

Ashfield Road Surgery

FAQS

About Total Triage

We want to ensure the process of booking an appointment with your GP practice is as fair as possible, as previously patients were more likely to secure a same day appointment if they queued at our front door or called us early in the morning which put patients who are unable to do this at a disadvantage.

We found that patients who do not necessarily need a same day appointment were often seen when in fact a routine non-urgent appointment would have been more appropriate. This then resulted in us not being able to see patients who really needed an urgent same day appointment.

Also, patients sometimes do not see the most appropriate healthcare professional for their need, for example, instead of a GP, a patient could have seen a nurse, pharmacist, physiotherapist, mental health practitioner or an advanced clinical practitioner – for more information on these roles, visit <https://www.england.nhs.uk/gp/expanding-our-workforce/>

The new system we have implemented is called **Total Triage**.

Total Triage is a new approach recommended by NHS England, to improve access to services. The main purpose of Total Triage is to:

- ♦ communicate with patients in a timely way
- ♦ enhance the quality of care our patients receive
- ♦ ensure patients are given the most appropriate appointment or advice to meet their needs.

How does it work?

All patients wanting to book an appointment with the practice are asked a specific set of questions either through the [online form](#) or over the phone with one of the team if you do not have access to the internet using a computer, tablet, or smartphone between the hours of 8am when surgery opens until 6pm. The information you provide will help our GPs direct you to the best healthcare professional within the Practice. Once you have provided our staff with the information, you won't be given an appointment time straight away. However, the information you provide will be reviewed by our GPs and we will aim to get back to you within 2 working days. We hope that this provides you with reassurance that every patient is important to us. We believe that these changes will improve your experience with us. If you wish to book an appointment with a nurse, physiotherapist or pharmacist directly, you can still call the surgery to book these.

How do I contact my GP?

The quickest way to contact your surgery with medical or administrative queries is by submitting an online request [here](#) on our website.

The screenshot shows the online request form for Ashfield Road Surgery. The header includes the NHS logo, the surgery name, address (39 Ashfield Road, Fordhouses, Wolverhampton, WV10 6QX), and a 'Powered by Accurx' logo. The main heading is 'What would you like help with?'. Below this is a yellow warning box stating that online requests will be read within 2 working days and providing instructions for urgent help (call 111 or visit NHS 111 online). Under 'Available options', there are three buttons: 'I have an admin request' (includes fit notes, test results, and repeat prescriptions), 'I have a health problem' (contact GP about a new or ongoing problem), and 'I want to read online advice' (read NHS information on conditions, symptoms, and treatments). At the bottom, there is a prompt to 'Use NHS login to submit your request faster' with a 'Continue with NHS login' button and a link to the 'NHS login help centre'.

What if I don't have a smartphone or can't use the internet?

You can still telephone your surgery or visit in person. The receptionist will ask you questions about your request to fill out the online form on your behalf.

The surgery team will then assess your request and will be back in touch with the next steps.

All requests will be assessed as soon as possible and in the same way, regardless of how you contacted the surgery.

Why has this changed?

Traditional ways to contact your GP often meant that appointments were being allocated on a first come, first served basis, with long phone queues to get in touch with your surgery. This meant that vulnerable patients, or those who needed care sooner were missing out.

You can avoid the queues by submitting a request online, between the hours of 8am & 6pm, making it easier to reach out to your surgery.

By registering all requests through an online form, your surgery is able to prioritise and action requests quickly and fairly, ensuring that you get the right level of care at the right place and the right time.

What happens once I've submitted my request?

Your surgery will use the information you provided to ensure that you're given the most appropriate care. They may send you a text message containing a link to provide more information if needed.

If an appointment is required, they may send you an appointment booking link via text message, or arrange this over the phone.

If there is a faster or more appropriate route to care, you may be offered this, such as being asked to go to your local pharmacy, or being referred to another service.

What if I have more than one health concern?

Similar to the appointment process before we launched Total Triage where you would book one appointment per health concern, if you have multiple health concerns, we advise that you fill in one triage form per concern.

This is so that the GP can make an accurate assessment of each individual concern. Please note that you may be directed to an alternative service or professional to help with your health concern, for example, A&E, your local pharmacy etc. ***Please ensure you provide as much information as possible per form.***

When will I receive a response?

