

# NewsLetter

AUTUMN 2024



## IMPROVED ACCESS TO YOUR GP SERVICES - 'TOTAL TRIAGE SYSTEM'

**The quick and easy way to get in touch and get the healthcare and services you need.**

**Did you know you can now make an enquiry, order a prescription or get your admin queries answered on-line via the VHG Website?**

The Total Triage system, introduced in June 2024, is a new service helping patients connect with the practice much more easily and quickly, avoiding those long waits on the phone or reception. For those without a computer or a smart phone, it frees up phone lines and reception staff.

### **Why has this new system been introduced?**

Total Triage has been introduced to improve the way GP appointments are made. It helps GPs to prioritise those most in need, whilst enabling patients to access the right services for their needs.

### **HOW DOES THE NEW SYSTEM HELP PATIENTS AND STAFF?**

The new system brings great benefits for patients and staff:

#### **Benefits for patients:**

- online access to VHG services
- shorter call waiting times
- improved & faster access to services
- timely medical attention
- better continuity of care
- convenient online appointments and email or text replies to your enquiries

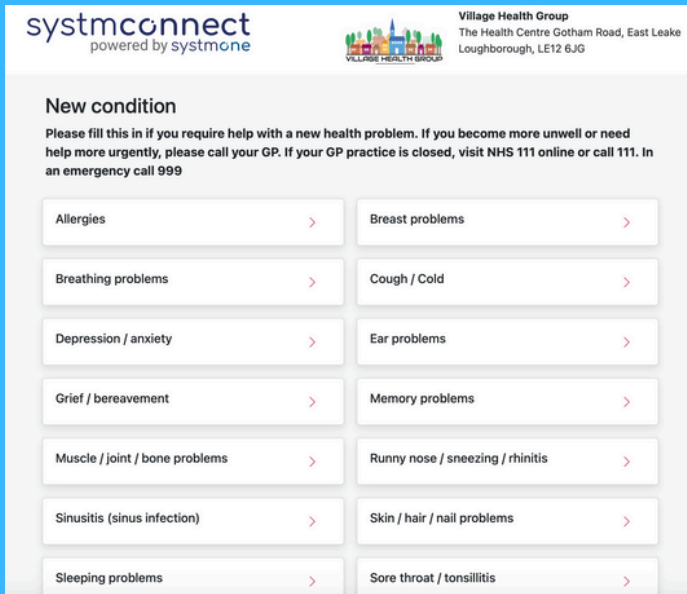
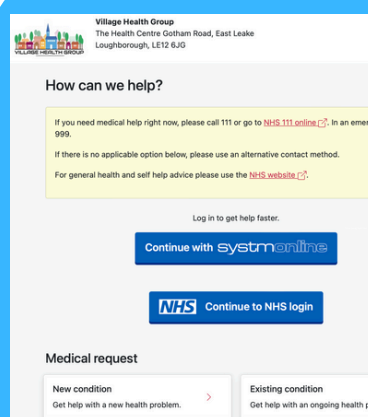
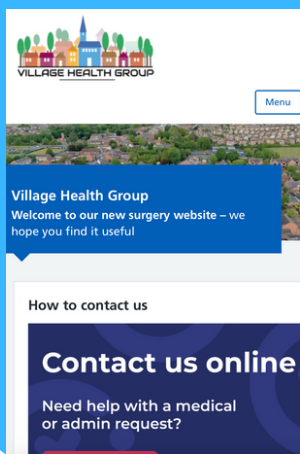
#### **Benefits for staff**

- providing better customer service
- planning workload & staffing more effectively
- streamlining admin work
- positive work environment

# What is 'Total Triage' and how does it work?

## What does the online form process look like?

Below is an example of what you might see on the on-line system for a medical enquiry for a 'new condition'. It's easy to use, the system will take you through each stage of the process.



## HOW DO I ACCESS THE ONLINE SYSTEM?

The new on-line system is easy to access on the Village Health Group website: [www.villagehealthgroup.co.uk](http://www.villagehealthgroup.co.uk)  
The system uses a digital form that allows you to contact the practice directly. You are asked a few questions to describe what you need help with.

