

## **Streamlined Appointments at Upper Mountains Medical Centre.**

From early March we will be measuring demand for our services over a three week period.

### **Why measure demand?**

Until we measure we will never know how many consultations we actually need to allow for. This will mean we continue to be fully booked while people are still ringing for appointments. This gives rise to stress for all of us including our patients. We will measure for three weeks and then compare how much demand there is on a given day and with how many consultations we have on that day. The aim will be to match the two so that we will always have available appointments on the day. When doctors are away for any reason we will be able to predict the number of appointments we will need to make up for them and plan for it.

### **How do we do it?**

There will be a tally sheet for the day next to your phone. When a patient rings or presents at the desk for an appointment say for KXXXa HXXXn place a mark in the box next to her name. The appointment is recorded on today's sheet no matter which day you give them.

We are particularly interested in how many "needed on the day" appointments we have to cater for so there will be a box to record that.

Record all requests for appointments made on that day whether received by phone or at the counter.

### **How will this help?**

Measuring demand is only the first step. It will give us a clear idea as to whether we have enough appointments available or whether we are hopelessly under-doctored. Once we know where we stand we can take steps to improve things such as:

- Making sure we have enough appointments on a Monday to keep up with the increase in demand that day
- Not booking follow ups on a Monday so we can deal with all requests for appointments on that day.
- Playing with quick clinics etc on certain days at certain times for simple things, perhaps trying phone appointments or email appointments!

The aim will be to get every patient an appointment on the day they request it. Some benefits reported from the UK include:

- Happier receptionists because they know they can say yes almost all the time on the day
- Happier patients because they do not have to wait for days to see a doctor
- Less DNA's because patients learn they do not have to book days in advance and then forget their appointment
- Happier doctors because they are not continually having to fit people in where there are no appointments.

This will mean a bit more work for the three weeks of measurement but the information we get will really help us improve the way we work.