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**Main Surgery**  
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*Consultations by Appointment Only*

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## **Update from Cove Bay & Kincorth Medical Centres – December 2024**

### **Staff Update**

We are pleased to advise that Dr Ruth Cole has joined the practice as a salaried GP.

### **Pressures in General Practice**

Many of you will see in the news about the stark reality of the pretty impossible demands and pressures on every GP practice today. Consultation rates have effectively doubled in recent years, but with a reduction of qualified GP numbers. New roles have been supported into General Practice, which provides help but nowhere near meets the needs caused by the growth in demand complexity, and expectations of Primary Care. The ratio of GPs to consultants has recently halved despite moves to greater community-based care!

We understand that patients are often frustrated and annoyed about the challenges in being able to access and be supported by General Practice to the level that they would like due to this situation.

The current situation within healthcare is well summed up in the recent Darzi report, which reiterates the findings of other independent evaluations of the NHS. Whilst this was commissioned by NHS England, it is in our opinion, instantly transferable to NHS Scotland. The summary of this report is well worth a read to help gain insight into current challenges and needs.

Complaints understandably rise (which in turn reduces clinical time as they need to be thoroughly investigated and responded to), and they also affect an already low staff morale in such trying times. Your understanding within this would be greatly supportive and appreciated. Within this we are always open to constructive feedback and ideas on our service provision. These may not always be achievable but will always be considered

Within this situation, GPs are burning out from workload pressures, the strain of holding up an NHS that is creaking, and from being at the front line of public anger around the state of the NHS, which is of course out of our control.

GPs across Scotland are distressed at being unable to always provide the level of care we would ideally wish. This means, as fast as new GPs are trained, others are leaving the profession or reducing hours in self-preservation.

So where does that leave you—our patients? Firstly, despite these pressures, we are absolutely committed at Kincorth and Cove to providing the best care we can in such trying times and are intent on continuing to do so for as long as we can.

We ask, however, for a little understanding of the situation that General Practice is in at present. Please understand that this is not down to the failings of General Practice teams and that solutions to fix this lie well beyond the scope of the practice or our wider profession alone. When will things return to normal, in response, things will never be done the same way they were before. It is imperative in healthcare that modernisation is used where it can to improve on care and efficiency. We acknowledge reform of the NHS as being imperative. However, within this, the current strains on General Practice are impacting negatively on the ability to best support continuity in care. This more "old-fashioned" aspect is an essential component of best care but is the most challenging to

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achieve in current resource pressures. More people are living longer but with increased health needs; more people with complex needs are being looked after in the community rather than hospital settings; more expectation and demand arise from progress in all aspects of health care. We strongly strive for some of the best aspects of older General Practice to be restored, but this will need Governmental recognition around the desperate need to significantly boost the General Practice workforce and other supports needed to do so.

We hope all political parties look ahead to solutions rather than point fingers of blame. This, however, cannot wait the 10 years currently projected for our own sakes and yours.

In the meantime, our plea to you, our patients, is to please be understanding (if not accepting) of the current situation and be considerate to our team within this.

We are facing these challenges and trying to provide the best service we can within them.

### **Winter Pressures**

The NHS is always under considerable pressure over the winter period as demand for services tends to increase significantly with the onset of cold weather and flu and many patients will face longer waits for care during the coldest months. Within this we face increased pressure with practice staff sickness.

### **Patient Services**

Patient Services is an online service that can be accessed online from your PC, tablet or mobile and is available 24 hours a day. Using Patient Services you can request your repeat medications. This is a safe and secure way to access your regular medications.

If you would like to register for this online service please complete a form and return it to our practice in person, **along with a valid form of identification, for example photo ID or your passport.** The registration form for patient services is available on the practice website <https://www.covebayandkincorthmedical.co.uk/prescriptions> or you can get a form from reception.

### **Festive Opening Times at the Practice**

The Christmas and New Year period is once again getting closer. The practice will close at 6pm on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December and reopen at 8am on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> December 2024. We will then close again at 6pm on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> December and reopen at 8am on Friday 3rd January 2025.

**Please try to ensure that all requests for repeat prescriptions are outwith this busy period. Our repeat prescription lines and online prescriptions via Patient Services are available 24/7. The repeat prescription telephone numbers are 01224 846875 for Kincorth patients and 01224 846786 for Cove patients.**

### **eConsult**

Over the festive period, eConsult will close at 2.00 p.m. on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and will reopen at 7.00 a.m. on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

Best wishes for a Merry Christmas from all at Kincorth & Cove Surgery