

# Total triage

## Frequently asked questions

### **What is Accurx?**

Accurx is a software used by 98% of GP practices in the UK to communicate and is an approved NHS supplier. You may have already had texts from the surgery using this system or asked by a clinician to send photographs ahead of a telephone consultation. It works with our practice computer system called SystemOne.

### **What is total triage?**

The process of total triage allows GP surgeries to receive information directly from a patient with their medical concern via an online form. These medical requests will be triaged by a clinician, or our Duty Doctor. This will allow the surgery to ensure patients with the most urgent needs are appropriately treated with the right clinician. You may not need an appointment, you may be re-directed to services outside of the practice (for example, the pharmacy or physio), or have tests requested before you come and see a doctor or nurse at the surgery.

### **Why is the surgery doing this?**

We have listened to patient feedback, particularly regarding the frustration of getting through on the phone. Additionally, the limitation of our routine appointment booking system, which were being allocated on a first come, first served basis, with long phone queues to get in touch with us at the surgery. This meant that vulnerable patients, or those who needed care sooner were missing out. This is also something the national NHS have insisted on, every practice in England has to be doing Total triage by October 2025.

### **What times of day is the form available?**

The medical form will be available for completion from 7:45am – 18:00pm Monday to Friday. This is to allow our clinical team to ensure we can review and triage appropriately each day. If you have a routine request after this time, you will need to wait until 7:45am the following day and complete the request. If you are requiring urgent medical assistance or have a life-threatening emergency, you will still need to contact the emergency services or visit the hospital. To ensure safety for patients, it may be necessary to close the triage system early, if we have reached our safe working capacity for the day. The surgery is still open until 6.30pm for urgent clinical matters.

### **How long is the medical form? Will it take me a long time?**

The form asks for your symptoms, the length of time these have been present or changed, how you would like the surgery to assist you, and how we can contact you once we have reviewed your request.

### **What happens once the form has been received at the surgery?**

Every form received will be triaged (reviewed) by the triage team (which includes clinicians). The team will decide how best to proceed with your query. If your query is medical and the triage team feel an appointment is appropriate, this will be classified internally as Red – urgent, Amber - less urgent and Green – routine. Red appointments will be allocated soonest, then Amber and then Green. The appointment will be booked in on the basis of clinical need, with the most appropriate person – a doctor, paramedic, nurse, Pharmacist, Physiotherapist or, if simply an administration matter such as querying at what stage a referral is, by the admin team. Patients will not be given an appointment at the time their

form is submitted but instead someone from the surgery will make contact once the request has been reviewed. You will be contacted within two working days of submitting a medical request but obviously urgent cases will be dealt with as a priority as is the case now. It is anticipated that most, if not all, requests, will be reviewed on the day they are received, but please remember if your concerns are very urgent you should ring 111 for advice or go straight to A&E if you are very unwell and require immediate treatment. Your admin request will be dealt with as soon as possible by the administration team.

#### **What if my request is routine or not urgent?**

You will still be able to submit your request using the medical request form as long as we have capacity. It is possible that you may be able to seek assistance from a pharmacist for advice as they are now able to prescribe antibiotics and other drugs (under the new NHS Pharmacy First scheme), especially for the treatment of seven conditions: Ear ache, Impetigo (a bacterial skin infection), infected insect bites, shingles, sinusitis, sore throat and uncomplicated urinary tract infections in women. Not all cases of the above conditions can be dealt with by pharmacies. You can check whether it is likely that a pharmacist can help you by clicking on the below link. <https://healthmedia.blog.gov.uk/2024/02/01/pharmacy-first-what-you-need-to-know/> Pharmacists can also give advice on other medical ailments such as head lice, thrush, worms, sun burn, hay fever and allergies, indigestion remedies, etc. You are able to discuss your symptoms with a pharmacist.

**We would not usually expect to prescribe the following items as these are usually readily available from pharmacies.**

- Cream/medication for thrush
- Cough and colds medication
- Common pain killers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen
- Head lice/worm treatment
- Hay fever and allergy treatment
- After sun/sunburn
- Calpol/ibuprofen for children
- Indigestion remedies
- Moisturisers

#### **I am on the surgery's housebound list. How do I get an appointment?**

We continue to offer home visits for those patients who are truly housebound and are recorded as such on their medical records. We would ask for you to please try to contact the Practice **before 10am** if you are housebound and think you may need a home visit. A GP will then phone you to gather more information before confirming the visit.

#### **I struggle with using the internet, how am I suppose to book an appointment?**

Although we recommend using the online request form for medical issues if you are unable to do so you can still ring the surgery and member of the reception team can fill out the form on your behalf.

#### **What times do requests open?**

You can send medical requests from 7.45am. There is no time restraint on admin requests.

#### **Can I request to see a certain doctor?**

Yes, you can request a certain doctor and we will try our best to make sure this happens.

**What happens if I can't make the appointment time the Doctor offers?**

We will have various appointment times and days for you to select when we send you the booking link.

**Do I have to have the NHS app to book appointments?**

No, you can make requests via our website too. [www.stelizabethmedicalcentre.co.uk](http://www.stelizabethmedicalcentre.co.uk) there is a banner on the front page to click.

**Do I have to register to use the online form?**

You only need to be registered as a patient at the surgery. There is no additional requirements.

**Can a form be submitted on behalf of someone else?**

Yes, when completing there is an option to state you are completing this on behalf of someone else and ask for their details.

**Can I ask for a preferred time to be contacted?**

Yes, please specify this on your request form.

**Do I need to complete the form for requesting appointments with the practice nurse or healthcare assistants?**

No, you can contact reception as you previously would.

**How long will it take to hear from someone once my request is submitted?**

There is no time frame, we aim to view and assess each medical request ASAP however the triaging Doctor will be working through requests all day so there may be a delay for less urgent requests.