

Positive and necessary changes at Leckhampton surgery as of 5th December 2022

Dear patients at Leckhampton surgery,

Thank you for your support during recent staff shortages and for your engagement with the online consultation system, called eConsult, that we have been using throughout the Covid pandemic. We have important changes to share with you about the future of GP consultations at Leckhampton surgery. There is a severe GP recruitment shortfall across the UK. The partnership of GPs at Leckhampton surgery must secure the future of the service, by maintaining quality of care for patients, and by providing an environment that skilled health professionals want to join. We believe our current online system of working is failing on both counts and we want that to change for you all, as well as to protect the wellbeing of our team in the practice.

We have listened to feedback from you about eConsult and the 'total triage' system, whereby a GP assesses all contacts with the practice and decides if and how we can assist you. It is clear that many patients and GPs are unhappy with this system, and we agree this needs to change. We feel that the changes we are making will improve the quality of our medical care, while securing the future of the surgery as a viable service for the community. Many of these changes will be familiar to patients who used our services before the Covid pandemic.

Leckhampton surgery is returning to a more traditional model of care provision. This is what many patients and staff feel is right for the surgery. eConsult will cease to be our method of contact for routine matters on the 5th December 2022 and will be deactivated. Appointments will no longer be triaged by a GP, instead patients and their representatives will be able to book appointments directly in the NHS App, online or by telephoning our patient care advisor team in reception, just as you could do before Covid.

The key changes are as follows:

- We will no longer be using eConsult
- Appointments will not have to be triaged; you can directly book GP appointments online
- All routine GP appointments are bookable on the NHS App / online, there is no need to call
- Nurse appointments remain bookable by telephone, but blood tests are now bookable on the NHS App / online
- Please call reception for routine administrative requests
- Prescription requesting – use the NHS app or Systmone, avoid requesting via a pharmacy
- Same day urgent GP appointments can be booked by telephone
- GP capacity is limited due to staff shortages - you may be directed to a different service if we are full
- Between 1300-1400 and after 1730 hours reception will not be contactable for routine queries

Please see below for more detail on these points

Routine GP Appointments

<p>Booking Routine Appointments</p>	<p>This change includes face to face appointments and telephone appointments. All routine appointments will have a defined start time, this is an approximate time for phone appointments.</p> <p>Our preferred booking method will be using the NHS App, please download this. Alternatively you can use Systmone online booking which you can access via our website https://www.leckhamptonsurgery.co.uk/</p> <p>All routine face to face and telephone appointments will be directly bookable on the NHS App/online so there is no longer any need to wait in a long telephone queue to book a routine consultation</p> <p>If you do not have online access, then you are welcome to phone for an appointment.</p> <p>We will still require detailed information from you at the time of booking so the clinician can prepare for your consultation – the more you tell us about the reason for your consultation at the time of booking, the better your care will be. Please focus on a single medical issue in an appointment, the quality of your care will be far better this way.</p>
<p>Reception Desk and telephone hours</p>	<p>The reception desk and telephone hours are changing. Between 1300-1400 and after 1730 our patient care advisors will be focusing on processing your prescription requests, administrative requests, and hospital correspondence.</p> <p>A message service will pass any truly urgent queries to the surgery during these times, but please refrain from calling or visiting during these times unless you have a pre-booked appointment</p> <p>During these hours all routine GP appointments can still be booked online via the NHS App, or using Systmone online booking, via the link on our website.</p>
<p>Booking appointments online</p>	<p>The best way to book all routine GP appointments, face to face and telephone, is using the NHS App or via our website</p> <p>If there are no appointments currently showing as available then there is no need to call, check online the following day.</p> <p>You will never lose out by using the online booking system, all routine appointments available by phone are bookable online.</p>
<p>Waiting times</p>	<p>To provide patients with the model of care they have been requesting, at a time of increasing GP shortages, there will be an increase in our wait times for routine appointments.</p> <p>Our focus is on providing high quality care for our patients, in the format they prefer, at a mutually agreeable time, and this may mean a longer wait for an appointment</p> <p>We look to the government to make national changes to increase the overall capacity of the healthcare system, while we focus on maintaining quality and safety for our patients.</p> <p>If we do not have capacity to offer you an appointment you will be offered the choice to re-contact us at a later date, or to access another service such as a community pharmacy, or to contact NHS 111</p>

