

# GP drop affects Furnace and Inveraray

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Lochgilthead Medical Practice is making moves to aid a growing GP problem in Furnace.

A new GP, Dr Laura Cameron, joined the team on Wednesday September 3 but, despite this, the number of GPs covering Furnace has dropped significantly and is now at half normal capacity.

Due to a range of issues, various GPs are unable to cover Furnace long-term and patients across Lochgilthead, Inveraray and Furnace are being directed to Mid Argyll Hospital until at least December.

Lochgilthead Medical Practice said: 'The practice is making changes out of necessity.

'We ask for your understanding if inconvenience is caused and for the immediacy of the changes as we work hard to continue to provide a safe service.'

To combat the lack of mobile GPs, Lochgilthead Medical Practice is to implement the telephone service already in use by Mid Argyll Hospital in which patients call and are judged on whether they need a face-to-face appointment with a GP.

'The telephone first appointment system implemented in Lochgilthead in May 2017 has led to positive benefits for patients using the service. One hundred per cent of the demand for medical support is met each day.

'Many inquiries do not require a face-to-face appointment with a GP and many issues can be resolved quickly over the phone saving the patient time, potential

travel cost and lost working hours. This system allows the GP team to be more efficient and effective with their time.

'A GP will be on site each and every day of the week in Inveraray with face-to-face appointments available in Furnace on Mondays and Thursdays. The practice is making every effort to secure locum assistance as a matter of priority.'

Convener of Furnace Community Council Lynda Syed said: 'While, on the whole, people are sympathetic to 'the situation the practice finds itself facing, there is frustration and anger that Furnace surgery is being reduced to having a GP for only two days each week while Inveraray will still have five days.

'With the lack of public transport and an ageing population, many of whom don't drive, it will likely lead to elderly and sick people facing hours of hanging around in the cold and we will continue to make the case for a third day in Furnace.

'With the reduction in available hours in Furnace and the telephone system being introduced, it is a huge change which has come about very quickly and which will take some getting used to along with the inevitable teething problems.

'I hope that if problems do arise, both the practice and residents will continue to communicate effectively and discuss possible solutions in an open-minded way.

'We are looking forward to welcoming a new GP to Furnace in November and wish those who are currently off sick a speedy and full recovery.'