

# TAYVIEW MEDICAL PRACTICE

## Autumn 2024 Newsletter



HELLO  
AUTUMN



### PRACTICE NEWS

With the weather becoming quite changeable, and children now back at school following the summer break period, it certainly feels as though Autumn is well on the way.

It has been exactly one year since I returned to Tayview and, through that time, the practice has gone through a number of changes. Those changes have involved staffing, procedures and a complete review of our appointment system following feedback from patients.

Patients may have noticed, over the year, a lot of new faces making up our administrative team. Our new team members have successfully completed their induction periods and are fully trained to help our patient population with any assistance they require. All staff have completed mandatory training regarding data protection whilst, recently, completing NHS National Education Scotland training regarding Care Navigation. As we progress through the autumn period, staff will build on that training regarding further areas relevant to our patients and the practice. We've received a lot of positive feedback from patients with complimentary messages regarding our new administrative team. Our staff work hard, doing an increasingly demanding job, to provide patients with a good service and they are very grateful when they receive positive feedback. I'm pleased to say that our administrative team is now fully staffed.

Since 2018, the demand for appointments has increased quite significantly. In 2018, the practice provided 15954 appointments with a clinician and 4671 appointments with a nurse. For the year 2023, the practice provided 24477 appointments with a clinician and 8785 appointments with a nurse. This shows a significant increase in demand for appointments and the reasons for this are numerous. This time last year, the practice received a significant number of complaints from patients regarding access due to an increasing demand for appointments. Understandably, patients were frustrated with having to contact the practice at 8am each morning to arrange a routine appointment only to be told that our appointments had been fully booked and to contact the practice the following morning. This resulted in a review of our appointment system to try and assist patients seeking an appointment which resulted in the practice increasing the number of pre-bookable appointments available each week, introducing our Acute Illness Clinic and allowing patients to book appointments with a clinician up to one week in advance. Overall, feedback from patients has been positive and the appointment system, although not perfect, appears to work for the majority of our patient population.

We continue to listen and try to improve the service we offer to our patient population. We always welcome feedback or suggestions. Such feedback / suggestions can be emailed to [Fife.F21609Tayview@nhs.scot](mailto:Fife.F21609Tayview@nhs.scot) for the attention of the Business Manager.

We hope you have an enjoyable autumn period.

**DAVID RAMSAY**  
Business Manager.

## STAFF UPDATES

As mentioned on our first page, our administrative team at Tayview is now fully staffed following the recent welcoming of Avril to the team. We are grateful to our patients for the patience whilst Avril progresses through her induction and training. The practice always displays a sign at our reception desk should a new member of staff be progressing through their training.

Patients will be aware that the practice recently received accreditation to become a training practice for junior doctors. We welcome our first GP Trainee, Dr Alexandra Ramsey to the practice. Dr Ramsey will be with Tayview for a 6 month period and is currently progressing through her induction period. Dr Ramsey is a fully qualified doctor and will be providing appointments here at Tayview.

Due to the increasing demand for practice nurse appointments, the practice recently advertised for a further practice nurse and we're pleased to announce that Karen Younger will be joining the team at the end of September. Karen brings with her a wealth of knowledge and experience having qualified as a nurse in 1993 and worked as a practice nurse since 2004.

The practice is looking forward to welcoming back Anila, one of our practice pharmacists, following a period of maternity leave. Anila will be in practice every Wednesday and Thursday with Sarah, our other practice pharmacist, being in the practice every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon.

## BE THE EARLY BIRD

Anyone, particularly those aged 40 and over, with persistent symptoms unusual for them are being urged to 'be the early bird' and contact their GP practice. If you're worried about a possible cancer symptom, your GP wants to know. Finding cancer early can mean there's more treatment options available, a greater chance of living well after treatment and better news to tell the family. Possible cancer symptoms include unexplained bleeding, unusual lumps, unexplained weight loss or something that doesn't feel normal for you. Further information can be found by visiting [www.getcheckedearly.org](http://www.getcheckedearly.org)

**The early bird can have  
more treatment options.**  
Cancer. Get checked early.



## VACCINATIONS

As we approach the autumn months, NHS Fife & NHS Scotland will provide information regarding seasonal vaccinations. Patients are encouraged to keep an eye out on NHS Fife's website for further information.

