

ROUTINE REQUESTS

In July 2017 we changed the way patients accessed routine GP appointments. The change was made to try and address the long waits we had for patients to be seen; at times this was between four and six weeks. We have tried many strategies to try and address this problem.

One of the main issues was to ensure that doctors were able to book their patients in for follow up appointments easily. This new system allows our clinicians and receptionists to book patients in for an appointment at an appropriate interval to monitor their condition, or to follow up on investigations, hospital results etc.

For patients who wish to make a routine appointment which has not been instructed by a GP, the following system is in place:

Patients who wish to see a doctor for a routine problem should telephone in the week that they wish to be seen. We will try to put patients in with the GP of their choice but this may not always be possible. These appointments can also be viewed on-line. Appointments will not be available more than 5 days ahead.

In the event that the appointments are fully booked, patients are invited to call back another day, or if they need more immediate help, a member of our Triage team will telephone to give advice and/or help find an appropriate appointment.

Patients who have been asked to make a follow up appointment by a doctor can be booked up to four weeks ahead via the Reception Team.

To help the system work efficiently and to ensure we have as many available routine slots as possible, please call to cancel any appointments you no longer need to keep.

The Nurse appointment system is not affected by this system.

STEYNING MEDICAL PRACTICE

APPOINTMENT SYSTEM – May 2018

URGENT/SAME DAY REQUESTS

Back in October 2016, we made changes to the way that patients access Urgent/Same Day medical treatment.

Our aim is to ensure that patients get the best possible advice and/or see the best clinician for their particular problem.

Why Did We Change The System?

The Triage System is used by many GP surgeries across the country. It is a system which ensures the patient is seen by the most appropriate member of the clinical team in the fastest possible way. At first contact, patients are asked for an indication of the problem. Using this information, the duty team can prioritise the service, ensuring those who need more urgent assistance are seen as quickly as possible. The team may also arrange preliminary investigations, such as an ECG or blood test, before a patient sees a GP, thereby obtaining a diagnosis quickly so that treatment can be delivered more efficiently. Some patients may avoid the need to visit the surgery altogether, since 40% of patient contacts can be dealt with by telephone, offering self-care advice or over the counter medications available from the local pharmacist. This, in turn, frees up appointments for patients who need to come in to the surgery to be seen by a clinician for an examination and investigations.

Our duty team are highly skilled, qualified clinicians who work with our GP's to provide a safe and efficient service.

How to access the Duty Team

1. Patient telephones to request an urgent/same day appointment:

To ensure that patients are reaching the right person and given the best advice for their particular condition, patients will be asked to give an indication of their problem.

The reception team will then put the patient onto a Telephone Triage List which will be viewed by the Duty Team.

2. Triage by the Duty Team

A member of the Duty Team will look at the telephone list and use the information gathered by the reception team to prioritise their work.

Patients with more urgent problems, will receive a call back very quickly. The Duty Team may advise Reception to bring a patient in to an appointment to see a Clinician and will give them specific instructions on who a patient should see. The Duty Team may wish to obtain further information or do a telephone assessment first, and will therefore make the call themselves. It is therefore important that patients give accurate information so that the system can work efficiently.

Patients should ensure they are near to the telephone number which they have given (either home or mobile) so the duty team can make contact.

If a patient is unable to take a telephone call by the Duty Team at certain times during the day due to work commitments, then we will endeavour to ask our Duty Team to call back at a more convenient time.

If a patient does not wish to disclose their symptoms to the receptionist, then the patient will be put straight onto the Triage Telephone List and they will be telephoned in turn by the Duty Team.

Patients with life threatening illnesses will receive immediate advice and may be advised to contact 999.

3. Call Back with Advice and Treatment

When the Duty Team call, they will take a thorough history of the patient's current condition and then give the most appropriate advice depending upon their symptoms and taking into account the patient's past medical history. The patient may receive telephone advice or be invited in to be seen by one of the Duty Team.

The Duty Team will be working together throughout the day. Should a patient be booked with one member of the team, but after being seen in clinic need more specialist advice, then this will be arranged while the patient is on site.

To help our Duty Team prioritise their workload it would be helpful if patients could call before 11.00 am if they wish to be seen on the Same day for Urgent/Immediate medical treatment or advice.

Home Visit Requests

Patients who are housebound, or who are seriously unwell and are unable to attend the surgery should, where possible, telephone to request a home visit before 10.00 am. This will enable our Duty Team to call the patient back to assess the urgency of the visit and arrange a visit as appropriate by either our Paramedic Practitioner or by one of the available Doctors. (see our separate Home Visit Policy for further information)