

Fair Use Policy

This policy has been written by the practice team to help make sure everyone can use our services fairly and safely.

Please read it carefully. If you have any questions, speak to a member of the practice team.

Why we have this policy

We want all patients to have fair access to our GPs, nurses and admin staff. To do this, we need everyone to use:

- online forms
- telephone access
- appointments

in a reasonable and considerate way.

If some people use our services unfairly, it can stop other patients from getting the help they need.

Examples of unfair use

Unfair use includes (but is not limited to):

- Sending a large number of online forms or messages that are not clinically necessary
- Repeating the same request several times in a short period
- Expecting an immediate answer or solution for non-urgent issues
- Attending the practice in person multiple times for minor queries
- Any abuse, rudeness or harassment towards our staff (in person, on the phone, in writing or online)

If unfair use of our services affects our ability to provide safe care to all patients, we may review an individual's access to online forms, telephone and appointments. This will involve written communication with you and may lead to further action if behaviour does not change.

In serious cases, where behaviour breaches the NHS Zero Tolerance Policy and causes an irretrievable breakdown in the doctor-patient relationship, we may consider removal from the practice list, in line with NHS England and BMA guidance.

Our commitment to you

We will:

- Treat all patients equally, with dignity and respect
- Provide a friendly, confidential service
- Keep you informed about our services and your rights
- Offer access based on clinical need

- Work to improve our systems within the resources we have
- Provide a practice complaints procedure you can use in confidence
- Welcome and consider feedback from patients

How you can help us to help you

Please:

- Submit only one online form for each issue, and include clear information in that form
 - Sending the same request repeatedly or chasing within a short time will not speed up the response
- Keep or cancel appointments in good time so they can be offered to someone else
- Be patient if there are delays – this may be due to emergencies or another patient needing extra time
- Use our services responsibly and do not expect immediate treatment for non-urgent or routine problems
- Consider self-care, community pharmacy, NHS 111 or other services for minor issues where appropriate
- Be willing to see other members of the practice team – the GP is not always the most appropriate person
- Allow enough time for repeat prescriptions (at least 48 working hours) and do not pressure staff to do these sooner
- Keep us updated with any changes to your name, address or phone number
- Treat all staff with respect – we will not tolerate verbal or physical abuse

Same-day resolution is not always possible

Sometimes patients contact us with a query and expect everything to be sorted the same day. This is often not possible.

Many issues need time so we can:

- Check your records and previous letters or results
- Request or review test results
- Contact hospitals or other services if needed
- Complete paperwork safely and accurately

For this reason:

- We cannot guarantee that every query will be fully resolved on the same day
- You may be given a timescale (for example, within a set number of working days) for a response

Demanding an immediate solution when a proper process is needed is not reasonable and can affect care for other patients.

Irretrievable breakdown of the doctor–patient relationship

Very occasionally, a patient’s behaviour may be so unreasonable or persistent that the relationship with the practice breaks down.

What we will do first

We will:

- Tell you there is a problem (in person or in writing)
- Explain what the problem is
- Listen to your point of view
- If needed, agree a “reasonable access” plan with you
- Monitor the situation – if problems continue, we may decide the relationship has broken down

If this happens, we may start the process for you to register with another practice.

What we will do within the practice

We will:

- Inform relevant members of the practice team
- Discuss the situation and possible reasons for the behaviour at a practice meeting

If things still do not improve

We will:

- Inform Primary Care Support England (PCSE) in writing of our decision to remove you from our list and the reasons
- Where appropriate, write to you to explain the decision and the reasons
- Explain that you will not be left without a GP
- Give you information on how to register with another practice and the expected timescales