

PATCHES FEEDBACK AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Since the 1st of March the practice has dealt with nearly 5000 patches messages and requests and provided 4200 appointments across our whole team – the vast majority face to face

- **What If I don't have access to technology and need to see a GP** – you can ask a friend or family member to put on a request for you. We have paper copies of the triage questions in surgery that you can fill in and our staff will submit for you or our reception staff will help over the phone or in surgery to add your request to the system.
- **Why can we not access Patches out of hours** -we must place safeguards into the system to ensure that urgent queries are not added and then not actioned in a timely fashion. We are not obliged within our contract to provide out of hours access.
- **Why can we not simply ring up to book an appointment** – the old system meant that there were long queues on the phone line and that people who perhaps needed to be seen but could not get through would not get an appointment. Triage allows the patients who most need to be seen to be allocated an appointment. We now often still have on the day appointments available well into the afternoon whereas these had usually all gone by 9.30am. Some patients were coming in unnecessarily and often some simple advice was all that was needed. We can deal with more queries in a day through this system. The appointment allocation is on need and not simply a lottery.
- **What if I need a home visit** – Home visit requests are still taken over the phone and triaged as they always have been.
- **What if I need to see a nurse** – All nurse team appointments can be booked by reception and can be requested on Patches, in person and on the telephone.
- **How can I choose the GP I want to see** – If there is a particular person who you have been dealing with for a particular problem then please write the name in the message and it will be forwarded to them for their attention. We have just recently introduced GP review appointments to allow space for the GP's themselves to follow patients up.
- **Why do I get sent a link for an appointment and why does this not always allow me to book an appointment** – appointments are released throughout the week and so it is worth trying multiple times to see if different appointments are available. Unfortunately, some GPs do get booked up quicker.
- **Why can I sometimes not add my query and PATCHES states it is closed** – we have set limits of how many queries we can deal with in a day. This is for patient safety and to ensure that the triaging doctor has the time to properly assess your query and action it appropriately. If you get shown the message in the morning, then patches will reopen at 1pm. If you feel that your query is urgent then please ring the surgery and reception can override the limit.
- **Can I still use my NHS app for medications** – yes, we still link with the NHS app for prescription queries, and you should still be able to access your record in this way.

We fully understand that change is difficult, and we are constantly taking on board comments, criticisms, and compliments to improve the system. We review the appointments available on a weekly basis and constantly make changes as we see the need. We appreciate all the positive and constructive feedback we have received, and we would ask that patients give the system time.