Here at Westgate, we are continually trying to improve our service. In particular, we are keen to improve **access** to our service. Of late, we have been conscious that the wait for a routine appointment has lengthened. To try and address this, we have decided to make some changes to reduce missed appointments and improve how we plan our appointments throughout the day. By doing this, we will be able to increase the number of available routine appointments. This will involve:

* DNA’s (Did Not Attend appointment) – Improved communication of appointment times and new 3-strike policy to reduce the number of wasted appointments.
* Urgent Same-Day appointments – All urgent on-the-day appointments need to be made before 11am to allow more routine appointments.
* Increased response to online queries.

**DNA’s/Missed appointments**

Since 1st August 2022, we have had 117 missed appointments. Over the last month, several hours of appointments were wasted by people not turning up to book appointments. This has a significant impact on how we can deliver our service. To reduce the number of wasted appointments we will ensure all patients are sent a message the day before reminding them of any appointments.

We will also be bringing in a new 3-strike policy for DNA's. How will this work? For the first missed appointment, we will send a warning text message. For the second missed appointment, we will give a verbal warning. Should this occur a third time over a 12-month period, we will remove to the capacity to book routine appointments, with patients needed to turn up to the surgery in person to be seen.

**Urgent Same Day Appointments**

Every day, we have patients calling late in the afternoon to report an urgent problem that has been troubling them since the start of the day. Whilst we always endeavour to see patients on the same day, it makes it logistically very challenging when we have patients booked into routine appointments that have waited a while to be seen. By asking all urgent problems to be called through before 11am, it allows us to deal with these urgent problems in a timely manner on the same day. It also allows us to schedule more routine appointments in the afternoon.

We understand that there may be certain exceptional circumstances that an urgent matter arises mid-afternoon. This will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, and we do encourage all patients to contact our patient navigators if they are unsure of the urgency of a situation.

Whilst we appreciate that it will take time for our community to adapt to these changes, many GP surgeries already have these systems in place. Again, we hope it will increase the number of routine appointments available in the afternoon.

**Increased response time to online clinical queries**

You can ask clinical queries through AccuRx, our new online platform. We aim to respond to all messages within 48 hours. Increasing the number of patients who use this prompt service, will increase the amount of routine appointments available.