### Shingles vaccinations:

The 2024/25 shingles vaccination programme will run from 1st September 2024 to 31st August 2025. Patients eligible for a vaccination will receive an invitation in the post from NHS Scotland. Those eligible include:

- Patients aged 50 years and over who are severely immunosuppressed (no upper age limit) and have not yet received a vaccine.
- Patients aged 65 and 70 years old from 1st September 2024 to 31st August 2025.
- A catch-up programme will invite patients aged 71 to 79 years of age who have not previously been vaccinated.
- Patients aged 18 years and over who have received a stem cell transplant as part of their overall treatment plan.

Appointments will be available from 01/09/2024 and NHS Scotland will invite patients for a vaccination. The practice does not provide any shingles vaccinations and is not responsible for the appointment system. Patients can contact NHS Fife's vaccination team, from 01/09/2024, on 01383 565456 should they have any queries.

### Influenza vaccinations:

Eligible patients will be contacted by NHS Scotland inviting them to attend for a vaccination. Again, the practice does not provide any flu vaccinations and is not responsible for the appointment system.

## PRACTICE CLOSURE DATES

The practice will be closed on the dates detailed below:

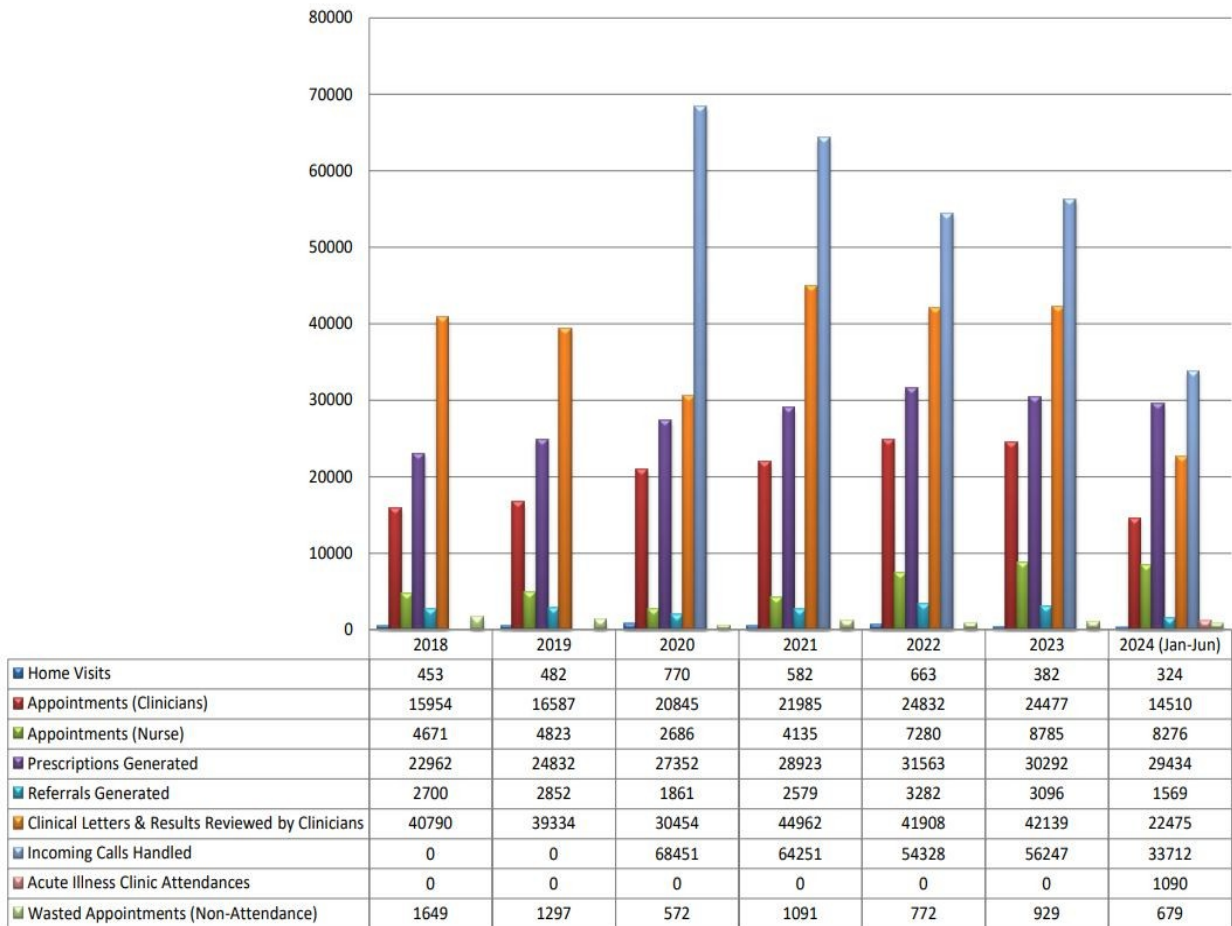
- **Thursday 12th September** from 13:00 for staff training and will re-open at 08:00 on Friday 13th September. Patients who require urgent care, which they feel cannot wait until the practice re-opens, should contact NHS Fife on 01592 729250.
- **Monday 7th October** for a public holiday and will re-open at 08:00 on Tuesday 8th October. Patients who require urgent care, which cannot wait until the practice re-opens, should contact NHS 24 on 111.

