



With thanks to Cambs LMC

North Cumbria General Practice Response to the Secretary of State for Health & Social Care Thérèse Coffey’s Statement around GP Access – September 2022

Did you know...

In Cumbria, the 35 GP Surgeries offer between **160,000 – 190,000** appointments **every single month**.

The number of missed appointments is between **6000 and 8000** appointments **every month** in Cumbria.

This is a waste of NHS resources and can cause serious delays in treatment for other patients.



Did you know...

In Cumbria **1 in 2** patients who need access to their GP team get an appointment **within 24 hours** of contacting their practice.

4 in 5 get an appointment **within 14 days**.

Your GP wait may be hours, days, or weeks **but you may still be waiting around a year for a hospital appointment**.

Waits for operations can be **even longer**.

Even suspected cancer referrals, ideally seen by a consultant within a fortnight, may take longer. This is not the fault of NHS staff who are working harder than ever.

We share your frustration. We feel the same.

On 22 September, the new Health Secretary told the media that ‘GPs would be required to offer an appointment on request within two weeks’ (regardless of clinical need). But when it came to Parliament, Ms Coffey **changed her statement** to ‘GPs may be expected to offer an appointment on request’.

Deliberate misinformation or misrepresentation of general practice helps no one. It’s an unachievable expectation without the doctors and nurses available, or additional funding to deliver it.

Don’t fall for the political spin.

Political spin is damaging to the NHS workforce:

By piling pressure on GPs & practice staff who can’t meet impossible targets, spin can trigger complaints, aggression, and abuse. That can lead to staff leaving the NHS workforce, and for patients that can mean losing your doctor and longer waits to be seen.

Political spin is damaging to patients:

It is unfair to make impossible promises to patients. We have a duty to put clinical need over personal want. There aren’t enough NHS staff to go round to offer everybody whatever they want, whenever they want it.

It’s not access – it’s capacity

Everyone’s working hard, but **general practice is the only part of the NHS to be offering even more appointments and more access**, than when compared with before the pandemic. That is extraordinary when we think about how many GPs and Practice Nurses we’ve lost in the past few years.

Extra phone lines need **extra staff** to answer them, and **extra clinicians** to see you and your family.

A million volunteers might be helpful, but how long will they volunteer for? **Wouldn’t it be better** to have a **sustainable workforce policy to deliver new trained staff?**

We must keep the NHS staff we have. We can’t afford to lose any more. Please help by being kind, patient and understanding. We are doing our best for you. ❤️