



# **OUR APPOINTMENT SYSTEM**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **“I need to see a GP today. Why can't I book to see my regular (registered) GP?”**

Where a patient requests to see a GP urgently, it is usually for a problem that has started recently and needs to be dealt with soon (within 48 hours). As it is not related to an ongoing matter, requiring continuity of care, we will ensure that the patient can see or speak to a GP but not necessarily the GP of their choice.

Where patients request to see a GP for an ongoing matter e.g. for a long term condition, we ask that you plan ahead and book to see your registered (or regular) GP.

### **“How far ahead can I book to see my registered (regular) GP?”**

Appointments are available to book four weeks ahead. We do not map more than four weeks ahead to minimise the risk of having to cancel appointments due to GP annual leave/study leave. We monitor availability and will try and ensure there are appointments available within a “reasonable” time (few days to one working week). So, if you need to book ahead it's best to follow these rules:

- For appointments up to one month ahead, book now.
- For appointments over a month, book about 2 weeks before the due date (you will get a better selection of days/ times to suit you if you book well in advance)

### **“What if I work? It's very difficult to get in to see a GP during the day”**

We have a few appointments available outside of our core working hours (6.30pm to 7.00pm and on Saturdays). Please see our website for details. We ask that you do not request these appointments unless you are having difficulty in attending during the working day.

## **“Why is it so difficult to get through on the phone?”**

Most patients who are unwell and need to see a GP urgently phone before between 8:30am and 10.30am. Our phones can be incredibly busy during this time. We ask that, for advance booking or other non-urgent matters such as prescription enquiries and messages to GPs, you call after 10.30am. This will free our appointment lines during the early morning rush!

When you call, you will hear a message confirming that you are through to the surgery. You will hear a “ringing” tone, but please do not think that the team are ignoring your call—you are being held in a queue until a line becomes free. If you hear an “engaged” tone, please call back; it means that over 16 calls are being processed at that particular time.

Please be reassured that, if you have an urgent problem which needs to be dealt with within 48 hours, we will assist you to access a GP.

You can also book routine appointments and order repeat prescriptions online – please ask at reception for details.

## **“I’ve been offered an appointment with a Nurse Practitioner. What is the difference between a Nurse Practitioner and a GP?”**

Our nurse practitioners are highly specialised qualified nurses who are able to diagnose and prescribe for a wide range of medical conditions. If you have an appointment with a Nurse Practitioner and they need to seek a doctor’s advice, they will liaise with a GP during your consultation.

## **WE VALUE YOUR FEEDBACK**

We monitor access very closely. If you would like to offer constructive feedback, please do so via the suggestions form.