**Issue**

A patient requested an appointment with a different doctor from their allocated one.

The receptionist said that was not possible, that the practice policy was that patients should see their own doctors

I raised the issue with the Practice Manager on the patient’s behalf. The Practice Manager confirmed that this was practice policy and said that it was better for continuity of care.

**Questions**

1. If a patient wants to change doctors how can they choose one if the practice will not allow them to see another doctor?
2. If a patient wants to see a doctor for a particular problem that another doctor specialises in how can they do this if the practice policy is to only let them see their allocated doctor? And what is the purpose of mentioning doctors special interests in the practice information if that information cannot be acted upon by the patient?
3. Patients have to see other doctors in emergencies / if their own doctor is unavailable / on holiday. This does not prevent continuity of care so the situation clearly can be managed. Why can’t the same mechanisms be used when a patient requests to see a different doctor?
4. This is not the approach taken by Old Schoolhouse – how will the two practices manage different approaches to this and other things when they are on the same site?
5. This is not the approach that is stipulated in the NHS Constitution so why do it differently?