

## Changes to booking GP appointments at Narrowcliff Surgery

Starting Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025 Narrowcliff Surgery will making changes to the way we offer GP appointments.

Narrowcliff Surgery was one of the first practices in Cornwall to adopt telephone triage in 2006. Whilst this has been very successful, and we are very proud of the access to GP appointments that we offer, we are now in a position where the demand and pressure on our services is unprecedented. We therefore have to change the way we review GP appointments to allow GPs to better manage their clinic time in an increasingly busy environment and growing population, by allocating appointments based on clinical need. This will ensure that GPs have enough time allocated on a daily basis to treat urgent cases first.

For the last few years we have offered online access to a triage system and many patients will already be familiar with it. We now ask that patients with access to the internet should now request a GP appointment by using the online consultation form which can be found within the Appointments section of the Narrowcliff Surgery website:

<https://www.narrowcliffsurgery.co.uk/appointments>

**Scan below to open the online triage form:**



We ask that you use the online form in the first instance to keep the telephone lines free for those who do not have access to the internet. We anticipate that the online triage form will now become the quickest way to access appointments.

When you contact us our receptionists will ask you for details of your medical problem, and whether your problem is an emergency. If you have used the online triage form you may receive a text message asking for further details. Gathering additional information before a call-back is key to establishing the level of urgency and allowing the doctor to assess the case more efficiently. If your problem is clinically urgent you will receive a telephone call from a GP the same day. Only medical emergencies will be offered an



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appointment on the same day. Routine queries will be pre-booked ahead, or for certain minor ailments you may be referred to a pharmacy or other health professional. Patients can expect to wait up to 3 weeks for a routine appointment at busy times, although in most cases this will be less.

We understand that changes to systems can be unsettling for some patients, especially those without access to the internet.

Patients calling the surgery will be asked to complete a triage form verbally with a telephone receptionist. The request will then enter the same system and be treated in the same way as requests received via the website. As always, our reception team will be happy to help our patients navigate the new system.

Online triage systems are now being used successfully at the majority of GP practices across the UK. We hope that you feel able to support Narrowcliff in this move to prioritise those with the most urgent needs in our community and improve efficiency and sustainability within the practice. We thank you all for your patience and understanding throughout this change.

### FAQs

#### **How do I get a GP appointment?**

If you have internet access please complete the online triage form. If a GP appointment is required you will be allocated a telephone appointment within a clinically appropriate timeframe. If the doctor needs to examine you, they will contact you to arrange a face to face appointment at a mutually convenient time.

#### **Will I still be able to see my GP?**

Yes. We value continuity of care and will always try to book your appointment with your own GP wherever possible.

#### **Can I still contact the surgery by telephone?**

Yes. Our team of telephone receptionists are here to help. GP appointments and administrative queries will now mainly be accessed online, but we understand that not all patients have internet access. If you are able to utilise the online system we would encourage you to do so, thereby keeping the phonelines available for patients who are not able to access our services online.

#### **What should I do if I don't have access to the internet?**



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If you do not have internet access please contact us by phone. A receptionist will complete the online consultation form with you verbally.

### **Why do I have to give information about my problem on a form?**

The online form is treated with same confidentiality as any other form of contact with the surgery. Describing your medical problem enables us to allocate appointments based on clinical need. It is also helpful for the doctor treating you to have some basic information before calling you.

### **I need medical help urgently. Do I still need to use the online form?**

Yes – your request will be triaged and urgent cases will get a call from a GP the same day. If you have a potentially life-threatening illness or injury you should always call 999.

### **Your website says the online consultation is temporarily unavailable.**

We accept requests between 0800 and 1600 Monday – Friday. Surgery phone lines will remain open until 6pm if you need help and cannot wait until the morning. Overnight please call 111 for urgent assistance.