



WOODLANDS & CLERKLANDS

GP PARTNERSHIP

Friday 12th September 2025

Dear Patient

As a Practice we are constantly striving to enhance our services in order to deliver the best care to all of our patients.

We have listened to patient feedback through your Patient Participation Group, our Friends and Family Surveys, as well as complaints.

We recognise that our current GP appointment system is not meeting your needs. Your feedback on area's that frustrate you are;

- the 8am rush to get an appointment, waiting on the phone in a queue, for ages
- that you can't pre-book an appointment
- that you can't book a F2F appointment
- that Telephone calls are good but its not practical for you to wait around all day not knowing when the call will be. When you miss the call you have to start the whole process again.

With the ever-growing demand within the NHS, we are continuously looking at ways we can make booking an appointment easier. As well as, where we can increase capacity.

To achieve this, and ensure patients are receiving the best possible care, we have opted to use the Rapid Health Smart Triage tool for our GP appointment system. This will allow us to maximise availability, enable patients to make appointments online and ensure patients are seeing the right clinician in the appropriate timeframe.

We must stress that no system is going have a magic wand to provide unlimited appointments. There may still be times when we are unable to provide an appointment with a GP or an appropriate skilled clinician. We may give you self-help advice or direct you to a local Pharmacy that can help with 7 frequent minor illnesses. As a Practice, we have significantly higher GP to patient ratios, compared to the National and Sussex average.

We are excited to announce our new GP appointment system, 'Smart Triage', will launch on Monday 06th October 2025 at 7am.



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What is Smart Triage?

A cutting-edge system that streamlines the way appointments are booked and managed. It will allow us to quickly assess your health needs and direct you to the most appropriate care pathway.

Key Benefits of Smart Triage

- **Faster Assessments:** With Smart Triage, patients can receive quicker assessments and guidance on the next steps in their care journey, whether it's an in-person visit, telephone consultation, or self-care advice. You will be given an appointment that is either; same day, next day, 5 days or within 2 weeks, based on your clinical assessment.
- **Your appointment, at your convenience:** The system has potential to allow patients to submit a medical request at any time 24/7, although for launch we will stick with 0730-1830hrs Monday to Friday. Once clinically assessed, you will have a choice of who you see, where, when, and whether it's a face to face or telephone appointment (if clinically appropriate).
- **Enhanced Patient Experience:** The triage process reduces wait times and unnecessary visits, providing a smoother, more efficient experience for our patients.
- **Avoid the 8am rush:** Smart Triage will help us to tackle the '8am rush', and ensure a more even flow of appointments throughout the week.
- **Safety:** Smart Triage is approved as a Class 1 medical device by MHRA (Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency) and meets all of the NHS security and clinical safety standards. Your data is held securely on the platform for a limited time, after which it is automatically removed and stored on your medical record. We will be updating our Privacy Policy with more information about data security.

How Does It Work?

You will be able to access Smart Triage through our website. In the near future you will also be able to access it through your NHS APP. Simply enter your symptoms and answer some questions about your medical history. The system will instantly analyse the information and provide you with tailored advice on what to do next. If further consultation is needed, the system will find an appointment with an appropriate skilled clinician or direct you to the right place.



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For patients under 16 there is a separate page within Smart Triage, where you will be able to submit your request for an appointment. Our Duty Doctor triages all these requests. They will make a decision on the appropriate action; appointment time frame, skilled clinician or direct you to another service/self-help advice.

The Smart Triage system will be open from 0700hrs through to 1830hrs Monday to Friday. These times may be extended in the future.

Who shouldn't use Smart Triage?

Some of our patients have specific accessibility needs for their appointments and therefore should not use our Smart Triage system. Those patients are:

- Registered Housebound patients
- Care Home patients
- Patients who require an adaption to their appointment such as British Sign Language or other Language Interpreter that may need to be pre-booked.

These patients should continue to contact us via telephone.

Why Are We Introducing Smart Triage?

We believe that by using Smart Triage we can offer a more proactive, patient-centred approach to healthcare. This innovative service not only improves efficiency but also empowers patients to make informed decisions about their health.

How long is the form?

On average, the form will have 10-13 questions and will take approx. 5mins to complete. However, for some more complex health needs, there may be more questions and it may take 5-10mins. By patients investing their time to complete the form, it will allow the appropriate appointment to be offered. This investment of 5mins is much shorter than the 8am rush long wait times of approx. 20mins+, with potentially no appointment given at the end.

