

PE2070/E: Stop same-day-only GP appointment systems

NHS Highland submission, 19 April 2024

Thank you for your letter dated 22 March 2024 in relation to the above petition.

You advised that: *The Committee is seeking information on whether any GP practices in the health board operate a same-day-only appointment system and if so, whether this is causing wider challenges across other areas of the health service. The Committee also noted that GP practices may only allow a short window in the morning for patients to contact the practice. The Committee would welcome information on how common this approach is in the health board area.*

Please can I now provide the undernoted information on behalf of NHS Highland.

Many practices in Highland do use on-the-day appointments, but the board is not aware of any that do not use this in combination with other appointment types for a range of conditions or condition recalls. This is a constantly changing landscape, however, as practices often change their approach as part of quality improvement processes, and in a continued attempt to better manage the unprecedented demand within general practice. GP practices are central to the delivery of proactive and preventative care close to people's homes and so any pressure on demand will have an impact on the wider system and on patient outcomes. We see the demand in general practice as much more impactful than any particular appointment type. However, we are aware that detailed work on this has been delivered nationally, through the Primary Care Access Collaborative, led by Healthcare Improvement Scotland.

As per the national contract, all practices have arrangements in place to enable access services in the case of an emergency, which would include the possibility of seeing someone that same day if their condition required that. Any practice not able to meet this obligation would be placed on an escalation framework, and we would work with them to ensure they are able to meet this core component of the contract.

I trust that the above provides the information you require, but please let me know if you have any queries.