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**The Glebe Surgery
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Dear Patient

I am writing this message from my heart. I have been, until this year Practice Manager for nearly 30 years at the Glebe. I now work one day a week to support the team, and I don't say that lightly, they really do need support at this time. There is a lot of negative press out there and I understand many of the frustrations patients are experiencing, because I am one of them! I can also see the other side of this problem and I can assure you that the Glebe Staff, who have worked tirelessly throughout the surgery move, the COVID 19 Hot hubs, the COVID vaccination clinics and now the Flu clinics are under real pressure. Due to the impact of making appointments for all of the additional clinics they still have the day to day appointment and admin tasks to manage. There are also additional challenges of covering for staff who have reported in sick or have had to isolate due to COVID. Basically they are at a very low ebb

Unfortunately COVID is still 'out there' and whilst we are doing our best to get 'back to normal' we still have to maintain some control over managing patients visiting the practice, as many are elderly vulnerable and frail. The doctors have continued to offer face to face appointments during COVID, following telephone triage when deemed necessary. We are working towards increasing the number of appointments available because everyone wants to resume normal service as soon as it is safe to do so.

We have employed additional staff to answer calls. Training is given to all new employees, but experience is also very necessary and learning all the idiosyncrasies associated with this job is challenging and takes time. Added to this, everyone working in the surgery is having to learn a new computer system. This takes us all extra time because everything is different.

I hope this doesn't sound like I am making 'excuses', because we are all working so very hard to make things better for our patients, who have been our support and cheerleaders through so many of the challenges named above. A little bit of encouragement and understanding makes a huge difference to staff morale and I would like to thank those of our patients who have continued to do this.

It does however sadden me greatly to hear from our hardworking receptionists, who are sometimes on the verge of tears, telling me how much verbal abuse they are having to tolerate on the phones from the start to the finish of their shifts. No one works well under these conditions and I am concerned for their health. If we lose our dedicated and caring staff through mental health or other stress related conditions things will only deteriorate more to the detriment of both our existing staff and patients.

Thank you again for your support and encouragement and I hope that we will be able to work together to make the Glebe Surgery the friendly, happy and efficient place it once was.

Sue Smith – Consultant Trainer/Mentor