

Holbrooks Health Team Appointments

A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT PROBLEMS

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Overview of the problem

Holbrooks Health Team workload is 22% more than expected by the NHS, with an average doctor working week of 58 hours in 2012. By the end of 2013 the average doctor was working 62 hours.

Each week there are 15 hours of doctor time wasted by people not keeping their appointments. Most of these appointments are booked the same day, and most of these within an hour.

Internet booking and internet prescription ordering started in March. Telephone eMail, text messaging and FaceBook appointments were introduced in July 2013.

Telephone appointments reduced availability. Although the doctors inserted unlimited immediate access, waiting time for routine appointments increased to 24 days by December 2013. At the same time, consultations were 56% more than would be expected for the population size.

This increased the pressure on telephone calls. Despite having the most phone-lines and operators in the city, patients were unable to get through at all, or having got through, were waiting a long time to speak to somebody. More than half callers were hanging up and six times as many calls lasted more than 4 minutes.

The cause of the problem is a shift in balance of appointments to 'same day' of which one in five are 'telephone' appointments.

The draft plan suggests the following changes:

The current 371 "same day" and "emergency" appointments should be reduced to 351.

The 169 "telephone appointments" should be reduced to 58.

The 240 regular appointments should be increased to 220 next day plus 202 advance booking.

The 63 special purpose appointments should stay as they are.

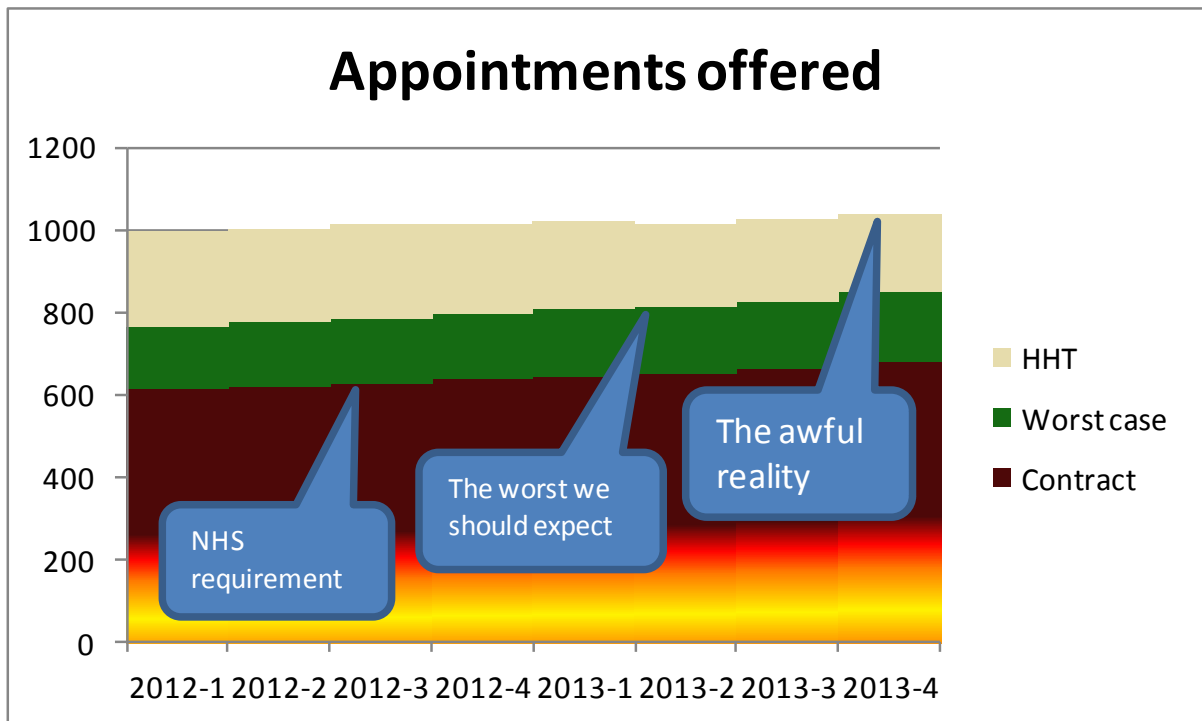
The doctors are currently offering 1147 appointments a week.

The NHS expects that practice of our size would only need 672 a week with a maximum of 840.

The proposed timetable offers 894 appointments.

How many appointments are required?

The NHS expects that GPs will offer 60 appointments a week for every 1000 patients in the list. At the very worst they might expect to offer 75. For Holbrooks Health Team, the worst case would be 845 appointments a week. The doctors are actually offering 1,035 a week and it is still not enough.



How do you balance booking ahead and same day access?

Our patients usually want to be seen the same day they contact the surgery. Just over half want to be seen the same day and about a quarter want to be seen within the week.

When telephone appointments were introduced, all the same week appointments seemed to disappear. This is what appears to be the cause of the problem.

