

Changes to our Appointment system – starting 5 July 2023

We are making a number of changes to our appointment system to make it easier for you to request a routine appointment with your doctor.

The changes will remove the need for you to contact us more than once to request your appointment and you will also be able to submit your request through our online portal.

The changes will take effect from **5 July 2023** but there will be some changes before this.

Why are we making these changes?

We are making the changes so that you only need to contact us once to request a routine appointment with your doctor. You will be able to request your appointment through our online portal or by telephoning the practice.

All requests will be processed in the same way so that we can pick up more urgent requests – or those that may need to be processed through our Same Day/Duty Team – and ensure that access is fair and equitable.

When you submit your request, we will ask you which doctor you would like to see and any times or days when you would not be available for an appointment. Where possible, we will arrange your appointment with the doctor you request, or with the doctor who you have previously seen about that problem as we recognise that continuity of care is important.

If your request is more appropriate for a different member of our team (for example, for the physiotherapist), we will arrange your appointment with them. This is to help ensure that we make the best use of the appointments that are available.

What changes are we are making?

We are expanding our online portal to include requests for a routine appointment with your doctor and a number of other functions including asking about your test results, checking progress or asking questions about your referral and letting us know if you need to cancel an appointment.

Our team will also be able to receive these requests by telephone, if you prefer.

The changes we are making should remove the need for you to contact us more than once to submit your request. All requests will be processed in date and priority order and we will contact you with the outcome of your request.

These changes will mean that the appointments that are available to book online through SystemOnline and the NHS App will also change. Routine GP appointments will no longer be available to book, but other new categories will become available (cervical smears, for example) to help maintain fair and equitable access.

In some circumstances, we may send you an appointment booking link so that you can book into a specific clinic or service.

To help accommodate the requests we receive, we may add your request to an appointment waiting list so that we can arrange your appointment for you as they are released.

Our online portal will remain open for longer. We are aiming to keep the portal open to receive requests until later each day (Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays), but there may be some times when we need to close it earlier.

How will the waiting list work?

If your appointment request is added to a waiting list we will let you know. The waiting list will be processed in date and priority order and we will contact you as soon as your appointment is arranged to let you know when it will be and who it is with.

If you have been on a waiting list for more than two weeks, we will update you and keep you updated until your appointment is arranged.

How will I be contacted about what you have arranged for me?

Your request will be triaged so that we can determine the most appropriate outcome for you. In the first instance, this may be advice on how best to manage or care for your condition rather than an appointment. But if things change or do not improve, we will ask you to contact us again so that we can do something different.

If we are arranging an appointment, we will contact you by text message. If you are not able to receive this information by text message, we will telephone you.

When will the changes take place?

Our new appointment system will start on **5 July 2023**. As routine appointments with the doctor are generally booked in advance, there will be a short period when we are not able to accept further requests as we move across to the new system. We are working to accommodate some of these requests in advance, but we may need to ask some patients to contact us on 5 July 2023 to request their appointment.

What if I no longer need the appointment I requested?

If you no longer need your appointment, you will be able to cancel it by telling us through our online portal, or by telephoning the practice. We will cancel your appointment and allocate it to another patient.

What other requests will I be able to submit through the online portal?

You will also be able to submit the following requests:-

- Request an appointment with the Nurse or Healthcare Assistant

- Arrange your annual review appointment for a long term condition
- Cancel an appointment
- Ask about your Test Results
- Ask about your referral or other admin queries
- Request Travel advice and vaccinations
- Submit a request to our Clinical Pharmacist
- Request a sick note (this option is already available)
- Request an Urgent Appointment (this option is already available)
- Sign up to the Dispensary Delivery Service (this option is already available)

What will happen next?

We will continue to monitor and review the changes to our appointment system over the next few months and may make some further changes and adjustments. Please share your feedback by completing the survey at the end of your online appointment request submission or by completing the Friends & Family Test survey on our website. Here's a link to where you can find it:-

<https://www.grovemedicalpractice-stives.nhs.uk/home/patient-feedback/friends-family-test/>