

PATIENT NOTICE

With effect from Monday 1st July appointments with the GPs for same-day appointments can only be booked by phone. The phone lines for booking appointments will still open from 8:30am.

This means that appointments will no longer be available to patients queuing up at the reception desk at 8:30am.

This is to ensure that requests for appointments are dealt with fairly and to help us ensure that our limited resources are allocated appropriately to those with the greatest clinical need on any given day.

Please read the message from the Partners below which explains more about why we have made this change and what we are doing to improve access to services at the Practice

We are working very hard to change the way that we deal with the ever-increasing demand for GP appointments which is growing faster than the resources we have available to meet it.

We want those people with an evident clinical need at the time they contact us to be seen quickly but we also want patients whose need is less immediate to have easy stress-free access to our services at an appropriate time.

It is not possible to allocate resources appropriately without carrying out some form of 'triage' to establish the correct level of prioritisation and to determine the type of clinician who is best placed to help each patient. Whilst triaging is not always popular with patients it is absolutely necessary and, in fact, is now almost universal across GP surgeries.

In the last few weeks we have taken the difficult decisions to temporarily suspend the registration of new patients and to ask a significant number of patients who live outside our practice boundary to register with a new practice nearer their home. These decisions were taken to safeguard the provision of a safe and sustainable service to our existing patients now and into the future. For this reason we ask, respectfully, for the support of all our patients in providing information to our reception team when they call to book an appointment. All information provided is, of course, treated in complete confidence.

Introducing a triage process means that each request for an appointment takes a little longer to deal with and initially this is likely to lengthen the waiting time during the 8:30 – 9.00am period.

We know that this is very frustrating for patients and in some cases causes anxiety that contributes to the feelings which have led them to seek medical advice in the first place.

Please bear with us while we work on measures which will enable patients to avoid having to call at all during the 8.30 -9.00 am peak time and still get access to appointments.

In the meantime please remember that however daunting the call-queue position may seem to you, our receptionists will get to you as soon as they can.

It is worth re-stating why we are asking patients requiring an appointment on the day to contact us by phone only . This has a number of advantages for our patients

- it enables us to deal with phone calls in the strict order that they are connected which is fairer for all patients.
- we can use our phone system messages to inform patients clearly and consistently about alternative means of accessing services before they are connected
- we can protect the confidentiality of each patient’s personal information during the triage process in a way that we cannot do when they are standing at the desk in a crowded reception area.
- it removes the sense of urgency which is compelling patients to arrive earlier and earlier in order to book an appointment at the desk. This has become difficult to manage and contributes to a feeling of unfairness for patients who are not able to come to the surgery and queue at that time of day.

On the same day as we introduce this measure, we are also introducing **E-Consult** to the practice. We encourage all our patients to try it for non-urgent clinical needs and admin type queries such as repeat sick notes or test results.



E-Consult is a system that supports on-line consultations and is one of the most significant changes to the way that patients can interact with their GP surgery for many years. As the promotional materials shown above indicate, e-consult is very much about convenience for patients and ease of access to clinical services. It isn’t appropriate in all circumstances but it provides a patient with the choice to go ‘digital first’ which is NHS England’s stated strategy for primary care in the future.

The system has some sophisticated technology built-in to identify ‘red-flags’ and direct patients with non-routine matters to the correct service.

You can find out more about e-Consult by scanning the QR codes above, by visiting our website or via the promotional materials in our waiting rooms.