

OPERATIONAL POLICY

Access to the Primary Healthcare Team

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Reviewed By:	Julie Winterbottom, Business Manager
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## a) Introduction

This document outlines the policies and procedures to access members of the primary health care team at Westcliffe Medical Practice, Westcliffe Road, Shipley, BD18 3EE.

This document is available to patients and members of the public on request.

## b) Access to the Primary Health Care Team

The table below provides a summary of the various options available to patients for them to access members of the Primary Healthcare team.

	<b>Access details</b>
Reception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Reception is the first point of contact to access the primary health care team to book appointments and answer general enquires.</li><li>- It is open for face to face or telephone contact between the hours of:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>7.30am – 7.00pm Mon &amp; Tues</li><li>8.00am – 7.00pm Wed, Thurs &amp; Fri</li><li>8.30am – 11.00am Saturdays</li></ul>(excluding bank holidays and during staff training days)</li></ul>
Routine appointments <i>(with a Doctor, Advanced Nurse Practitioner or Practice Nurse)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Pre-bookable appointments are available Mon – Fri between the above opening hours. Patients can choose any of the Doctors or Nurse Practitioners working that day, subject to availability of appointments.</li><li>- Appointments can be pre-booked up to 12 weeks in advance</li><li>- Saturday surgeries are bookable on the day via phone or walking in</li></ul>
Urgent appointments / advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- There is a Doctor oncall from 8am – 6pm, Mon – Fri therefore patients have easy access to clinical advice. During the times of 8am and 10am patients access the oncall Doctor directly by selecting option 3 on the phones. After this time reception will take the call and either pass the patient over to the oncall Doctor or agree a time when the oncall Doctor can ring them back. Should the oncall Doctor think the patient needs to be seen they will offer them one of their emergency appointments for that day.</li></ul>
Emergency appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- In instances of a true emergency patients should ring 999, for example, acute chest pain</li></ul>
Telephone appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- In addition to the oncall service, each Doctor has a weekly 20 minute telephone talk time whereby patients can ring and queue for a telephone consultation. These appointments should be used for quick advice or results of investigations. Ask reception for details of each GPs talk times.</li></ul>
Home visits	All home visit requests will be put through to the oncall doctor and where agreed a visit arranged.

Out of Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Patients can access the out of hours service between the hours of 6pm – 8am Monday to Friday and 24hrs a day over the weekend and bank holidays.</li> <li>- To access out of hours patients can ring the surgery’s main telephone number where they will hear a message informing them that the practice is now closed and if it is an emergency they can hold on the line to be put through to the out of hours service.</li> </ul>
Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Patients can relay messages to the Doctors, Nurses and non-clinical staff, as relevant, by leaving these with reception. Reception will send an electronic task to the staff member which is attached to the patient’ medical record for audit purposes</li> <li>- In addition, Reception will also relay messages verbally as relevant to Doctors and Nurses</li> </ul>
Repeat Prescription Requests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The repeat slip should be either handed to the receptionist or posted in the practice repeat script box in the foyer.</li> <li>- Alternatively patients can join a local pharmacy scheme and the pharmacist will order and collect the script and then deliver the items to the patient</li> <li>- Also, patients can request repeat prescriptions via the on-line appointment and script service – ask at Reception for your password and login details</li> </ul>
Obtaining test results ie blood and urine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reception will inform patients that their test results are normal or that the Doctor or Nurse has stated they need to discuss the result with them</li> <li>- Please allow 4 working days before ringing for results</li> </ul>
Access to Community Nursing Services  - Health Visiting Teams - District Nurses Teams - Midwife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Heath Visitors and District Nurses are based at the practice however they organise their own appointments and workloads therefore patients should contact them on their direct dials or alternatively Reception can put a call through to the teams.</li> <li>- The practice also houses Midwifery clinics. These appointments can be booked through reception.</li> </ul>
Other practice based services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The practice also houses various other services such as hospital outpatient clinics and GP specialist clinics in Cardiology, Diabetes, Urology, General Surgery, Plastic Surgery, Pain Management and other services such as mental health counselling, chiropody, physio and dietician etc. Access to these services is via referral from a Doctor or Advanced Nurse Practitioner only.</li> </ul>
During practice education/training events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The practice closes for staff training on some Thursday afternoons between 1pm and 4pm.</li> <li>- Patients needing urgent care during these times can ring the surgery where their call will transfer to the out of hours service.</li> </ul>