Will it always be a GP appointment?

Smart Triage will work the same as we currently do, by looking for the most appropriate skilled clinician be that; GP, GP Trainee, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, First Contact Physio or Pharmacist. By using these skilled clinicians it will make sure GP appointments are free for those health needs that are more complex.



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For Womens Health, such as Menopause, contraception, HRT, pelvis issues, etc, these are booked through our new GP Appointment system – Rapid Health Smart Triage.

By completing the online survey with your health needs, the system will offer you an appointment with our Advance Nurse Practitioner – Tracey Whittle (Women's Health specialist) or a GP. When choosing a GP, their name will indicate Male or Female, enabling patients to choose a clinician.

Do I need an appointment to discuss everything?

No, Smart Triage also has an Admin function.

Here you can submit a question/comment/request for the following:

- Ask a general question
- Request a Doctors letter or report
- Request or query a Referral
- Request a sick/fit note
- Query test results
- Submit or query a repeat prescription request
- Submit a travel risk assessment (travel vaccines)
- Let us know about a change to your personal details such as; address, contact, etc

As the above can now be submitted through Rapid Health Smart Triage we will no longer be accepting requests via email. An auto response will be sent to any emails submitted after 06th October 2025.

The benefit of admin requests submitted this way are that they are linked/trackable through your patient record.

These admin requests will be actioned by either our Admin Team or a GP, dependant on the request type.

What about Nurse and Healthcare Assistant appointments, how do I book those?

Appointments for our Diabetic Nurse – Rebecca Martin and our Practice Nurses Nicky & Kayleigh for immunisations, smears, travel vaccines, Asthma reviews, COPD reviews are booked as they are now, through a personal invitation to book via a text self-book link or letter.

Likewise, appointments with our Healthcare Assistants (Bianca, Caroline, Sally, Gemma and Caz) for blood tests, Long Term Condition reviews, ECG's, INR tests,



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Learning Disability Review, dementia Review, Mental Health Review, etc., will also continue to be booked via a text self-book link or letter.

For Women's Health, such as Menopause, contraception, HRT, pelvis issues, etc, these will be booked through our new GP Appointment system – Rapid Health Smart Triage.

By completing the online survey with your health needs, the system will offer you an appointment with our Advance Nurse Practitioner – Tracey Whittle (Womens Health specialist) or a GP. When choosing a GP, their name will indicate Male or Female, enabling patients to choose a clinician they feel comfortable with.

Do I need to do anything?

During any contact with us, we may ask you to update your email address. This is because the system responds to you by email (do not worry – sensitive medical information is not included). If you do not have an email address, you will need to contact our patient services team to book an appointment. They will complete the Smart Triage form on your behalf.

My friend/relative doesn't use the internet, will they be excluded?

No, this system will be used by whatever way you contact us so that the right information is captured and the right outcome is recorded. If a patient does not use the internet, our Patient Services Team can fill in the form for them so that they still benefit from this system but with a helping hand.

It's worth noting that completing the form over the phone will take longer, due to the need for our Patient Services Team to read out each element of the questions. We anticipate each call may take 10-15mins.

Of course, a friend/relative, with the patient's agreement, could submit the form on their behalf.

We will also be installing an IPAD/Tablet/PC in our waiting room where you will be able to access our website to book an appointment using Smart Triage, as well as submit an Admin request or register for the Practice.



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What's next?

In the next few days, we will be inviting patients to attend Meetings where we will show demos of the new system and answer your questions.

We will also be sharing demonstration videos on our website and social media sites.

In our launch weeks, we will have support from our Patient Participation Group members and our staff, in the waiting room to show you the system and answer any questions you have.

I want to assure you that we will be continuously reviewing the processes and appointment access to identify any improvements. We would ask that you are patient with our team over the next few weeks whilst we embed Smart Triage.

Thank you for your continued support of the Practice.

With regards

The Partners of Woodlands Clerklands Partnership;

Dr Jon Birch

Dr Omar Abdulle

Dr Harminder Panesar

Dr Rubey Dullo

Dr Salim Salajee

Dr Manoo Gupta

Dr Taimoor Cheema

Dr Tolulope Omokanwaye