## WHAT CAN I USE THE NEW ONLINE SYSTEM FOR?

### MEDICAL ISSUES

- **MEDICAL REQUESTS** (for new or existing conditions)
- **MEDICATION QUERIES** (questions about medication you are taking)

### ADMIN ISSUES

- DOCTOR'S LETTERS
- MEDICATION REQUESTS (reviews and **prescriptions**)
- FIT NOTES/SICK NOTES
- TEST RESULTS
- **CANCELLING APPOINTMENTS** please make sure you always cancel an appointment if you no longer need it as it frees up spaces for other patients.

# IF I NEED HELP WITH A MEDICAL ISSUE, WHO READS MY ONLINE REQUEST AND WHEN WILL I GET A REPLY?



All medical queries are automatically sent to a qualified GP who looks at every request and carefully assesses it. This is what 'triage' means.

**Each medical enquiry or medical request is responded to the SAME DAY**, ensuring no patient is turned away because there is insufficient appointment availability.

GPs can now offer on-line consultations where appropriate. This means that there is better availability for face-to-face appointments when the GP feels it is necessary to see you in person.

The new system makes the planning of services to meet the demand much easier, as enquiries come in immediately via the on-line system.

## HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE FOR AN ADMIN QUERY TO BE DEALT WITH?

For admin queries ONLY, please allow at least **3 working days** (Monday to Friday).

## CAN I ACCESS THE ON-LINE SYSTEM ANY TIME OF THE DAY / ANY DAY OF THE WEEK?

No - The online Total Triage system is open for requests during practice working hours only, **Monday to Friday 8am to 2pm.** This is because it is a 'live' system responded to in real-time during those hours. The system does not allow messages to be sent outside these hours as no-one is available to respond. **For admin or medication queries, the system can be used between Monday and Friday from 8am to 6.30pm.**

**PLEASE NOTE THE ONLINE SYSTEM IS CLOSED ON BANK HOLIDAYS & STAFF TRAINING DAYS.**

**On those days, you should contact 111 for routine medical issues or 999 for an EMERGENCY.**

# CAN I STILL BOOK APPOINTMENTS AT RECEPTION?

No, we really want to encourage you to use our new online system in the first instance. If you don't have access to the internet, then please get in touch by phone. Reception is open as usual from Monday to Friday, 8am to 6.30pm.

## IS THERE ANYONE WHO CAN HELP ME USE THE ONLINE SYSTEM?

Yes - reception staff can help you to use the online system if you telephone the practice.

## What should I do after 2pm when the online enquiry system closes?

If you have an urgent need to speak to a GP after 2pm and you don't feel it can wait until the next morning, please phone the practice and a receptionist will discuss your case with a GP.

## HOW HAS THE NEW SYSTEM CHANGED THINGS SINCE JUNE 2024?

- Reception and admin staff have more time to help users with phone calls and support over the phone
- Clinicians can now plan clinics more accurately
- Waiting lists have been reduced
- Patients are getting more timely medical attention
- Staff have increased job satisfaction  
Many patients feel they now have a much better service

## WHAT DO PATIENTS AND STAFF THINK OF THE NEW SYSTEM?

'Great service the new total triage is really user friendly'

'Very good and straight forward better than being kept on hold on the phone for an hour'

'Excellent - ease of accessing a GP and they knew why I was there. This system must help patients and the surgery. Please keep it!'

VHG Staff said:

'We can spend time helping those patients that need more help without worrying about the calls needing to be answered'

## CAN I USE THE ONLINE TRIAGE SYSTEM ANY TIME OF DAY OR NIGHT?

No - The online triage system only works while the surgery is open. It's a 'live' system - so there is a GP reading your requests as you send them in.

## OPENING HOURS FOR THE ONLINE TRIAGE SYSTEM

FOR MEDICAL ISSUES:

new or existing health problems & medication queries

**MONDAY TO FRIDAY - 8AM TO 2PM**

FOR ADMIN ENQUIRIES:

prescriptions, test results & letters

**MONDAY TO FRIDAY - 8AM to 6.30PM**