

INFORMATION REGARDING OUR APPOINTMENT SYSTEM

Total Triage Coming September 2025

The way you will access your GP is changing from Monday 1st September 2025, as we adopt the NHS's Modern General Practice model.

TO PREPARE FOR THIS CHANGE, WE ARE CURRENTLY ASKING THAT ALL REQUESTS FOR A ROUTINE APPOINTMENT ARE SUBMITTED THROUGH OUR WEBSITE, USING THE ANIMA ONLINE FORM. UNTIL 1ST SEPTEMBER ON THE DAY REQUESTS FOR APPOINTMENTS CAN STILL BE MADE IN PERSON, OR ON THE TELEPHONE.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Modern General Practice

From 1st September all appointment requests and clinical queries will start with an online consultation form. This is known as total digital triage and is part of the Modern General Practice model supported by the NHS.

You will submit your request via our website (www.sandwichmedicalpractice.co.uk) If you are unable to use the internet, a member of our team can complete this for you, either in person at the surgery, or on the telephone.

A GP will review it and decide on the most appropriate care – be that a same day or less urgent appointment, phone call, or another service.

Why are we doing this?

We recognise that our current system is not working and we have a long wait for a routine appointment. This change ensures everyone gets a safer service as clinical requests will be screened promptly by a GP as they come through. It also allows a fairer service as appointments are allocated based on clinical need, not just who calls first, or who is first in the queue outside at 8am.

GPs may be able to deal with some queries as they come through without a formal appointment. They can also signpost some queries to other professionals better placed to manage them e.g. pharmacists, physiotherapists, social prescribers. It therefore frees up GP appointments for those who need them.

Data from practices adopting this model show a majority of patients and staff prefer it as it improves demand management and leads to higher patient satisfaction.

How do I request and appointment?

Go to our website www.sandwichmedicalpractice.co.uk and click on submit a request.

You can also use this form for medication queries, fit notes, administrative help e.g. referrals, letters. Please note that the NHS app is still the best place to order your repeat medication.

Initially the form will be available Monday to Friday from 7.30am to 10.30am and can be completed using a smartphone, tablet or computer.

Outside of these times, in our core hours (weekdays until 6.30pm) you will still be able to telephone the practice for urgent queries in the usual way.

What if I can't use the internet or need help?

Patients who cannot go online or need help can still:

- Phone the surgery – our team will fill out the online form on your behalf.
- Ask a friend or family member to complete it for you (with your consent)
- Walk in to the surgery, where a member of our team can help you with the process

We are committed to digital inclusion and no one will be left behind.

Will I still be able to see a doctor or nurse face to face?

Yes. If the clinical team decides a face-to-face appointment is needed, you will be offered one. The online form simply helps us decide the best first step. For same-day appointments, you will receive a call from the reception team to book this in. For those which are not same-day, you may be sent a self-book link to choose a date and time that suits you.

When will I get a response?

For clinical queries sent using the form between 7.30am and 10.30am, you will receive a response from the surgery the same day. We will let you know:

- What will happen next
- Who will contact you
- When to expect it

For urgent queries we will endeavour to respond to you as promptly as possible.

Can I still call at 8am for a same-day appointment?

No, from 1st September 2025 we won't be using the 8am phone queue for appointments, and receptionists will not be able to book you in an appointment directly. All requests – whether routine or urgent – should start via the online form or by calling us if you cannot do it online.

We would advise patients to use the online forms whenever possible, to allow the phone lines to be freed up for those patients who cannot use online methods.

Is it safe? What about urgent problems?

Yes, the system is safe and clinically led. Every request is reviewed by a GP, leading a trained triage team. If your problem is urgent, you'll be prioritised accordingly. **For life-threatening emergencies, you should still call 999**

What about home visits or community care?

These will be arranged based on clinical need, especially for housebound or vulnerable patients. Use the online form (or call us) to request help, as early in the day as possible.

Will I still be able to see my regular GP?

Yes. We recognise the value in seeing a regular clinician, particularly for routine appointments and complex clinical issues. In fact, the Modern General Practice model has been shown to improve provision of continuity of care. The online form allows you to mention a particular clinician you feel would be best placed to deal with your issue, and where possible, we will try to accommodate this as we currently do.

However, for urgent care requiring an appointment very soon, it may not be possible for you to see your regular GP if they are not available, and it may not

be safe for you to wait until they are available – the priority here will be providing urgent clinical assessment by a trained clinician, as soon as possible.

How will this help me as a patient?

You'll benefit from:

- Shorter waits
- More consistent access
- Quicker resolution of issues
- Fewer wasted appointments

It is care that is designed around you, rather than around queues or phone lines.

How can I discuss these changes further?

If you have further questions or queries, we would be happy to speak to you. Call into the practice and speak to one of our friendly team.