

# Communications campaign about accessing your GP

## Key messages

- GP practices are open and have been open throughout the pandemic but they are very busy.
- Please treat practice teams with respect, they are trying to help.
- There are other ways of getting in touch than phoning, please use them if you're able to as this keeps phone lines clearer for those who can't.
- GP teams have a range of trained clinicians that can help you be seen more quickly.
- GP practice teams have been instrumental in the rollout of the vaccination programme.

## Getting in touch with us

We are aware there are significant problems getting through to us on the phone. We are sorry this is the case and would like to explain a little about why that is.

Many GP surgeries across the country are in a similar position. We understand how frustrating it can be for it to take longer than normal.

We would like to reassure you we are working hard to resolve the situation.

There are three things that are challenging us:

1. There has been an unprecedented post-lockdown increase in demand. Part of this is because many of our patients have been managing health issues themselves rather than contacting their doctor over the last year and some hospital procedures and appointments have been necessarily delayed. As confidence in general is returning, patients are now quite rightly contacting us.
2. We have been heavily involved in delivering the country's largest ever vaccination campaign.
3. We have had to change the way we work to keep things safe for our patients and our staff.

What can you do to help?

- Choose well – can the pharmacy help your symptoms?
- Call 111 if you are unsure which sort of treatment you need. You can also go online [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk)
- Download the NHS app. You can use this to cancel appointments and order repeat prescriptions.
- Use our online consultation system, if you are able to.
- Cancel appointments you no longer need.

It's useful to remember our teams are on the front line and see both the best and the worst of us all. They work incredibly hard to help patients navigate the system, but may not be able to offer you exactly what you want at all times.

Please be patient and courteous, they want to find the best solution as much as you do.

We are grateful for your understanding.

Dr Okafor, Dr Afelumo & Dr Madueke