**AS ALWAYS, FOR LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCIES SUCH AS CHEST PAIN OR STROKE SYMPTOMS, YOU SHOULD DIAL 999 AND REQUEST AN AMBULANCE**

## FACTS AND FIGURES

As mentioned on our front page, the demand for appointments has increased significantly since 2018. We thought it would be helpful to give patients an insight into just how much demand has increased over the years.

**TAYVIEW FIGURES 2018 TO 2024 (JAN - JUN)**



Patients will note from the above that our wasted appointments continue to rise. This is despite the practice reintroducing text and email reminders regarding appointments.

We kindly ask all patients to contact the practice to cancel their appointment if it is no longer required. This helps other patients be provided with your cancelled appointment.

Patients who repeatedly fail to attend or cancel their appointments may be removed from our practice list.



## KEEP INFORMED

Patients can request to receive a copy of our quarterly newsletter directly into their email inbox. If you wish to receive a copy, please email [Fife.F21609Tayview@nhs.scot](mailto:Fife.F21609Tayview@nhs.scot) and detail in the subject box "newsletter registration". You do not need to do anything else. Once your email is received, we will add your email address to our distribution list.

Patients are also welcome to join our Facebook Group page by searching for Tayview Medical Practice. Our page aims to keep patients up-to-date with the latest news regarding the practice.

Our practice website can be viewed by visiting [www.tayviewmp.org.uk](http://www.tayviewmp.org.uk) and provides information regarding the practice and services offered.

Lastly, we kindly ask patients to ensure that we have their correct contact details on their medical record. We use our text messaging service to notify patients of important information. If your mobile number is not up to date, you will not receive appointment reminders or important information to your mobile phone.

## Acute Illness Clinic

Our Acute Illness Clinic (AIC) was developed to assist patients with urgent illnesses whereby they could attend the practice on a Monday morning between 08:30 and 10:30 and wait to be seen by a clinician. The AIC commenced in January 2024 as a trial and was evaluated at regular intervals. Patients were also asked to provide feedback regarding their experience. The practice sought the views of 500 patients who attend the AIC which, overall, showed 463 patients being very satisfied with the service provided. 37 patients were satisfied and no patients were unsatisfied.

The trial period has now finished and the AIC has proven to be successful. The AIC provides patients with another option available to them if they feel their medical need is urgent in nature and cannot wait for a routine appointment.

We are pleased to announce that the AIC will now continue to run every Monday morning at Newport and we would encourage patients to attend between the hours of 08:30 and 10:30.

## PRACTICE WEBSITE—UPDATE

Over the October and November period, our practice website will be updated. Patients will still be able to access our website at [www.tayviewmp.org](http://www.tayviewmp.org) however they may notice some of the information missing or out of date.

We are grateful to our patients for their patience whilst we update the website to make it more user friendly with the aim of making information easier to find.

## OUR APPOINTMENT SYSTEM EXPLAINED

Over the last number of months, the practice has noticed some confusion on social media sites regarding our appointment system. We thought it would be helpful to provide a gentle reminder below regarding our appointment system and how it works.

### Acute Illness Clinic (AIC):

Patients who have an urgent medical condition (e.g. Chest infection) which they feel cannot wait, can attend our AIC on a Monday morning between 08:30 and 10:30. There is no need to call us beforehand. Simply attend the practice and speak with a receptionist who will assist you further. Please note, our reception team may suggest an alternative healthcare provider, such as an optician or dentist, if this is appropriate.

### Urgent / Emergency Appointments:

The practice provides a small number of urgent appointments each day for use by patients who feel their condition is urgent in nature and cannot wait. These appointments are booked in time order and a choice of doctor is not available. When all of our urgent appointments are full, patients will be contacted by our duty-doctor to discuss your needs further.

