



The Robert Street Practice

Dr. B Aubrey Dr. D Weaver Dr. A Mackintosh Dr. M Douglas Dr. I Griffiths Dr. V Anthony

Patient Consultation About Appointment Booking System

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The Partners and Staff at The Robert Street Practice are very grateful to you, our patients for your understanding and patience whilst we have completely overhauled our electronic patient record system. This was the first step on our roadmap to improve The Practice's access, efficiency, integration with online services and ultimately the care that we provide you, our patients.

In the next phase of this journey, The Practice is exploring new and innovative solutions for managing our appointment booking process, specifically investigating a new way of managing appointments called "Total Triage". We would like to hear our patients' thoughts and concerns about this new way of working.

Why is the practice thinking about changing?

Without question, the biggest issue facing our practice is that there are not enough appointments to meet our communities need. Getting a GP's opinion can be an uncertain endeavour. This a widescale problem across the U.K and many of you will be aware of the complex reasons behind this including:

- The population is living longer with more complex health needs.
- Conditions that used to be managed by hospital specialists are now being managed by your GP.
- The wait to see a specialist is increasing, meaning your family doctor may need to see you more often whilst you await hospital appointments
- The number of doctors training to be GPs has not increased to meet demand and many are leaving the profession due to retirement or emigration.
- It is harder to recruit healthcare staff in rural and coastal areas.

When demand exceeds supply, it is essential to investigate what can be done to ensure that our available appointments are used in the most efficient and appropriate way.



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What is Total Triage?

Total Triage is a system where every interaction with the practice begins with providing us with brief information about your health, prescription or general query. This is best done digitally yourself or on behalf of another patient via an online form on our website. If this is not possible, then one of the practice team can assist you by filling out the form on your behalf. Every request is read and actioned by the practice and kept in your medical record. This new way of working recognises that not every request will need a GP appointment.

Administrative requests will be read and actioned by our administrative team and brought to the attention of a clinician if needed. Prescriptions queries will be managed by a clinical pharmacist or clinician. Every medical query is read and actioned by one of the GP partners.

You will be able to review the status of your query and the outcome online. If a doctor, nursing or phlebotomy appointment is needed you will be invited to book this at a time that is convenient for you, unless your GP decides you need an appointment that same day. The new clinical system will enable us to send or receive information, including file attachments and photographs, digitally.

What problems is Total Triage hoping to improve?

Access –

- Total triage improves access to your GP practice by ensuring that the most appropriate person deals with your problem, from the beginning.
- Many patients prefer the convenience of communicating with the practice digitally (such as via e-mail). Total triage improves on e-mail by gathering the important information quickly and effortlessly, reducing “back and forth” communication with the practice.
- Total triage reduces the competition on the phone line at 8am. The reduced call volume means less waiting time for those who cannot use the digital service and increases the time our administrative team have to deal with your queries.
- Having real-time updates and feedback about your requests also means you should not need to contact the practice again once your initial query has been submitted.
- Your GP will be able to communicate and comment on investigation results digitally.
- Having all queries filtered through a single point of access makes the process of getting an appointment fairer for all patients.



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Urgent Queries

- Total triage allows the practice to collect important clinical information in advance of your appointment, giving us an idea of the severity and urgency of the problem and allowing us to prioritise the most urgent problems, first.
- You will be able to provide this information without the time pressure of a typical appointment, making you less likely to forget important information.
- Sometimes, a patient's problem might need hospital attention. This might be apparent to a doctor but not the patient. Recognising this early reduces the delay in you arriving at hospital.

Quality Of Care

- The IT system is designed to capture important information about your health, improving the wealth of information in your notes for doctors to make decision later in your life.
- If your problem is best served by a specific GP with a special interest or a GP who know your history well, this can be identified from the beginning.
- If your problem requires additional time or you need additional support, this can be identified in advance.

Common Patient Concerns

What about patient who don't/cannot use the internet?

Patients who do not use the internet can ask a family member or caregiver to complete the form on their behalf. If this is not possible then a member of the reception team will be willing to help you. Regardless of how the form is completed, the request will join the queue waiting to be triaged. There is no additional benefit from having a member of staff complete the form on your behalf.

Why do I have to register an account to access my GP surgery?

This depends on the software provider, some integrate with the NHS app, which is being increasingly rolled out in Wales. Otherwise, they require an e-mail address to set up an account. The practice can also then use your e-mail as an alternative method of communication, reducing delays compared with conventional postage.

I'm worried I won't get to see a GP about my problem.

It might be that your GP decides that another clinician is able to deal with your problem more effectively or in a timelier manner. By deferring appointments to other clinicians, your GP has more time for dealing with the problems that can only be dealt with by GPs. Total Triage systems have been demonstrated to approve access to GP practices. Additionally, It will be clear from your interactions with the Total Triage system how many times you have sought advice about a problem and who you have seen previously. If another service has been unable to address your issue, then your GP will be aware of this in their triaging decision.



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We are eager to address any other concerns you may have and encourage you to write your concerns by following the QR code below. If you need a paper form, please ask the reception.