Routine nursing and blood test appointments

Nurse appointments	Nurse appointments should be booked by telephone due to the many different appointment types and lengths needed.
	It is not currently feasible to offer a full range of nurse appointments online.
Blood tests	These can now be booked using the NHS App or using Systmonline via our website
	Please note that this is for blood tests requested by your GP only, not hospital blood tests.
	To avoid embarrassment please to not contact us for hospital blood test requests – if you have a red and green paper form, please attend West block outpatients as per our previous system
	There is no change to the type of tests we take in the surgery

Urgent, same day, appointments

The surgery offers appointments for **urgent matters needing a same day response**

You can access this service by calling reception. Our patient care advisors in reception can book a call back with the duty GP or nurse practitioner, who will see you the same day if needed

If the duty GP and nurse service has reached full capacity, then you will be directed to an alternative service such as your community pharmacy, NHS 111, a minor injury and illness unit, 999, or the emergency department

Please note that primary care is not an emergency service - **if you have an emergency, please use an emergency service such as 999 or the emergency department without contacting the surgery first**

Routine administrative matters

Clinical and non-clinical administration (excluding prescriptions) will mainly be provided via our patient care advisor team in reception and our administration team

In due course we will roll out a more user-friendly online service for these requests. During this period of change please telephone to discuss any requests

This service can assist you with requesting sick notes, private medical work (e.g insurance forms), cancelling appointments, and requesting access to medical records.

To change your address or your registered pharmacy please use the form on our website. Alternatively, please use online services via our website booking link

Prescriptions

Please see the prescribing section of our website for full details

You can request prescriptions in the following ways:

Using the NHS App – here's how:
<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/>

Using Systmone online via our website

Do you still have questions? These **Frequently Asked Questions** & answers may help:

1. Why are you making this change?

Patient feedback shows that the eConsult system is disliked by many patients. The GPs have concerns that vulnerable and elderly patients are not well served by an online process that provides quantity over quality. The volume of online contacts to be processed has become unmanageable for the GPs and allied health professionals. The working environment created by a 'total triage' model of care is adversely affecting recruitment of GPs to the surgery.

2. I liked eConsult, can I still use it?

No. eConsult will be deactivated. In the near future we will assess alternative online platforms for administrative services, so we can be as efficient as possible in this area.

3. How do I book an appointment to see a GP?

Please use the NHS App or NHS login as our preferred method – You can self-register for this booking platform - <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/>

Alternatively, you can use the link to Systmonline on our website, to access the simple online booking service – this is the same process we used before covid. You will need to register for Systmonline online services using our web form if you have not already registered.

If you do not want to use online services, then please telephone reception between 0830-1300 or 1400-1730 hours. All patient bookable appointments are available online.

Should I book a telephone appointment or a face-to-face appointment?

Telephone appointments are best used when you believe you do not need to be examined. E.g:

- Ongoing symptoms of an existing long-term condition
- Blood pressure concerns
- Flare ups of a previous condition where you feel re-examination is not needed
- Mental health concerns – our mental health nurse is direct bookable by phoning reception
- Review of treatment plans, referrals, follow-up, conditions where there is GP led monitoring etc
- Medication issues – our in-house pharmacy team is direct bookable by phoning reception
- New gynaecological issues – a telephone call first helps plan for the specific examinations needed

Face-to-face appointments are best used when you need to be examined. E.g:

The **first** time you have consulted about the following: a lump, a skin lesion, rashes, swelling, discharge or bleeding (for gynaecological issues see above), urine flow, abdominal pain, joint pain, breathlessness, ENT symptoms, breast problems, or any other condition where you feel examination would help you.

If you need guidance on what type of appointment to choose, please telephone our patient care advisors.

4. How do I book a blood test?

A blood test requested by your GP practice: Please use the online booking link on our website or telephone reception

A blood test requested by the hospital: Please attend West Block outpatients with the form the hospital has provided. If you do not have a form please contact your consultant's secretary. There is no change in this process.

5. How do I book a nurse appointment?

Please telephone our patient care advisors in reception.

6. How do I get urgent help from the GP today?

Telephone our patient care advisors who will put you in touch with our on-call team, if capacity allows.

7. What do I do if I have an urgent problem, but the on-call team is full?

We can signpost you to alternative services. These services are listed on the ASAP Glos website: <http://www.asapglos.nhs.uk/search-by-service/>

8. How do I get a prescription for a repeat medication?

Using the NHS app, NHS online login or your Systmone online account. We would appreciate it if you would not request prescriptions at your pharmacy or by post/in person.