

GIFFORDS SURGERY - PPG SURVEY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Following our recent patient survey there were quite a few issues that were raised and we felt that the best way to answer some of them was to produce a frequently asked questions sheet.

OPENING HOURS

What are your opening hours?

The surgery is open from 8.30am to 7.30pm on a Monday and from 8.30am to 6.30pm Tuesday to Friday; we are open all day including lunchtimes.

From 8.00am to 8.30am our phone lines are open for clinically urgent medical problems that need immediate attention.

MISSED APPOINTMENTS

The practice has up to 200 missed appointments per month. This is equivalent to 14 surgeries per month.

What does the practice do to ease the problems of patients who fail to attend their appointment?

1. We ask patients to contact the surgery via the automated cancellation line if they are unable to attend their appointment, to allow us to offer this appointment to someone else.
2. We have introduced the text messaging service for patients that we hold a mobile telephone number for, to remind them that they have an appointment in the next 24hrs.
3. We have a DNA (Did not attend) policy for those patients who persistently fail to attend their appointments please see below:
 - If you fail to attend for 2 appointments without informing us, we will write to you explaining that failure to attend further appointments may result in you being removed from the practice list.
 - If you fail to attend for a 3rd appointment you may be removed from the practice list, unless there is some substantial reason why this situation has occurred.
4. Unlike dentists we are unable to charge our patients who fail to attend their appointments.

Patients who fail to turn up for their appointments puts a huge pressure on the practice and means that sometimes you can not see the doctor of your choice or get the appointment when you want to, and is a drain on NHS resources. We would therefore encourage all of our patients to cancel your appointment if you do not need it, because someone else will.

ROUTINE APPOINTMENTS

How do routine appointments work?

The surgery offers 10 minute routine appointments with all the Doctors working at the surgery each week. We aim to have these appointments available to book up to 6 weeks ahead.

Some doctors are very popular and do get booked up well in advance, however we aim to be able to offer patients a routine appointment with a GP no longer than 1 week ahead, we realise that this is not always possible due to the demand for appointments at busy times in the year.

For continuity of care we aim to offer you an appointment with your usual doctor or the doctor who has been dealing with your episode of care.

Routine appointments are for all ongoing medical problems that can reasonably wait to be dealt with at the next available routine appointment.

Generally we have 9 doctors working every week offering up to 700 routine appointments. In addition the doctors offer clinics for minor operations, injections, coils, contraceptive implants, and child health surveillance every week.

The doctor's working days per week are as follows:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Dr Phillips	Dr Phillips			Dr Phillips
Dr Rosser	Dr Rosser	Dr Rosser		
Dr Harrison-Smith	Dr Harrison-Smith		Dr Harrison-Smith	Dr Harrison-Smith
Dr Hill / Dr Hosur	Dr Hill / Dr Hosur	Dr Hill / Dr Hosur		Dr Hill / Dr Hosur
Dr Duignan		Dr Duignan	Dr Duignan	
Dr Cottrill		Dr Cottrill	Dr Cottrill	Dr Cottrill
Dr Firman	Dr Firman		Dr Firman	
Dr Gray	Dr Gray	Dr Gray		Dr Gray
		Dr Weaver	Dr Weaver	Dr Weaver

EMERGENCY APPOINTMENTS (PROBLEMS THAT ARE CLINICALLY URGENT)

What is an emergency appointment?

An emergency appointment is for a clinically urgent problem that will not reasonably wait until the next available routine appointment. It is something that has suddenly occurred or a problem that has significantly worsening symptoms.

It is not for minor injuries, or any 999 problems such as chest pain or suspected stroke.

Neither is it for ongoing routine problems where a patient is not prepared to wait until the next available routine appointment. It is really important that patients understand that this resource is limited and using it inappropriately puts a lot of pressure on the clinicians trying to manage their care. Where ever possible maintaining continuity of care (ie seeing the same doctor) hugely improves the service that we aim to provide.

The doctors in the surgery work on a rota basis to cover the morning or afternoon duty doctor service and as well as seeing patients with clinically urgent problems in the surgery, they also have to go out on emergency visits or deal with other healthcare professionals needing urgent assistance. This means that any patient attending the surgery for an emergency appointment will have to wait to be seen even if they have been given an appointment time.

The surgery has 2 clinicians dealing with the emergency work – every day we have a doctor and either a Nurse Practitioner or Duty Nurse.

Why do the reception staff ask me about my problem if I need an emergency appointment?

If a patient asks for an emergency appointment the reception staff need to find out a brief description of the problem to enable them to book the appointment with the most appropriate clinician. The reception staff work to a clinical protocol which has been set up by the clinicians at the surgery which tells them which clinician to make the appointment with depending on the patient's problem.

The reception staff are not being nosy nor do they need to take lots of personal information, they just need a brief idea of what the problem is. They do not need to be clinically trained for this situation and they are not making a clinical judgement.

If a patient is at the reception desk when they are being asked this question and they would rather give the answer privately they can ask the reception staff to take them to a private area to discuss the problem.

Once the receptionist is aware of the problem they may offer you the option for your problem to be dealt with by a telephone call or by a member of the practice team in the surgery. The staff will try to deal with your request as efficiently and quickly as possible for you, although this may not necessarily be with the duty doctor. If the problem is urgent but can wait until the next day they may offer you an appointment with your usual GP to maintain continuity of care.

Why can't we have an emergency prescription service?

The practice does not have the resources to offer a same day prescription service, and therefore we encourage all our patients to make sure they plan to order their repeat medication in a timely manner to ensure that you do not run out of your medication. Our normal turn around time is 48hrs from the time we receive your request to the time the prescription is produced. Unless there is a query on the medication which has to be referred to a GP and it may take longer to process.

The local pharmacists will offer to order your repeat medication for you, to ensure that it is ready at the appropriate time, but you will need to discuss this directly with your local pharmacist and they may require additional time to process your request.

SPECIALISED SERVICES

Does the practice offer specialised services for Alcohol, Addictions, Mental Health and Learning disabilities?

The surgery does not offer in house services for alcohol and addictions, but the doctors can refer patients onto services offered by external organisations if necessary.

The surgery has mental health practitioners offering counselling appointments every week at the surgery. The doctors can refer patients to these services or alternatively patients can self refer to this service.

We do offer annual learning disability health checks for our patients.

CLINIC SERVICES

Can you tell me what clinics the surgery offers?

In regard to our clinical services we can only offer the services that we are commissioned to provide. We currently provide the following clinics:

- NHS Health Checks for 40-74 year olds
- Womens Health appointments
- Chronic Disease Management annual reviews for the following conditions: Diabetes, Heart Disease, Stroke, COPD and Asthma.
- Travel Vaccinations
- Minor Operations and Injections

HEALTH CARE ASSISTANTS

Why can't the health care assistants give advice?

The Health Care Assistants provide the following services: phlebotomy, blood pressure checks, ECG's, some dressings, suture removals, smoking cessation clinics, NHS health Checks, B12 injections, Flu injections, Warfarin Management. They are not trained nurses so they cannot give advice on medical conditions outside of their level of expertise, but they can refer patients on to a practice nurse or doctor for the appropriate advice.