

New Fareham Primary Care Service off to a 'smooth' start

A new service for Fareham people seeing urgent same-day GP appointments welcomed its first patients today (Wednesday September 20) as it got off to a 'smooth' start.

The Fareham Primary Care Service (FPCS), based at a hub at Fareham Community Hospital, Park Gate, dealt with 60 patient calls in its first three hours after going live at 8am.

Four of the ten GP practices in Fareham are working together to develop a new way of offering urgent appointments to patients who want to see a health professional on the day they make contact.

The participating practices are Highlands Practice, Jubilee Surgery and Whiteley Surgery – and Stubbington Medical Practice will also join the scheme, from January 2, 2018. Other practices may follow if the initiative proves successful.

Routine appointments at GP practices are not affected, and continue as before.

The FPCS is being run along similar lines to the Same Day Access Service (SDAS) which has been operated by four of Gosport's 11 GP practices at Gosport War Memorial since late 2015.

In Gosport, around 60% of patients initially seeking a GP appointment have had their issue resolved on the same day through non face-to-face contact – greatly freeing up the time of doctors and nurses who can then see other patients.

Dr Tom Bertram, the Titchfield GP who is clinical lead for the project, which has been funded by the Better Local Care initiative, said: "A great deal of hard work has gone into planning for today, and I would particularly like to thank the management team for all its hard work and meticulous planning.

"It's very exciting to see the hub in action. It's all gone very smoothly and calmly. I'd also like to thank everyone at the community hospital for getting the room, IT, and everything else in place. They have done a fantastic job – and it is patients who will benefit."

Amanda Gray, the practice manager at Highlands Surgery, who is on the project team, said: "The patients who have come here for appointments have been very positive. we have been delighted by the response to this new service so far."

Dr Donal Collins, one of the GPs triaging patients at the hub today, said: "From a GP's point of view, I really value the fact that I can speak to other colleagues, from other practices, in one setting here and that we can all learn and share from each other as we work together for a common purpose. That has to be good for our patients.

"We have had great help and advice from colleagues at the Gosport Same Day Access scheme – and it's lovely that there is such close collaboration between the two towns."

Patients wanting urgent same-day appointments phone their GP practice as normal and, if they agree to their details being shared with the service, they will then be called back in order of clinical priority with a nurse/GP having a detailed conversation with them - which may result in the patient being given advice over the phone or offered an appointment.