### **c) Providing continuity of care**

Some patients prefer to see the same Doctor or Nurse each time they visit the surgery, others prefer to take the shortest wait time or most convenient time/date for their appointment. This is the personal choice of each patient and the practice aims to facilitate this through the following:

- Ensuring access to appointments within 48hrs
- Access to the oncall Doctor throughout the day
- Published telephone talk time schedule for each Doctor
- Pre-bookable appointments up to 12 weeks in advance with any of our Doctors or Nurse Practitioners therefore allowing choice of Doctor and/or convenience of time/date
- The Doctors and Nurse Practitioners meet weekly to discuss matters of the practice. This includes, where appropriate, peer advice on the clinical management of some patients and their conditions. Therefore obtaining a more informed treatment plan for the patient. This meeting will also be used to hand-over patients, where appropriate, before a Doctor or Nurse goes on annual leave or other absence. Therefore ensuring continuity of care during a particular clinician's absence.
- The practice also uses electronic messaging systems. This is a safe and confidential way that allows clinicians and staff within the practice and across certain NHS organisations to communicate in a way that remains attached to the patient record. This method of communication helps ensure continuity of care across clinicians and NHS organisations.
- The practice is notified by electronic message from the out of hours service for any patients that have used that service the previous evening or weekend.
- Patients can agree to share their GP medical record with other NHS organisations. This helps ensure continuity of care eg during a referral to hospital. The clinician must always seek consent from the patient before requesting access to their record.
- The practice has systems in place that ensure good communication between NHS organisations for palliative patients. It is important that ambulance and out of hours services are aware of patients medications and wishes with regard matters such as resuscitation etc.

### **d) Patient Communications systems**

The following systems are in place to help aid effective communication between the practice and its patients:

- Notice boards and displays in reception and consulting rooms
- Electronic call board and message display in reception
- Practice Booklet
- Health promotion leaflets and literature
- Nationally instigated Patient Feedback Questionnaires
- Practice instigated Patient Feedback Questionnaires
- Practice instigated patient interviews and group interviews
- Complaints process
- Written practice policies and procedures
- The use of computerised message systems that remain part of the patient record
- Mail shot letters
- Recalls and alerts on the patient record

## e) Standards and Performance Monitoring for accessing appointments

The practice routinely monitors its performance against the following standards:

Target	Measure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ 100% of the time be able to offer an appointment within 2 working days (with any GP or Nurse Practitioner)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Patient feedback questionnaires</li><li>➤ Daily review of appointment situation</li><li>➤ Access to oncall doc throughout the day</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Pre-bookable appointments always available at least 8 weeks in advance for each GP and Nurse Practitioner</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Monthly checks to ensure all clinician's rotas have been rolled forward</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ 85% of patients can book with the Doctor/Nurse Practitioner of their choice within 7 working days of that clinician</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Measured by the 3<sup>rd</sup> available appointment for each clinician – a standard report within the clinical system</li></ul>

The appointment system that the practice operates ensures that the above targets are routinely met however there may be occasions when remedial action is needed. Such action will depend on the nature of the problem. For example, a long bank holiday weekend or flu pandemic can increase demand for appointments. The practice would aim to increase the number of appointments available on these days. This could be through withdrawing the GPs and Nurses from their non-clinical work or working additional hours or using extra staff.

The practice publishes these standards and its performance against them within the practice booklet, displays in the waiting room, statements via the call screen/message board in reception.