

Dear Patient,

We wanted to take a moment to express our gratitude for those that have provided feedback about our service. Your input has been instrumental in shaping positive changes at Denmark Road Medical Centre (DRMC).

Since our transition under South Coast Medical Group (SCMG) on April 1st, 2023, we've faced some challenges, particularly in staffing levels and patient access to appointments. Rest assured, we have a comprehensive plan in motion to enhance our services. We understand that this process will take time, and we sincerely appreciate your patience.

Recently, we met with the DRMC Participation Group (PPG), a dedicated group of Denmark patients who share our commitment to improving healthcare delivery. Their insights, combined with valuable feedback from patients, have led us to accelerate some of the planned service enhancements.

Improving access and reducing waiting times to see a GP and other clinicians.

Starting from October 2nd 2023, we're implementing changes to enhance access to our clinicians and reduce wait times. The most noticeable change you'll experience is in the questions our reception team will ask when you request an appointment. In response to the national GP shortage, we've expanded our team to include specialised clinical staff, such as pharmacists, physiotherapists, paramedics, physician associates, and highly skilled nurses. This initiative, which is inline with recent contractual changes, has proven successful in our other surgeries, will now benefit DRMC patients. Training our reception staff to ask specific questions during appointment requests will enable us to direct you to the most appropriate care provider, be it a pharmacist, paramedic, physician associate, or other external service like your community pharmacy, dentist, optician, A&E, or health visitor. This approach is designed to significantly reduce wait times for those patients in genuine need of direct GP care.

Increasing our online service

Additionally, starting from October 2nd, we're extending the hours that you can contact us through Accurx to align with our telephone opening hours. Currently only available from 8am to 8:45am, Accurx is an online consultation service that provides a convenient for you way to contact your NHS GP practice online. By using Accurx, you'll help ensure that our clinicians receive all the necessary information to assess and prioritise your needs, ultimately ensuring every patient receives the care they required. We are delighted to say this will now be available via our website homepage, from 8am – 6:30pm. This expanded availability will accommodate more patients and reduce the need to call the surgery and wait in the telephone queue. We encourage you to use Accurx through our website.

To accommodate the expected surge in Accurx, we're adding more clinics led by the GP partners of SCMG. These remote consultations allow our GPs to efficiently address requests, even when stationed at our other surgeries.

In due course, we aim to have the resources and staff necessary to meet the current demand. For now, we hope the aforementioned changes will alleviate some of the current challenges. We will closely monitor waiting times, gather patient feedback, and continue to collaborate with the PPG.



Communication with our staff

While we acknowledge the need for improved access and reduced wait times, we must also emphasise that any form of violence or aggression towards our staff is unacceptable. Regrettably, we have observed an increase in such incidents during this transitional period. We believe that the changes we are implementing, based on PPG input, will lead to improvement in this regard. Nevertheless, when we encounter instances of violent or aggressive behaviour towards our staff, we will enforce our zero tolerance policy and may need to consider removal from our patient list.

Website improvements

Another point of feedback from the PPG pertains to our website, which has been described as outdated and less user-friendly. We are pleased to inform you that work is underway on a new website, which we anticipate will be live in the coming new year.

New telephone system and reducing call waiting times

Furthermore, we are in the process of upgrading our phone system, which will have a positive impact on telephone queues for DRMC patients. Presently, due to IT limitations, we are unable to distribute incoming calls to our other SCMG surgeries during peak periods. We are optimistic that in the next few months, a new phone system will be in place, aligning with our other SCMG surgeries and allowing for call sharing. When this transition occurs, it is likely that we will also align Denmark's telephone opening hours with those of our other SCMG surgeries (8:30am-6pm) to help bolster staffing levels, thus reducing waiting times on the phone for you.

Thank you

We extend our sincere thanks for your feedback and the invaluable role played by our PPG. Your input is crucial in our ongoing efforts to enhance services and better meet your needs. If you are interested in joining the PPG or would like more information, please do not hesitate to reach out to our reception team.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