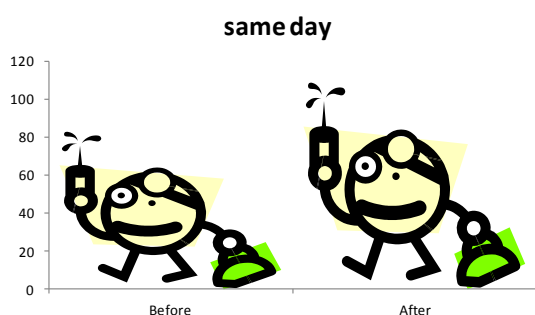


Figure 1 Same day appointments increased

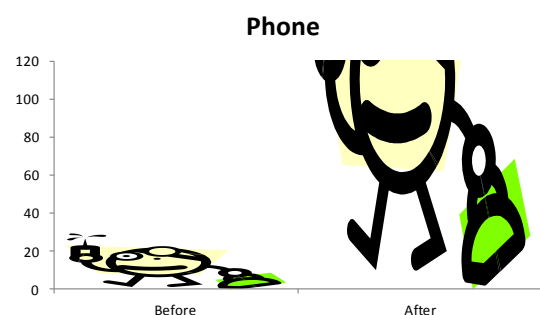


Figure 2 Phone appointments increased massively

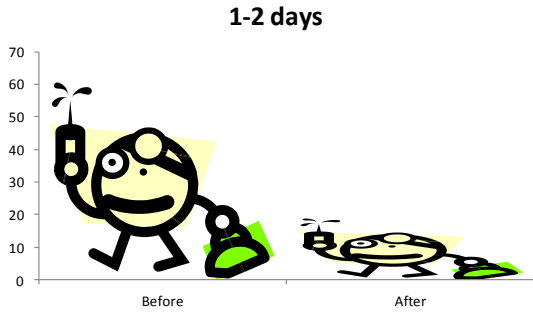


Figure 3 Appointments in 1-2 days nearly disappeared

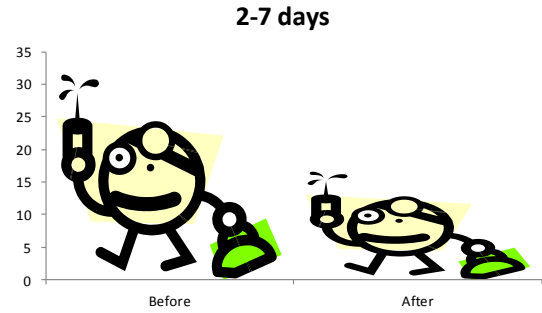


Figure 4 Appointments in a week cut to 1/3rd

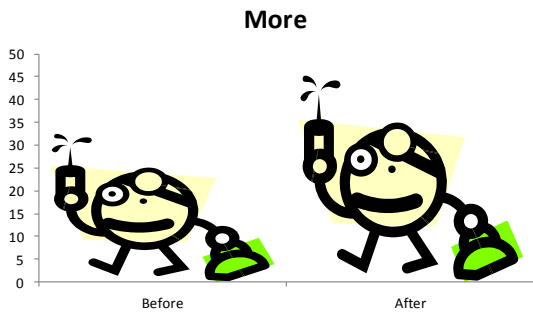


Figure 5 Waiting more than a week nearly doubled

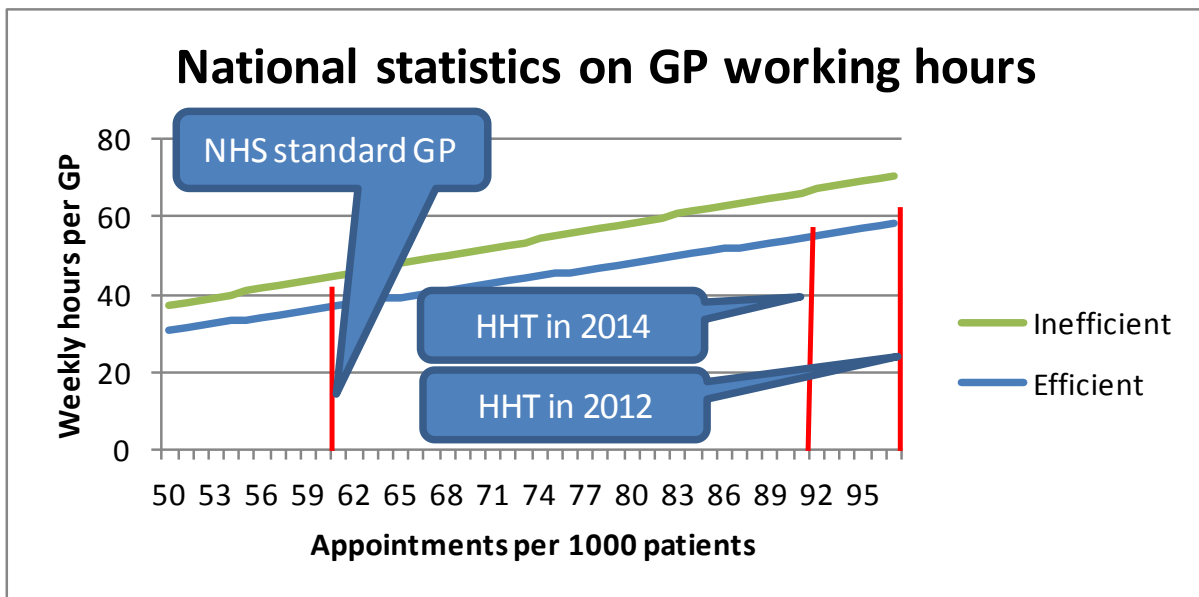
People who simply wanted to plan an appointment for sometime during the week found that they could no longer get an appointment. Instead they were having to ring again on the day and fix to come the same day, or for somebody to ring back.

