

# Patient Services - How do we work?

## Frequently Asked Questions



### What is your appointment system?

Our appointment system is split such that approximately 50% of our GP availability is bookable up to 3 months in advance (useful for patients who have a long-term condition and/or need to see their GP regularly) with the other 50% being available for patients that need to have their needs met on the same day.

### What is changing from the current system on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019?

You will still be able to book an appointment to see a GP or nurse of your choice for routine appointments as you do now.

For patients who are asking to be seen on the same day, we are introducing what is known as **telephone triage**. This is where during your first call, you are asked by the Patient Services Adviser for some details of your problem to enable them to direct you to the most appropriate GP or Advanced Nurse Practitioner. This information will then be passed to the duty team and your call returned as soon as possible. If the GP or Nurse is able to deal with your needs over the phone then they will, or if they feel they need to see you then you will be invited in to see the most appropriate member of the team.

We have also added the ability to consult with your GP online for non-urgent matters using the E-Consult service on our website [www.thegrovemedcentre.co.uk](http://www.thegrovemedcentre.co.uk) . (see below for more details).

### Will I have to ring a different telephone number?

No, the existing numbers for Bute House Surgery and Newland Medical Practice will still be fully operational. You can ring either number. You will then have 3 options to speak to patient services, dispensary or our medical secretaries.

The main telephone numbers are:

**01935 810900 / 01935 813438**

### How can I book an appointment?

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 (available from July) 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.

## **What is your E-Consult System?**

Get in touch with your GP from home, work or play, 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, we have 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.thegrovemedcentre.co.uk](http://www.thegrovemedcentre.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 available, else another GP will contact you. This service is not for any urgent needs.

## **How do I cancel an appointment?**

We appreciate that sometimes that your personal situation may change and you’re unable to attend your appointment, please let us know as soon as possible so we can offer it to another person. Having someone not turn up is frustrating for the clinician and for other patients who could have been seen. Help us to help you, we will be happy to offer you an alternative date and time.

You can cancel an appointment by:-

- Phoning and speaking to a member of the patient services team (option 1)
- replying CANCEL to the text message confirmation you received on your mobile.
- Through your personal login for the online services.

## **Why have you changed the name of Receptionist to Patient Services Adviser?**

Our non-clinical team performs many roles including making appointments and handling enquires from patients but also within their remit is to support the administration function of the practice. This year we have developed their skills in supporting patients by training them in providing care navigation services to patients. They are there to help you, the patient, steer your way through an increasingly complex NHS system and to support the GPs by taking some of the administrative burden traditionally that the GP would have carried out. As such they are more highly skilled than a traditional receptionist and no longer just provide the traditional appointment booking services.

In order to support the GPs and the patients, they do need to know some details of your query if you call and they have access to your medical record in order to carry out their job.

## **How do you ensure my information remains confidential?**

We take confidentiality extremely seriously and have a suite of policies and protocols in place.

The entire practice team, clinical and non-clinical, is bound by confidentiality and we have strict codes of conduct to ensure your private information is not shared inappropriately. We have protected systems in place to ensure access is only ever made of your record by those who need to know it and our clinical IT system has

different levels of access dependent on job role. We also have regular audits and checks in place to ensure no breaches.

All members of staff are very aware that breaching any of these confidentiality protocols could lead to disciplinary proceedings or even instant dismissal.

## **Patient Frequently Asked Questions - How do we handle them?**



### **I would like to make an appointment to see a GP...**

The patient services adviser will ask a little bit more detail about your issue in order to ensure your query is put to the right member of the clinical team and help us to manage and plan our workload.

If your need is not urgent for today, the patient service adviser will book you an appointment with the GP of your choice (subject to availability) up to 3 months in advance. Remember if you have more than one issue to discuss then please ask for a double appointment.

If your need is urgent for today, in most cases, you will then be placed on a telephone triage call list and be called back by a member of the duty clinical team within the next few hours to discuss your needs. If the GP or Advanced Nurse Practitioner that calls you back feels you need to be seen, then they will offer you an appointment with the member of the team best suited to your needs. They may be able to help you over the phone, saving you an unnecessary journey and allowing someone else to have that face to face appointment. Please note that for issues that need to be dealt with on the same day, we will not always be able to offer you a specific GP of your choosing.

