

PRESS RELEASE

Infographic included

12 September 2017

£2.7 million wasted on missed appointments in Wiltshire

Over the course of 12 months more than 76,400 GP Practice appointments were missed in Wiltshire, leading to £2.7 million of pressured finances being wasted and the equivalent total population of Trowbridge and Salisbury not being able to get an appointment when they needed one.

Between July 2016 and June 2017, Wiltshire's 50 GP Practices were recording an average of 29 missed GP, Practice Nurse and Healthcare Assistant appointments every week. Known as 'Did Not Attends', missed appointments have a huge impact on the health economy, prevent other patients from being seen and wastes practitioners' valuable time.

Dr Andrew Girdher from Box Surgery said: "The scale of missed appointments across Wiltshire is extremely high and adding unnecessary pressure to already stretched NHS resources.

"It's really important that if a patient no longer needs, or cannot attend their appointment that they cancel it. We understand that people often feel better by the time their appointment comes around, or that circumstances change meaning it is no longer convenient, but cancelling your unwanted appointment allows other patients to be seen more quickly."

Most Wiltshire Practices have multiple ways to make cancelling an appointment easy at any time of day including online systems, dedicated telephone lines with answer machine facilities and text messaging services. Speak to your Practice Receptionist to find out what's available at your Practice to help make cancelling appointments easy for you, your family and friends.

Dr Richard Sandford-Hill, a GP from Market Lavington Surgery, explains: "On average a GP will conduct 30 appointments per day and based on the total number of missed appointments for July 2016 – June 2017, that's the equivalent of 2,547 days of general practitioner time that has been lost.

“It’s widely known that NHS resources are under significant pressure, particularly as the needs of patients increase, which is why it’s important that people understand the impact they have if they simply do not turn up to their appointment.”

The reported number of missed appointments wasted £2.7 million of public money, which could have been spent on over 63,000 hours of nursing hours in a GP Practice, or used to pay for:

- 324 heart bypasses,
- 2,853 cataract operations, or
- 711 treatments for stroke

Dr Girdher continues: “The numbers speak for themselves and highlights the collective impact missed appointments across Wiltshire have on our local health economy. Everyone has a responsibility to look after the NHS – it is tax payers’ money after all - and we urge patients to remember to cancel their unwanted appointments and to help their friends and family to do the same.”

ENDS

Notes for Editors:

- Infographic included – The cost of Wiltshire’s missed GP appointments
- NHS Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is the commissioner of health care services for the population of Wiltshire. The CCG is led by local GPs who have first-hand experience of what their patients need.
- The CCG consists of 50 GP member practices and works closely with local partners including Wiltshire Council, local NHS providers, patients and the public to manage existing NHS services and implement new services to ensure that high quality health and social care is delivered to the population as close to their home as possible. Further information can be found on the website www.wiltshireccg.nhs.uk

Further information:

NHS Wiltshire CCG communications team
T. 01380 736010 E. communications.wiltshireccg@nhs.net