**PRESS RELEASE**

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| **Date of release:** |  21/10/2021 |
| **Approved by:** |  John Barbour, Senior Manager of Corporate Services at NHS Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Group |
| **Issued by:** | Karl Steel, karl.steel@nhs.net |
| **Reference:** | 2110-02 |
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**GP practices in Morecambe Bay launch video offering helpful advice to patients**

GPs and practice staff in Morecambe Bay have launched a video to address some of the pressures they are currently facing.

The video, which was produced by Morecambe Bay CCG, offers helpful tips and advice to patients and members of the public on ways they can help ease the situation.

Dr Paul Atkinson, one of the GPs who took part in the video, said: “We wanted to try and convey a sense that we sincerely care, and that we are trying our best to improve the situation.

“The video gives an insight into how it is at the moment working in primary care and that we are working hard on numerous fronts to make it easier to get help from your local practice.”

Practices in Morecambe Bay are facing higher demand now than any prolonged period since appointment data started being recorded by Clinical Commissioning Groups in 2013. The number of monthly GP appointments across Lancashire and South Cumbria in June this year was up by more than a quarter compared to February 2020, prior to the coronavirus pandemic striking.

Typically, appointments take longer due to infection prevention control measures in place so practices have introduced lots of innovations to help reduce the demand, and for some patients a phone or video consultation is absolutely the best and most practical option.

The new video, which can be viewed on the NHS Morecambe Bay CCG YouTube channel, also advises booking appointments and ordering repeat prescriptions online, as well as asking patients to be kind to staff – all messages that GPs and practice staff were keen to include.

Dr Atkinson, who is a GP at the James Cochrane Practice in Kendal, added: “Recent months have seen an unprecedented increase in calls to our practice for medical help. We are receiving over a third more calls this year than previously with the same staff.

“We always aim to help as many people as possible, though achieving this safely continues to be our biggest challenge. It is difficult to get more clinicians quickly, but steps are being taken to increase capacity such as removing the need to triage every appointment, adding more clinics and we are actively recruiting.

“It is important for patients to know that we remain open for business, we are seeing people face-to-face and still offer a variety of consultation types which are available with a wide number of clinicians.”

**Ends**

**Notes for Editors:**

‘A Day in the Life of a GP Practice’ can be viewed at the NHS Morecambe Bay CCG YouTube channel here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4NivuOcSZ4

“Commissioning” is a term the NHS uses to describe the planning and buying of healthcare services.

**Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)** commission the majority of hospital, community services and GP services for the communities they serve. They came into operation in April 2013 and are led by local GPs and managers.

**NHS England is responsible for the commissioning of services in England.** NHS England shares out more than £100 billion in funds each year, much of it to CCGs. It holds these organisations to account for spending this money effectively for patients and efficiently for the tax payer. NHS England is also responsible for commissioning specialised health services, dentist, pharmacist and optometrist services along with some public health programmes including cancer screening and vaccination and immunisation; and responsibilities such as safeguarding.