Please inform the adviser if you are unable to take a return call at certain times or if wish to be contacted back in another way.

### **I would like a telephone consultation today...**

The patient services adviser will ask a little bit more detail about your issue in order to ensure your query is put to the right member of the clinical team. With the exception of certain conditions, you will then be placed on a telephone call list and be called back by a member of the duty clinical team within the next few hours depending on the urgency, to discuss your needs.

### **I would like to book an appointment with the nurse...**

The Patient Services Adviser will ask you the reason to see the nurse. This information enables them to book the right amount of time to meet your needs and allows the nurse to plan what equipment or supplies she needs for your appointment.

### **I would like some advice on a medical condition...**

Initially please use our E-Consult service on our website to 'consult our doctors online'. [www.thegrovemedcentre.co.uk](http://www.thegrovemedcentre.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.

### **I can't get to the surgery as I'm too ill and would like a home visit...**

The Patient Services Adviser will ask the nature of the problem. You are likely to receive a phone call prior to the visit by a GP or Advanced Nurse Practitioner to ensure they understand the details of your needs. The visit will most likely take place early afternoon unless advised otherwise.

Please try to call before 10.30am if you need a visit that day unless it is an urgent need. This allows us to plan our workload.

### **I need to change my contact details...**

You can change your details by:

- Using your personal login to access your online account.
- Coming to the surgery and completing a short form at the reception desk.
- Writing to us.

If you need to change your recorded name then we will need to see your marriage or deed poll certificate. We are able to record a 'known as' name should you wish to be called a name other than your official name.

### **I have a query regarding my medication or wish to order a prescription over the telephone...**

Please select Option 2 when you call to speak to dispensary. All of our dispensers are trained to handle most requests. If they are unable to answer your query straight away, they will call you back once they have spoken to the GP or Nurse. Our prescriptions line is open 08:30 - 12:00 Monday - Friday.

### **I have a query regarding my referral to the hospital or other area of the NHS...**

Please select Option 3 to speak to a member of our secretarial team who are experts in navigating the NHS systems. They will be able to advise if you need to contact the hospital directly yourself.

### **I would like to make a complaint or compliment regarding the service I have received...**

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 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, including how to get support for your complaint.

### **I would like to get a fit note (sick note) from my GP...**

The easiest and quickest way to get a fit note (sick note) is to use our E-Consult service. This will give the GP an understanding of the nature of your problem. The GP may contact you before issuing the certificate if they need to see you or require more details. Fit notes can be backdated but a new certificate cannot be issued until the last one has run out. The first 7 days of your illness, you should self-certify - please ask your employer for their process.

### **I would like to get the results from my recent tests...**

If you have online access to your medical record then you will also be able to see the results of any tests if we have had them back from the laboratory. Please ask the patient services adviser for more details.

Alternatively, we are able to email your results or print them for you to collect. Sorry, we are not able to post your results to you. Please avoid calling during our busy morning period if possible.

### **I have a form that needs a GP signature...**

Please come to the surgery and speak to a member of the patient services team. Please be aware that in nearly all circumstances this is not an NHS service and as such there will be a charge. (Charges are displayed on our website and in the waiting room).

We are sorry due to workload we are not able to do these whilst you wait and depending on the complexity of the form, and the availability of the GP we aim to turn these around within one working week. For certain forms, there is a requirement of the GP to examine you or review your medical record in detail before they can sign.

### **I'm going abroad and need some travel advice and/or vaccinations...**

Please go onto our website to complete our travel form online or collect a form from the front desk. These get passed to the nurse who will review the information provided against your medical record and we'll contact you to discuss your needs including booking any consultations and vaccinations required. Most travel vaccinations and medication (such as malaria tablets) are not provided on the NHS and as such they are chargeable. You will be advised of any costs prior to any consultations. The travel vaccination costs are available on our website.

Remember certain regions of the world need you to complete a course of vaccinations prior to entry so do make sure you contact us in plenty of time (ie. at least 6 weeks) prior to your travels if possible. If we're unable to assist you may be advised to visit a specialist travel clinic.

We are also a Yellow Fever centre and as such are able to provide yellow fever vaccinations to patients who are not registered with us.