

# *JUNCTION SURGERY*

*Dr F W Thomason Dr S Molana Dr I Uwaifo*

346 Grimshaw Lane, Middleton, Manchester, M24 2AU

0161 271 3030 [www.junctionsurgery.nhs.uk](http://www.junctionsurgery.nhs.uk)

29 November 2022

## **An open letter to all patients of the Junction and Alkrington Surgeries**

As many of you will be aware, we have had major issues with our telephones for much of 2022. The main issue has been that patients have been cut off after waiting for some time in the queue, but there have also been other issues such as calls being disconnected mid call.

Since the pandemic started in 2020 the demand on telephone systems throughout the NHS has skyrocketed, and it continues to increase. It seems many of the systems that have been put in place do not have the capacity to deal with this increased demand.

Throughout the issues we have had with our phones, we have shared details with our supplier who have consistently investigated the incidents that we have shared with them. They have liaised with Virgin Media and Cisco to try and find a fix. Various patches have been applied, but as yet no fix has been found. It is believed new hardware is required and once this has been delivered and installed, they believe the issues will be resolved. Unfortunately, we have no confirmation as to exactly when this will be. Whilst we hope this fix will work, there are no guarantees.

It is clear that patients and staff are unsatisfied with current progress. We are looking into other options from other providers, but should we find a suitable provider and opt to switch, this will take several months.

We originally moved to a queueing system from a system where you either got through to a member of staff or if all lines busy, you would be met with an engaged tone. Patients requested a switch to a queue system as it was frustrating to be constantly having to redial. Because of the current issues with our queueing system, patients are still having to constantly redial, with the added issue of having potentially spent up to 60 minutes on hold before being cut off.

Following conversations with patients and staff, **we have decided to turn off the call queueing feature. This will happen during the day on Wednesday 30 November 2022.** This may make it harder to initially get through, but overall, we believe this is preferable to patients.

Once our suppliers fix has been applied, we will look to move back to the queueing system, as we believe a reliable queueing system is safer (once you are in the queue you know you will eventually have your call dealt with). We will continue to listen to feedback from our patients and staff and will continue to look at options from other providers as we want access to the surgery to be simple and easy for all our patients.

Sincerely

The Junction Surgery