A close-up of a house

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**Appointments Policy**

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| V1 | 2/6/22 | Introduced |

## Background

An appointment policy in a general practice setting outlines how appointments are managed to ensure efficient and effective patient care. At Rectory Meadow Surgery we monitor our demand with appointment capacity and also offer a range of Health Care Professionals who complement the GP provision.

The surgery is open from 830am to 6pm each day (with urgent telephone cover from 8am to 830 and 6pm to 630pm provided by our Out of Hours provider.

We do not open on weekends or bank holidays except for some planned enhanced access clinics.

1. **Appointment Types**
   * Routine GP pre bookable 10 mins – used for follow-up and forward booking reviews or procedures
   * On the day GP Book Only 10 mins – appointments for patients who have been triaged via Klinik – can be F2F or telephone – dependant on patient preferences
   * Routine GP Telephone/ Video Consultation 10 mins – pre-bookable and ideal for telephone or remote reviews
   * GP Home Visits – these are for patients who are housebound – they are arranged by 10am each morning and a telephone conversation is held initially to establish the urgency and who the best clinician would be to visit. A home visit may not always be required and we may attempt to resolve the issue in other ways.
   * Minor Illness 15 mins – with Advanced Nurse Practitioners
   * Pharmacist Medication Review or Side Effects 10 mins – Telephone consultation
   * Pharmacist / BP / Lipid / Heart Failure Clinic 15 min telephone appointment or F2F if preferred
   * Physiotherapy – 30 Min – Monday Evenings
   * Nursing clinics
     1. Respiratory checks / Asthma Reviews / Spirometry / Feno
     2. Diabetes
     3. Wound care
     4. Immunisations ( Children / Adults and Travel)
     5. Smear tests
     6. New Patient Checks
     7. Phlebotomy
     8. ECGs
     9. Stich and clip removal
   * Mental Health Reviews – with Primary Care Network Mental Health Practitioners
   * Health & Wellbeing Coaches and Social Prescribers – self referral [Self-Referral - Mid Chiltern PCN](https://www.midchilternpcn.nhs.uk/self-referral/) or reception can refer via Joy
2. Booking System
   * All appointments are able to be requested via the online form on the homepage of the website or by telephone
   * We aim to respond within 24 hours
3. Advance Booking
   * Appointment diaries are generally available 3 -4 weeks ahead. This supports and reduces the risk of DNAs (Did Not Attend)
4. Out of Hours
   * If you need attention outside of our normal working hours then the easiest option is to call 111 or go online [Get help for your symptoms - NHS 111](https://111.nhs.uk/)
5. Urgent Appointments
   * Urgent requests can be made online or over the telephone and where possible we will either offer an appointment of direct you to urgent Care or A&E depending on the situation. If we do not have capacity we will redirect you to call 111.
6. Enhanced Access
   * We offer Physio appointments on a Monday evening
   * We offer group consultations covering a wide range of subjects on average 1 Saturday morning per month
   * We offer some evening telephone consultations with clinical pharmacists
7. Cancellations and DNAs
   * Cancellations can be made via the NHS App or by telephone
   * Repeated DNAs may trigger a warning letter and you may be asked to register at another surgery.
8. Patient Preferences
   * If you have any accessibility preferences or if you are housebound then please do let us know and we can add an alert to your notes
   * If you need longer with the clinician because you have multiple issues then you may request a double appointment
9. Capacity Management
   * Each month we review the incoming calls and incoming Klinik requests and retrospectively audit our systems
   * Each month is planned ahead using this data and seasonal variation and we have a minimum number of clinicians to operate safely. We use a local locum agency to support when we are reaching our lower threshold.
10. Communication
    * We use AccuRx text reminders to remind patients of appointments
    * We can update your consent preferences if you let us know if you are not receiving these texts
    * We aim to answer the telephone within 3 minutes and we do achieve this target. We regularly audit our telephone performance including time take to answer, missed calls, abandoned calls and overall call volume
    * All calls are recorded both incoming and outgoing
11. Feedback and Review
    * We send out Friends and Family Feedback Texts after the majority of appointments.
    * Please do respond as this informs us of areas that are working well or not working well and we can the review our systems to ensure they meet the needs of both patients and the practice.

By implementing a clear and comprehensive appointment policy, practices can improve patient access, reduce wait times, and enhance the overall efficiency of care delivery.