

Doctor First: Our telephone appointment service

We have created a more efficient appointment system to ensure you receive the most appropriate care straight away.

Giving you faster access to your doctor

The new service is designed to help you get the appointment you need, when you need it. If you want advice about a health problem, you can now have an appointment by telephone and speak directly to your doctor by telephone on the day that you call.

You can use the telephone appointment service for urgent and non-urgent health problems.

Doctor First means you will speak to the person most qualified to assess your problem; rather than a receptionist.

This is how it will work:

Call us on the main surgery telephone number and ask to make an appointment with the doctor.

The receptionist will ask you for your name and your telephone number. If you need to speak to the doctor urgently, because it's an emergency, tell the receptionist straightaway.

The receptionist will ask you to say generally what your health problem is. You don't have to tell the receptionist if you don't want to. But if you can, it helps the doctor to decide whom to prioritise for a call back based on clinical need.

If you want to talk to a specific doctor, tell the receptionist. Wherever possible they will arrange it.

Your call will go straight through to the doctor if they are free. You can then talk to your doctor about your health problem in the same way you do if you come into the surgery for your appointment.

If your doctor thinks you need to come into the surgery to be seen, or if you would still like to come in, he or she will make an appointment for you.

When you call the surgery, if your doctor is busy he or she will call you back as soon as they can.

If you want us to call you between certain times then tell us and, where possible, we will arrange that.

Why is the surgery offering telephone appointments?

You have told us in surveys that sometimes you find it frustrating and difficult to get the appointment you need, when you need it.

By offering telephone appointments and giving advice this way we can make sure that everyone is able to speak to, or see, their doctor on the day that they call or on the day that they choose.

Many people don't need to come into the surgery to be seen at all; their problem can be dealt with by telephone. This gives your doctor more time to see those people that need appointments in the surgery. And, because your doctor is the one making the appointments, he or she can judge how much time you might need and give you a long or a short appointment. This helps appointments to run to time and means you're more likely to be seen on time.

We also know that when people make an appointment close to the date that they call, they are more likely to keep the appointment.

Your questions answered:

Question: Can I still have a same day assessment?

Answer: Yes. After speaking to one of the doctors over the telephone they will book you in to be seen the same day if agreed by both parties.

Question: Can I still have an appointment with the doctor I want to see?

Answer: Yes. After speaking to a doctor on the telephone, appointments can still be booked to see your preferred doctor when they are available.

Question: Can I speak to my preferred doctor?

Answer: Yes. If your call is not urgent, we can put your call onto the list for your preferred doctor on the day they are available.