Appointment requests will receive a response within 2 working days. If you need to be seen on the same day, you will receive a call from the practice. If you need to book a routine appointment, we will call you to book an appointment to be seen within 2 weeks. If we cannot get a hold of you, you will receive a text message with a link for you to book.

Administrative requests will be acknowledged within two working days.

Please do not re-submit the same form.

If you haven't received a response within the relevant timeframes mentioned above, please call the practice directly.

How can I access the form?

You can access the form by:

- ◆ Website: [Ashfield Road Surgery](#), click 'Contact Us Online (Patient Online Triage)'. Then you can either click
 - I have an admin request for things such as sicknotes, test results and repeat prescriptions.
 - I have a health problem, to request an appointment.
 - ◆ Text message: You will have received a text message with the link when Total Triage was launched in your practice, if you still have the text message please click the link to access the form.
- No username and/or password is required to complete and submit the form. Forms can also be completed on behalf of a patient, for example, by a relative or carer.

What if I can't attend the same day appointment offered?

If the GP feels you need to be seen on the same day, you will be expected to attend your appointment. If you are unable to attend the same day appointment offered, you will be directed to out of hours services. If you are unable to/do not want to attend out of hours services, you will need to submit another form the following day.

Please make sure you provide your availability when you complete the form so that we can take this into account when offering an appointment.

Will I receive a quicker response if I attend or call the surgery?

No, if you visit or call the surgery, you will still need to fill out the same triage form so that you can be assessed in the same way, as the process is the same for **all** patients. The receptionist or call handler will need to go through the form with you to capture all the required details.

If you/the patient cannot fill the form in for whatever reason, calling the practice would be the best option as it avoids an unnecessary visit to the practice.

Forms can be submitted between the hours of 8am and 6pm.

Will I see a GP?

The GP assessing your request will determine who the most appropriate healthcare professional is for your needs.

This means you may not see a GP during your appointment, instead you may see one of the following:

- **Advanced Nurse Practitioner** – a registered nurse with advanced training: they can assess, diagnose, treat, and prescribe medication.
- **First Contact Physiotherapist** – a highly experienced physiotherapist who can manage most conditions without needing to involve your GP, and can request investigations, in some cases joint injections and prescribe medication.
- **Mental Health Practitioner** – a specialist mental health nurse who can support with patients experiencing mental health problems such as low mood, OCD, depression, anxiety or stress.
- **Clinical Pharmacist** – a clinical pharmacist can provide advice in relation to medicine use and can also prescribe medication as and when needed.

Alternatively, you may be directed to services outside the GP practice, for example, your local pharmacy.

Do I need to fill in a triage form for a prescription request or for test results?

For any administrative queries/requests such as repeat prescriptions, test results etc should be submitted by clicking the 'admin query' button.

Using the [NHS App](#) is the quickest and most efficient way to request repeat prescriptions and view your test results?

What if I've been told to book a routine appointment but there are none available via the link provided?

If a GP feels you need to be seen via a routine appointment and you missed our call, a link to book an appointment will be sent to you via text message.

You are given seven days to book your appointment using the link. If you click the link and it says there are no appointments available, please try again the next working day as early as possible.

More appointments become available on a regular basis so it's important you keep checking.

Please be mindful that the link is only valid to use for 7 days.

Please note that the link you are sent can only be used once for one appointment. If you need an appointment for another health concern, please complete a separate triage form.

How do I know which GP I will be seeing/what about if I want to see a specific GP?

If there is a specific GP you would like to see for your appointment, please state this on the form.

If it's a same day appointment that you require, the receptionist will call you and let you know which GP your appointment is with, it may not be your preferred GP depending on availability, for example, they may not be working that day.

If it's a routine appointment that you require, we will call you to book an appointment. If we cannot make contact with you, we will send you a link via text message. We will consider your preference of GP when booking/sending you the available slots but again, they may not be available on the date and time of your appointment. If the GP triaging your form thinks you need to be seen as soon as possible but your preferred GP is not available, you will be offered an appointment with another clinician.

You have the option to use out of hours services if you prefer.