

Access to a GP Appointment

Since we changed our appointment system in August 2010, some of you have raised concerns about the new process and the role of our receptionists, in particular. This leaflet aims to try and address those concerns and reassure you about how this new process is more effectively meeting your needs.



All our receptionists are *medical* receptionists and have been trained accordingly by our doctors. They have significant experience in primary care and all are signed up to our confidentiality and information governance procedures. A key part of their role is to signpost patients to the most effective way of getting their issue addressed.

Many patients are unaware that they can often get advice from the GP (or a simple medication review) over the phone or that the reception team may be able to sort a report or form for them without them needing to see a doctor. Equally, many patients think they must see a GP to have their blood pressure taken or to discuss their diabetes or asthma (etc) or to quit smoking and actually our nursing team is often better placed to attend to these needs.

In short, there are many patient issues that can be sorted *without* the need for a GP appointment and this is what the receptionist is trained to sort for you. But, in order to effectively signpost you to the most effective way of meeting your requirement, they may need to ask you for a brief indication of your condition/symptoms.



We recognise that not everyone wants to share their symptoms – however briefly – with a medical receptionist. If that's how YOU feel, don't worry. If you are requesting an urgent, same day appointment, the receptionist can still pass your details on to the duty doctor for the day.

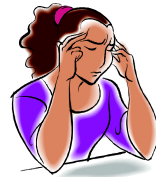
The duty doctor will assess your request to be seen along with the other urgent requests received that day and prioritise accordingly. On busy days, the duty doctor may call you to conduct a brief telephone triage before deciding how best to address your need.



Like many busy GP practices today, we manage the GP workload by splitting the demand for appointments into 3 main categories:



(i) Emergency:- which means that the symptoms are life threatening. GP Practices do not deal with emergency cases and the receptionist will advise you to dial 999



(ii) Urgent:- which is for patients who have a condition/symptoms that is/are likely to worsen if not treated the same day and/or their symptoms prevent them from functioning normally



(iii) Routine:- which covers any other need to see a GP. All our routine GP appointments can now be booked up to 2 weeks in advance (up to 6 weeks for web bookings)



We hope you have found this information leaflet helpful and reassuring. Please let us know your views by either emailing us at:

patient.comments@gp-N81066.nhs.uk
or by completing a patient comment form, available at Reception.