### Routine (pre-bookable) Appointments:

All of our pre-bookable appointments are released at 08:00 every Wednesday morning for one full week. This was implemented following patient feedback. There has been confusion on social media where patients have stated that these appointments are released in blocks throughout the day. This is not true. All pre-bookable appointments become available at 08:00. Patients can contact the practice by telephone or come into the practice to arrange an appointment. At times, the number of pre-bookable appointments may be lower than usual due to clinicians being on annual leave (such as over this recent summer school period). The practice does try to secure locum cover however, given the current GP challenges impacting general practice, we are finding it increasingly difficult to secure like for like cover.

### Home visits:

Home visits are available for patients who are housebound or feel they are unable to attend the surgery to be assessed. We encourage patients to contact the practice before 10am each morning for a home visit as this helps our duty doctor plan the visits accordingly. The doctor may call you first to discuss your needs further and our reception team will take some details regarding your need for a home visit. Home visits can not be booked in advance.

### Face to Face appointment or Telephone consultation:

Patients have the choice of a face to face appointment or a telephone consultation when booking an appointment. Each booking requires the same length of appointment time and both are treated as appointments. Patients booking a telephone consultation will be advised as to whether their call will take place in the morning or afternoon. We are unable to provide a specific time. We're grateful to patients for following the advice of the reception team should they suggest a specific type of appointment. For example, if you are suffering from abdominal pain and request a telephone consultation, our reception team will suggest a face to face appointment as you are likely to need examined.

## CARE NAVIGATION - WHY AM I BEING NAVIGATED TO AN ALTERNATIVE HEALTHCARE PROVIDER?

In response to a national shortage of GPs, and the introduction of a new GP contract, the Scottish Government announced significant changes to the way medical practices must work in 2018. One of the main announcements was that GPs are no longer the first point of contact for many health issues. Various tasks previously performed by GPs and their staff are now undertaken by other healthcare professionals and, also, the Health Board. This is designed to enable GPs to concentrate on more complex problems and relieve the pressure on hospitals.

Our reception team have received extra training to enable them to help navigate you, where appropriate, to an alternative healthcare professional. This helps us maintain our GP appointments for those patients whose medical needs require GP input.

**Why am I being directed to an optician?** Opticians are experts in eyes and the eye area. They have a lot more equipment to assess the eye and have a direct referral process to the hospital if they have concerns. Opticians can deal with any eye issues and can prescribe medication if required. Simply contact any optician by telephone to arrange an appointment. This will help you be seen by the correct person, at the correct place and may be quicker than being seen by a GP.


**What am I being directed to a dentist?** Dentists are experts regarding the mouth area and can diagnose and treat mouth conditions. GPs will not assess and treat dental problems and patients will be directed to contact their dentist for such issues. Dentists can also prescribe medication to help with symptoms whilst being able to refer to a dental hospital if need be.

**Why am I being directed to call NHS 24 on 111?** Patients who have suffered a minor injury (such as a sprain, possible broken bone, minor burns, cuts, bruising or grazes) may be directed to call NHS 24 on 111 to arrange an appointment at a minor injuries unit (MIU). MIU are well equipped to deal with minor injuries. By phoning 111, you will be assessed and provided with an appointment time to attend a unit if necessary.

**Why am I being directed to a Mental Health Nurse?** The practice has a Mental Health Nurse (MHN) who works in the practice. The nurse is able to assess and provide advice to patients suffering from depression, low mood, anxiety etc. Our MHN can see patients over the age of 16 years old.

**Why am I being directed to a pharmacy?**

The Pharmacy First Scotland service is designed to provide patients with healthcare advice without the need for an appointment. Pharmacies are able to provide advice, treatment and referral to other services where appropriate. The Pharmacy First Scotland service can assist you with a wide range of illnesses whilst prescribing medication, free of charge, if appropriate. By attending a pharmacy (if suggested by our reception team), you will be able to get healthcare advice quicker with treatment (if appropriate) without the need to see a GP.



## WHY YOUR GP PRACTICE IS NOW UNABLE TO DO EVERYTHING THEY ONCE WERE ABLE TO DO

Lastly, our Local Medical Committee (LMC) has asked us to share the below with patients. It makes for interesting reading and helps explain why GP practices are now unable to do everything they once were able to do.

### Why are your GP practices now unable to do everything they once were?

General Practice across the Country has been struggling for years. However it has now reached a critical situation with less money, less doctors and less staff to meet the growing needs of the Scottish population. So how did we get here?