Asking somebody to ring back wasn't very satisfactory as it was impossible to know when the call might actually be.....

How many hours does a doctor work?

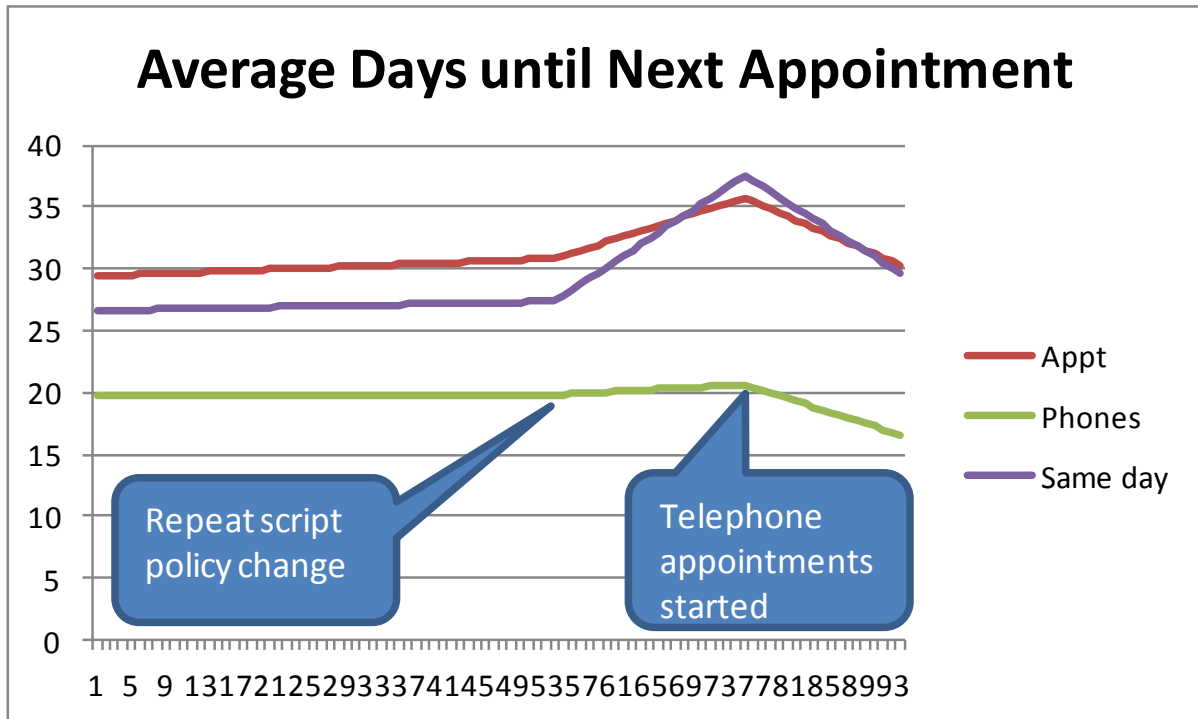
Appointments are about half a doctor's work. The rest of the time is reading and writing letters, issuing repeat prescriptions and attending clinical meetings. If appointments increase, so does the additional work.

The NHS expects that a GP will work 37.5 hours and this is the equivalent of 60 appointments per 1000 patients a week. Holbrooks Health Team doctors currently work 58 hours a week, but this has reduced from 62 hours a week at the end of 2012.



Do telephone appointments save time?

In short, no. They are usually shorter than an average appointment, but people generally need to be seen again in less than a month. The average time between appointments is just 30 days at Holbrooks Health Team but for telephone appointments it is just over 15 days.



This shows the average number of days between appointments in a single quarter. About half the patients would be seen in an average quarter, so the average number of days between appointments should be 60. In Holbrooks Health Team it is less than 30.

How many appointments are not kept?

About 1 in 10 appointments is not kept. Most of these are appointments that were booked the same day and about a quarter of them are for appointments offered in less than an hour.

The number of missed appointments has reduced from 116 a week to 64 a week since telephone appointments started.

In an average week there are 80 appointments not kept overall. This is 15 hours of doctors' time.

