



A NEW GP APPOINTMENT SYSTEM

We are moving to a new way of helping all our patients get seen more promptly.

This is a **telephone-first consultation system**. When you want an appointment with a clinician, either **call us on the day you want to be seen** (ideally, early), or book in advance online. You will be booked for a telephone assessment and an appropriate clinician will phone you back. If you need to be seen face-to-face after that consultation, the clinician will organise a convenient time for you.

To CONSULT WITH A GP: You call our admin team in the usual way **on the day you want to be seen** (ideally, first thing in the morning)

Or book in advance online!

If appropriate for the GP, You will be put on the GPs telephone appointment list. They will call you back to assess you.



If you still need a face-to-face appointment with your GP, they will book you in for a mutually convenient time.



FOR ANYTHING ELSE:

There are many services which are not changing and you will be offered a face-to-face appointment in the usual way, either in advance or on the day. Specifically:

- **Nurse** appointments
- Blood tests and other in-house **investigations**
- Long-term illness **scheduled monitoring** (such as your regular asthma review or diabetes review)
- **Minor illness** appointments with one of our emergency practitioners (nurse or paramedic)
- Antenatal appointments with your **midwife**
- **Postnatal appointments**, such as the '6-week check' with your GP

Don't forget! You have the option to **book online** in advance if this is more convenient. We use the ASK NHS app which you can download onto your phone or use directly from the website.
Please do NOT use email to ask for consultations or medical advice (use the above)

- ✓ *We hope to be able to deal with your problem the same day (especially if you call early)*
- ✓ *Don't let an appointment block out your day! Approximately four out of five GP consultations can be managed just as well on the phone*
- ✓ *Jump the queue! Book your telephone consultation in advance online*
- ✓ *Have a disability or other influence which prevents you from using the phone? Don't worry, we're here to help. Talk to us.*

FAQs

What are you changing the way you do things?

We've been listening to your feedback! And we need to respond to rising NHS pressures:

1. You want to be consulted the same day.
2. The waiting times for routine appointments are too long.
3. Whilst we are lucky to have a full and vibrant team in Berryfields, nationally GP numbers are falling whilst patient demand is increasing. We need to adopt a new strategy to keep up with this demand.

Why have you chosen to make initial appointments with your clinician on the phone rather than offering same-day face-to-face consultations?

This is a vital component that helps us meet the increasing demand. National and local research shows that telephone consultations take, on average, 8-minutes, whilst face-to-face consultations take 14-minutes. So, we can see more patients if we change the way we operate.

What are the benefits of this new system for me?

- You are more likely to get an appointment on the day (please call early, or book in advance online to maximise your chances)
- You can carry on about your daily activities, including work – you just need your phone on you.

Can you really diagnose my problems and help me over the telephone?

Absolutely we can. Almost all diagnoses are made on the basis of how people describe their symptoms. Examinations are sometimes needed, for example, when the clinician wants to confirm their impressions or assess severity of specific illnesses. Approximately 1 in 5 telephone consultations will end up with the GP asking to see the patient face-to-face to be examined.

What if I know my problem needs a face-to-face appointment?

You may be right! Approximately 1 in 5 telephone consultations end up this way. But please bear with us and accept the telephone consultation first. There is lots we can still do on the phone: for example, your GP may want to arrange some tests before seeing you. Alternatively, the telephone call first will allow you to negotiate a face-to-face consultation that is at a better time for you whilst at the same time allowing your GP to prioritise their daily schedule so that if you are the sickest, you can be seen earlier! Having the telephone assessment first helps us prioritise and moves things along efficiently. If a 'face to face appointment is necessary we may also be able to offer you a video consultation which will also reduce the need for you to come into the Surgery.

What if I want to be able to book appointments in advance so I can plan my time?

Don't worry, you can still do this! You can book consultations in advance online.

What is not changing?

The following will be booked in the usual way (by calling our reception staff):

- Nurse appointments (usually face-to-face)
- Blood tests and other in-house investigations.
- Long-term illness monitoring appointments (such as your regular asthma review or diabetes review – we will generally call you)
- Antenatal appointments with your midwife.
- Postnatal appointments, such as the '6-week check' with your GP
- If our consultations are fully-booked and your problem is a genuine emergency, the emergency doctor will still triage your problem and decide on the best way to treat you.

What if I have a disability or other restriction which prevents me from using the phone?

Don't worry, if there is a good reason why you can't use the phone, we will support you in accessing a face-to-face appointment in the usual way. We have a dedicated list of patients who we know will need a face-to-face appointment.

I still have questions!

We're here to listen and make things better for all our patients. You can always call us, talk to us in person, or email in to berryfieldsmedicalcentre@nhs.net.