In 2017, the Scottish Government recognised this and promised to introduce a new Contract, starting in 2018 and to be fully implemented within 3 years. At the time, the then Health Secretary Shona Robison MSP said "We equally recognised the fundamental challenges faced by general practice, not least growing workload and increasing risk". Unfortunately, for the first time in the history of the NHS, large parts of this contract have not been implemented. Even worse, when Health Boards haven't been able to spend the money that they were given to employ additional pharmacists and other professionals to support General Practice, the money has had to be returned to Scottish Government rather than being able to be spent supporting your local practice.

Scottish Government promised transitional payments to Practices to recognise the non-delivery of this contract, but then withdrew that funding, even after some practices had already used the money for additional cover. There have been many further challenges both local and National since then:

Many Practices in Fife are facing increasing bills for their building costs such as mortgages, rent payments and utility bills. Without any additional funding coming into practices, their financial situations will deteriorate and it's likely this will lead to reduced staffing, with fewer appointments and longer waits to be seen.

All Practices in Fife are impacted by Scottish Government not funding an increase in compulsory pension contributions. This is only occurring in General Practice in Scotland; the English and Welsh Governments have already committed to paying this, and there is funding in place for all staff in hospitals. Therefore, these payments come out of the funding available to Practices to pay for administrative staff, nurses and doctors.

Many people don't know that the funding for Practices comes through a National formula and doesn't reflect how many times patients are seen. Practices are paid the same whether you are seen once or a hundred times per year. In 2017, the Scottish Government recognised that it wasn't sufficient and promised to move towards a new funding model. This still hasn't happened, and the funding uplifts have been substantially below inflation since then.

The average patient used to contact their Practice 3-4 times per year. This has increased to 6-7. The reasons for this are multiple and include an increasing elderly population, more people with illness (often multiple) and more available treatment options. The large growth in waiting lists has also had a big impact, with GP appointments being taken up with ongoing management whilst awaiting hospital investigations and procedures. (CONTINUED OVER THE PAGE)





**WHY YOUR GP PRACTICE IS NOW UNABLE TO DO EVERYTHING THEY ONCE WERE ABLE TO DO (CONT')**

GPs are in demand. There are many roles and jobs that require the skills of a GP, so the GP that you see in your practice will likely be working "full time" hours across fewer, longer days with other days spent in these other roles or undertaking caring responsibilities for their families.

Part of the funding which comes from Government every year is earmarked for non-GP staff pay rises e.g. receptionists, nursing staff, practice managers. This has always matched what was given to staff working elsewhere in the NHS. For the first time last year, the Scottish Government decided to break this link, meaning practices had to fund the shortfall or risk losing staff.

The number of GPs in Scotland is falling. As part of the 2017 contract the Scottish Government promised that numbers would rise by 800, however when doctors in training are excluded from the figures, the numbers are actually reducing! Since 2013, the GP WTE (whole time equivalent) workforce has fallen by 5.35% - a fall of 196.7 whole time equivalent GPs. In that same time period, the number of practices has fallen by 9%, average practice list sizes have increased by 18% and the total patient population has increased by 7%. 42% of practices in Scotland report at least one GP vacancy. The number of GP partners has reduced by 14% between 2012 and 2022. In the last 20 years the ratio of GPs to hospital consultants has halved, despite many things which used to be done in hospital now commonly being done in practice, and this reflects the falling share of the NHS budget spent in General Practice.

In many areas, Practice buildings are too small and are outdated. Unfortunately, Scottish Government has now cancelled all funding for new builds, leaving many working out of buildings no longer fit for purpose. Scottish Government has also withdrawn sustainability loans, a scheme to reduce the risk for GPs who own their building. This leads to financial loss which again impacts on the services they can deliver.

With less staff and more work, better IT would help improve efficiency. Our IT is cumbersome and unreliable which often impacts on the care of our patients, increasing inefficiency and damaging staff morale. We are the only country in Britain still using paper prescriptions - this alone costs a huge amount of clinical, administrative and patient time.

In order to make systems better we need time to learn and develop. We used to receive regular half days to work with our teams on making practices better for everyone. The support for this was withdrawn by NHS24 and Scottish Government have done very little to reintroduce any form of reliable support, although our local health board have tried to reintroduce this recently.

**Incredibly, despite all that we have just described, your Practice remains absolutely committed to provide the best service that it can.**

However, if you're not satisfied with the service you receive, look beyond the Practice and instead hold those with the power to improve matters to account. Scottish Government needs to do more to directly support General Practice, the bedrock of the NHS. Please contact your MSP. Their contact details can be found on the Scottish Parliament's website.