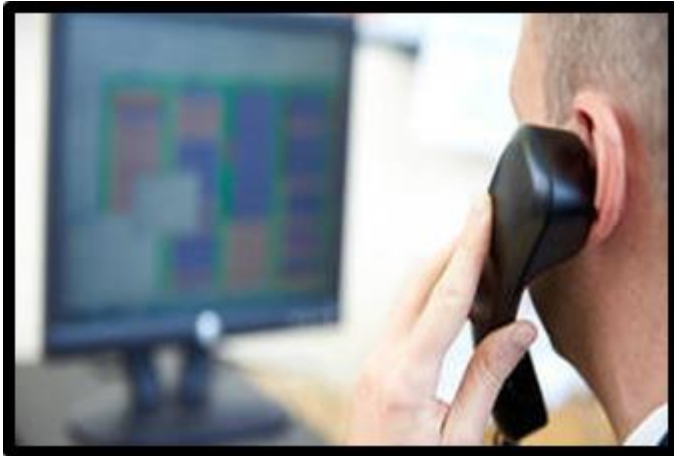




Tilbury Chadwell Group



**Our NEW  
Telephone Triage Appointment  
System Explained**

**&  
Other Helpful Information**

# Tilbury Chadwell Group

## Our Triage Appointment System Explained

Dear Patient,

Following a period of consultation with local Patient Participation Groups (PPG) across all our surgeries in Thurrock, together with a review of patient feedback and discussion with staff, local commissioners and Healthwatch, we have introduced a new appointment system in our larger Practices, whereby our experienced and dedicated Practitioners now Triage all requests for an appointment with a doctor through a telephone consultation in the first instance.

This simple change provides improved access to 'on the day' appointments and ensures that those patients who need to be seen can be seen SAME DAY where necessary, which a traditional appointment system does not assure. This new triaged appointment system addresses many historic problems such as patients (including the elderly) finding themselves queuing outside the Surgery at 8 o'clock in the morning in order to secure an appointment and difficulty in maintaining continuity of care with a particular doctor.

The new system enables us to talk directly with our patients the same day they call, placing us in the best position to allocate an appointment according to clinical need (both in terms of urgency and with the most appropriate clinician), arrange a blood test or investigations prior to an appointment and/or to signpost the patient where appropriate to another health care professional (prescribing nurse, paramedic, social prescribing, health care assistant or specialist pharmacist), or simply to provide advice.

By speaking directly with an experienced Practitioner patients have improved access to a GP and problems can be dealt with more effectively and appropriately. We do endeavour to offer appointments with the clinician of patient choice; however, this is dependent on the availability of the clinician concerned. Patients who have other commitments can specify a window of time in which to receive a call back from the Triage Practitioner or GP.

Where there is clinical indication that a patient requires immediate access to a GP they can be seen by our Urgent Care Practitioner clinic.

College Health regularly meets with Practice PPG's. Review of Triage is a regular agenda item. We listen to feedback and often make small revisions to the system. We prioritise urgent, children and the frail, vulnerable and elderly. We have removed the need for triage for patients we've invited to make an appointment and changed the range of appointments offered. We continue to review the system on a regular basis and urge you to join our PPG and make your voice heard.

Thank you - Your College Health Team

## **What do you do if you simply want to speak to a named doctor or nurse on the phone, but don't need an appointment?**

If you need to speak to a doctor or nurse on the telephone please inform our receptionist, who can book you telephone appointment. The doctor or nurse will call you back same day. Should the doctor wish to write a prescription for you following a telephone consultation, or arrange a blood test, he or she will leave the necessary paperwork in reception for you to collect at a time convenient to yourself. Please note Telephone Consultations help us reduce appointment demand especially if it is not necessary for the doctor or nurse to physically examine you.

## **Patients can help to reduce the demand for appointments in several ways:**

- Avoid running out of medication by requesting prescriptions well in advance and checking that your medication review date is not overdue. On most occasions, if you have run out of medication and your review is overdue, the doctor or pharmacist will be happy to issue enough to tide you over for a couple of weeks until you have your medication review. This reduces demand on urgent appointments.
- Consider whether the Nurse Practitioner, Practice Nurse or Health Care Assistant could deal with your problem and consider consulting a Pharmacist for minor ailments.
- If the GP arranges investigations / blood tests for you, clarify with them whether you need a review after the results have come back or whether you only need to telephone for the results. In any consultation discuss with the GP the need for a follow up appointment and when or under what circumstances that should be.

## **Cancelling Appointments**

**It is important that if you are unable to attend any appointment, you inform the Practice as soon as possible, so that your appointment can be given to another patient.**

## **Why may we ask you for details of your medical problem?**

You are not obliged to reveal details of your medical problem when booking an appointment, but, if you can give a brief explanation to the receptionist then it will help us to allocate you the most appropriate appointment and help us prioritise more urgent problems.

## **Home visit requests**

Please telephone as early as possible if you think you need a home visit. Unless the request is very urgent, most people are visited between morning and afternoon surgery, and the workload is shared between the GP, Paramedic Practitioner and Advanced Care Practitioners.

All requests for a Home visits are Triaged by the GP who decides whether the home visit is necessary and allocates the right Practitioner to attend. Home visits are reserved for the housebound and those too ill to attend the Surgery. Late requests make it difficult to plan our workload and can take doctors out of surgery. Please try to request any home visit by 12.00noon if possible.

## **Need urgent but non-emergency help when the GP practice is closed?**

If you have an urgent medical problem which cannot wait until the surgery re-opens please call the NHS 111 Service by dialling 111. NHS 111 is free to call from both landlines and mobiles. When you call the NHS 111 Service you'll be asked some questions about your symptoms so that you can be directed to the local service that can help you best.

You can obtain more information about NHS 111 by visiting [www.nhs.uk/111](http://www.nhs.uk/111)