**Change to how we manage requests for an appointment on the day**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Why is Wealden Ridge Medical Partnership making this change?** A review of our appointment data showed us that many of the telephone calls queuing at 8am to request an appointment on the day were **not** for urgent conditions/illnesses.

Many of the requests for an appointment were for routine issues that didn’t need to be seen on the day and could have been booked for an appointment in the future. Thus freeing up an appointment on the day for patients with more urgent issues/illnesses.

By reviewing our appointment system and creating additional appointments available to be booked ahead we anticipate that the 8am telephone calls will, in time, be for urgent illnesses/issues.

This change is also in line with the Government directive to reduce/eliminate the “8am scramble for an appointment”

**How do I make an appointment for an urgent illness/condition on the day?** If you feel you need to see a doctor on the day, you should telephone the practice as normal.

The receptionist will ask whether your request for an appointment is for an urgent issue.

If it is urgent, a link will be sent to your mobile phone.

Once you receive the link and complete the request, your request will be forwarded electronically to the duty doctor for triage.

Following triage by the duty doctor you will either be offered an appointment on the day or be asked to book an appointment ahead depending on the urgency of the illness/issue.

**Can I make an appointment ahead for a non urgent issue?** Yes you can, we would ask if your request is routine and not urgent for on the day appointment that you telephone or call in to reception after 10am to make an appointment.

We offer the following appointments to book ahead:

* 48 hours ahead
* 1 week ahead
* 2 weeks ahead
* Up to 6 weeks ahead

Appointments are also available to book on-line via the **NHS App**\* or **Patient Access**\*\*

Please note there may be a reduction of appointments available on line during the following times:

* For the first two weeks of the new change
* Around public bank holidays

\*The **NHS App** can be downloaded from your usual app store

\*\***Patient Access** is granted via reception with proof of ID

**I do not have access to a mobile phone and cannot receive a text link, how do I make an appointment on the day for an urgent illness/condition?** We will have a limited number of appointments available for booking via reception for those patients without a mobile phone.

Or if you prefer our reception team can complete the on-line form on your behalf. If you present at reception for this option, you may be asked to go home and a member of the team will telephone you on a landline to go through the on-line form, this is for reasons of confidentiality.

**I am not confident completing on-line forms, how can you help me with this?** Our reception team can complete the on-line form on your behalf. If you present at reception for this option, you may be asked to go home and a member of the team will telephone you on a landline to go through the on-line form, this is for reasons of confidentiality.

**I prefer to make an appointment at the reception desk, will I still be able to do this?** Yes, we will have a limited number of appointments available for booking via reception for those patients without a mobile phone.

You can also present at reception if you have a mobile phone and wish to book an on the day appointment for an urgent illness/condition, a link will be sent to your phone as described above.

**Does this change affect appointments with all healthcare professionals at the practice?** No this change just affects requests for a GP appointment.

**What are the 7 conditions that the local pharmacist can treat and prescribe for?** The NHS Pharmacy First scheme launched by the government and NHS England on January 31, 2024, allows community pharmacists to treat seven common conditions without a GP appointment or prescription, these being:

* + Sore throat
  + Earache
  + Sinusitis
  + Infected insect bites
  + Impetigo (a bacterial skin infection)
  + Shingles
  + Uncomplicated urinary tract infections in women

.