

THE APPOINTMENT SYSTEM EXPLAINED

Our appointment system is split such that approximately 50% of our GP availability is bookable up to six weeks in advance (this is important for patients who have a long-term condition and/or need to see their GP regularly) with the other 50% being allocated to the same appointment system.

SINCE THE MERGER WE STILL OFFER PRE-BOOKABLE APPOINTMENTS & PATIENTS CAN STILL REQUEST TO SEE THEIR PREFERRED GP.

The key points to this system are as follows:

- Patients requesting an urgent appointment or advice will be put on the Triage List.
- The Triage team of GPs and Nurse Practitioners will contact each patient and discuss the issue to determine a course of action.
- If the issue cannot be dealt with on the phone, an appointment with a GP, Nurse Practitioner or Practice Nurse will be made, usually for the same day.
- At this point patients can request to be seen by a specific GP or Nurse Practitioner.
- If patient demand is excessive, only Emergency Issues will be placed on the Triage List. This is essential in order to manage patient demand and ensure safe and effective clinical care.

The Patient Services team will not be able to give a specific time though if the patient has called in the morning a Triage Clinician will phone back before 1pm and if the call has been made to the Practice in the afternoon there will be a call back 6pm. The Triage team will continuously monitor the list and call back patients in order of clinical priority. If the patient has not had a returned call, please call in again and a member of the Patient Services team will investigate further.

If a patient has restrictions on when they can be called the Patient Services Adviser can annotate the appointment with “phone before” or “phone after” a specific time, however this is not a guarantee that it will be possible.

Calls Not Answered

If a patient fails to answer their phones on 2 separate occasions they will not be called again unless they phone in and ask to be put back on the list. The GP cannot leave a message on answer machines unless they consider it appropriate to do so. If you have not had a call back within four hours, please contact the surgery.

Advanced Nurse Practitioner

If the problem falls within the remit of a Nurse Practitioner, either the Patient Services Adviser or a member of the Triage team will offer the patient a face-to-face appointment with either of them. Our Nurse Practitioners are fully trained and capable of managing many medical issues.

Third Party Queries, Including Relatives, Friends & Carers

A third-party friend or relative may book a triage appointment for someone else, but Practice Staff will not be able to divulge any medical information to the third party unless specific consent has been given by the patient to allow them access to their medical information. Parents will have access to their children's medical records unless the child has specifically asked for them not to and a GP has agreed the child is competent to make that decision.

Withheld Number

For Confidentiality reasons our phone number is always withheld so if your phone does not accept calls from withheld numbers please provide an alternative that does.

Home Visits

If you wish to request a home visit, please try and contact the Surgery before 11 am on that day. Home visit requests after this time may not be possible due to pre-existing patient demands. The doctors are required to manage their clinical workload efficiently in order to benefit the maximum number of patients.

On rare occasions the demand for home visits may exceed capacity. In these instances, vulnerable patients such as cancer sufferers or those in nursing homes will be prioritised. Patients will be contacted should this apply to them.

When Demand Exceeds Capacity

The same day appointment system seeks to match the daily patient demand with practice capacity, whether it is a practice nurse, nurse practitioner or doctor. There will be occasions, (particularly over the winter months), when patient demand exceeds practice capacity. The doctors have a responsibility to ensure safe and effective clinical care at all times. On these rare occasion's patients may be signposted to suitable alternative providers of primary care services, such as the minor injuries unit or a pharmacy.

ON LINE SERVICES ALLOW THE PATIENT TO CONTACT THE PRACTICE FROM HOME. THE GROVE MEDICAL CENTRE USES AN E-CONSULT SYSTEM?

Get in touch with your GP from home or work, day or night without the hassle of waiting for an appointment or phone call. You may not even need to come in for an appointment. If you need advice, an update on a hospital appointment or general enquiry this may be the most appropriate form of communication. There is lots of self-help information on how to treat hundreds of conditions or you can consult with a GP online.

1. Visit the practice website www.thegrovedcentre.co.uk and click on “consult our doctors online”, make your choice of how you wish to get help and follow the simple on-screen questions. Your GP only gets sent information about what you’ve searched for if you choose to send it to them and require a response from them.
2. If you have chosen to consult with your GP, the practice will contact you by the end of the next working day with a response. If you choose a specific GP to respond, then this may take longer if that GP is unavailable. In this instance another GP will contact you. PLEASE NOTE that this service is not for any urgent needs.

If you would like some advice on a medical condition initially, please use our E-Consult service on our website to ‘consult our doctors online’. www.thegrovedcentre.co.uk or you can ask for a telephone consultation. If the GP feels they need to see you to discuss your issue, then you will be invited in.

The main telephone numbers are:

01935 810900 / 01935 813438

You can book an appointment by:

- Calling the practice to speak to a Patient Services Adviser between 08:00 and 18:30 Monday to Friday.
- Online booking is available for routine appointments with your GP using the new NHSApp or your current online login. If you don’t have a login or have forgotten your login details, then please speak to the patient services team.
- Using the E-Consult service for advice, administration queries or to have an online conversation with your GP.

Dear Patients

May we take this opportunity to thank you for supporting us since the merge in July of this year. We appreciate that there has been considerable disruption to patients and thank you for your patience and understanding. We still have the same fantastic clinical team but as you will have noticed there have been some changes. The staff here have worked tirelessly to try and keep the disruption to a minimum ensuring patients best interests are paramount.

We are pleased to announce that following patient feedback the appointment system has been amended from this month to increase the number of pre bookable appointments. The triage system was working very well for urgent care, but we appreciate that access to routine appointments could have been improved. We have also employed more Patient Service Advisers to work in the hub. This should improve waiting times on the phone and allow for greater interaction with patients. In addition, staff have been recruited into the dispensary team.

The new nursing suite has been completed and hopefully you will agree that they are lovely rooms. The team have worked hard to get them all up and working. We are also pleased to announce that work will start on the 9th December on the new front porch. The brand-new entrance to the building will provide greater accessibility for all patients to the surgery with a clear hatched area for either reception or dispensary. The two waiting rooms will remain but there will be one booking in area so signposting to the correct waiting area will become easier. We envisage the building work to take two to three months and ask you to bear with us while we complete this.

We are continually looking to make improvements here at The Grove Medical Centre. We are very sorry for any inconvenience caused to patients whilst we continue to renovate and update facilities. Thank you again for your patience and may we take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and all best wishes for a happy and healthy 2020.

If you would like to make a complaint or compliment regarding the service, you have received please do not hesitate to contact us. We value all feedback received from patients good and bad in order to improve our services.

If our patient services team are unable to help, please ask to speak to Mrs Debbie Ryalls, Patient Services Manager or Mrs Alex Kimber, Managing Partner. Should you wish to write to us, our address is The Grove Medical Centre, Wootton Grove, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 4DL. You can find our full complaints policy and process on our website & leaflets in the waiting room, including how to get support for your complaint.