take over from local doctors across the country when they retire.

The Coppice, Angmering Medical Centre, Arun Medical Group, Fitzalan Medical Centre and The Lawns Surgery have all been advertising for GPs this year and haven't been able to recruit. **Here at Willow Green Surgery we currently need a GP for 6 sessions this equates to approximately 96 GP appointments per week.**

Recently The Hurdles in East Preston has had to close due to a lack of clinicians and we have many more patients registering with us. This may result in a longer wait for all types of appointments.

Despite the pressures, we are still committed to providing you with the best possible service and are working well together to share ideas, staff and premises.

We have also diversified our teams and many of you have already been looked after by our Nurse Practitioner, Paramedic Practitioners, Community Pharmacists and Proactive Care Teams and without them we would be really stuck.

We all want the NHS to continue and we are working hard to make sure this happens. Please work with us and help us – the NHS is there for us all to use responsibly.

Please think about where you can get the most appropriate help; we have lots of great pharmacies across the town and they can provide advice, support and over the counter treatments to help you to look after yourself confidently.

Thank you for taking the time to read this - help us to make sure we are available when you need us most.