

INFORMATION REGARDING OUR APPOINTMENT SYSTEM

Total Triage starting September 2025

From Monday, 1st September 2025 the way you access your GP will be changing as we move to the NHS Modern General Practice model.

FROM THIS DATE ALL ROUTINE APPOINTMENT REQUESTS MUST BE MADE USING THE ANIMA ONLINE FORM WHICH CAN BE ACCESSED VIA OUR WEBSITE OR ON YOUR SMARTPHONE OR TABLET.

PLEASE NOTE THAT NURSE APPOINTMENTS CAN CONTINUE TO BE BOOKED AS NORMAL, EITHER IN PERSON OR ON THE TELEPHONE.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Modern General Practice

From 1st September all appointments and clinical queries will begin with an online consultation form. This process, called total digital triage, is part of the NHS supported Modern General Practice model.

You can submit your request through our website (www.sandwichmedicalpractice.co.uk) If you are unable to use the internet, our team can complete the form on your behalf, either over the phone or in person at the surgery.

A GP will then review your request and determine the most appropriate care. This may be a same day or routine appointment, a telephone call, or referral to another service.

Why are we making this change?

We know our current system isn't working well. Patients are waiting too long for routine appointments, and the process can feel unfair. By introducing this new approach, all clinical requests will be reviewed by a GP as they come in. This means:

safer care – urgent issues can be identified and prioritised straight away

fairer access – appointments are offered based on clinical need, not just who manages to call or queue first thing in the morning.

In many cases, GPs may be able to resolve queries without needing a full appointment. Sometimes, they may direct patients to another professional such as a pharmacist, physiotherapist or social prescriber- who is better placed to

help. This way, GP appointments are kept available for patients who need them most.

Evidence from practices already using this system shows that both patients and staff prefer it. It helps manage demand more effectively and leads to greater satisfaction with the service overall.

How do I request an appointment?

Go to our website www.sandwichmedicalpractice.co.uk and click on '**submit a request**'. You'll be guided through a series of questions tailored to your medical condition. For some conditions, the questionnaire may feel a little longer, but most of the answers are simple yes/no responses. This process helps your doctor gain a clear and accurate understanding of your symptoms, enabling them to decide on the most appropriate care. These are the same questions you would be asked in a face-to-face consultation.

You can also use this form for medication queries, fit notes, administrative requests such as referrals or letters. Please note that the NHS app remains the easiest way to order repeat prescriptions.

Requests can be submitted via smartphone, tablet or computer.

What hours will the service be available?

You can submit requests from 7.30 am Monday to Friday. The practice will be able to accept requests until capacity is reached. Once we are full, you will receive a message informing you of the next available time to submit a request.

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

If you are unable to go online or need assistance, you can still get support:

- Call the surgery – our team can complete the online form for you.
- Ask a friend or family member - with your consent they can submit for form on your behalf.
- Visit the surgery – a member of the team can help you complete the process in person.

We are committed to ensuring everyone can access our services - no one will be left behind.

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

Yes. If the clinical team determines that a face-to-face appointment is necessary, you will be offered one. The online form simply helps us identify the most appropriate first step.

Same Day Appointments – our reception team will call you to book a time.

Appointment for another day – You may receive a self-booking link to choose a date and time that works best for you.

When will I get a response?

For clinical queries submitted via the form from 7.30am, you will receive a response from the surgery on 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 respond as quickly as possible.

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

No. From 1st September 2025 we will no longer use the 8 am phone queue for appointments, and receptionists will not be able to book appointments directly.

All appointment requests – routine or urgent – should start via the online form, or by phone if you are unable to go online.

We encourage patients to use the online form whenever possible, so that phone lines remain available for those who cannot access services digitally.

Is it safe? What about urgent problems?

Yes. The system is clinically led and safe. Every request is reviewed by a GP, who leads a trained triage team. Urgent issues are prioritised to ensure you are seen promptly.

For life-threatening emergencies, you should still call 999.

What about home visits or community care?

Home visits and community care will be arranged according to clinical need, particularly for housebound or vulnerable patients. Please use the online form (or call us) to request assistance, ideally **as early in the day as possible**.

Will I still be able to see my regular GP?

Yes. We understand the importance of seeing a regular clinician, especially for routine appointments and complex health issues. The Modern General Practice model has been shown to improve continuity of care.

The online form allows you to indicate a preferred clinician and we will try to accommodate your request whenever possible.

However, for **urgent care** that requires a prompt appointment, it may not always be possible to see your regular GP if they are unavailable. In these cases, the priority is to ensure you receive a timely clinical assessment from a trained clinician.

How will this help me as a patient?

This new system offers:

- Shorter waiting times
- More consistent access to care
- Faster resolution of health issues
- Fewer wasted appointments

It's care designed around you, rather than around queues or phone lines.

How can I discuss these changes further?

If you have any questions, or would like further information, our team is happy to help. Visit the practice or speak to one of our friendly staff members.

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