



St. George's Patient Forum Newsletter

Connecting Patients, Empowering Lives

July 2025

Digital Front Door Special

Key dates for July	Inside this issue
28th July – Digital Front Door opens (all appointments to be made this way from the 28 th July)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction• Why the change?• The benefits• How will it work?• FAQ

Introduction:

The Practice is changing the way to access GP appointments and advice from Monday 28th July to a new online system of total triage (assessing needs) which will be accessed through the Practice website <https://www.sgmp.nhs.uk> rather than via reception.

There will be no need to queue on the phone or at reception for GP appointments.

Why the Change?

- It is in line with Government Policy with the aim to improve patient access to Primary Care and deliver the right care at the right time. The present system of using the telephone is not working well – it is currently first come, first served rather than based on clinical need.
- Telephone lines are very busy and there are long waits which do not help anyone.
- Surgery is full, particularly at the 8.00am and 2.00pm 'rush hour' times.
- Increasing wait times for routine appointments
- National demographics and projected workload 25% increase in demand since COVID. Ill health is projected to increase by 37% in the next 15 years. The UK workforce is projected to increase by 4%, the probable outcome of this is very little increase in tax revenue and therefore very probably little increase in NHS funding.

The Benefits

It is hoped that the key benefits will be:

- End to 'first come, first served' and instead assessment of actual clinical needs.
- Same day response for all.
- Experienced Triager (one of the Practice GPs) and therefore safer practice.
- Some requests will be sorted online, which will be better for patients and won't need clinical space
- Easier to gauge unseen, unmet need using uniform questions and online coordination (and questions used on the online form can be changed if they are found to be not appropriate or working well).

- National data (on those GP practices who have already changed to this system) show that a third of requests can be resolved online – better for all patients and more quality time to be available for those who need ‘face to face’ appointments.

How it will work?

The following notes are taken from the AGM presentation. They explain the system to be used.

Digital front door for GP Appointments and Online requests.

How do I use the system?

Please visit our website <https://www.sgmp.nhs.uk> to request ALL doctor appointments, advice or raise any administrative queries – no login required (though NHS or systmonline login helpful) and click the ‘submit an admin or clinical request’ button. This will take you to an options page to fill out a relevant form, depending on your issue.

Our online request system, will be open for requests from 7.30am until 5pm (administrative requests until 6pm) Monday to Friday.

For medical problems, please supply as much information as possible, as early in the day as possible, to ensure your issue is accurately assessed. Each clinical request will be triaged by one of our GPs on the day. You may be contacted for additional information or a photo as appropriate. The team will then either offer online advice or an appointment on the day (a receptionist will contact you) or a routine appointment (via text or email booking link) within a maximum of 14 days, depending on need.

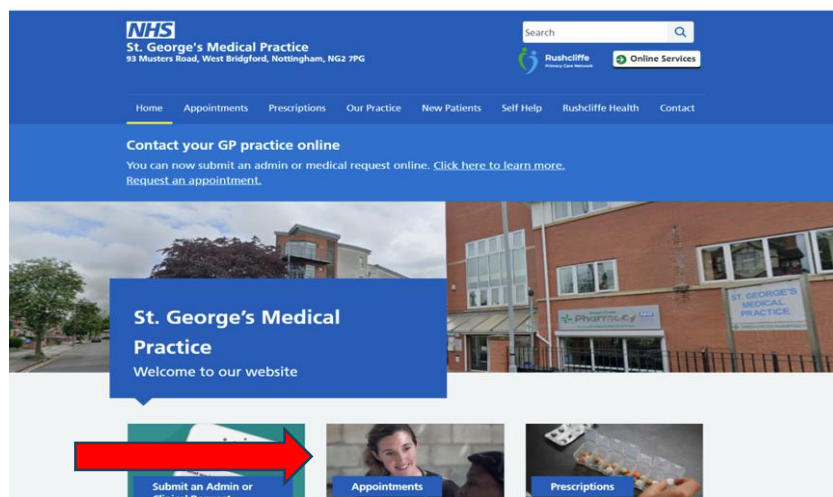
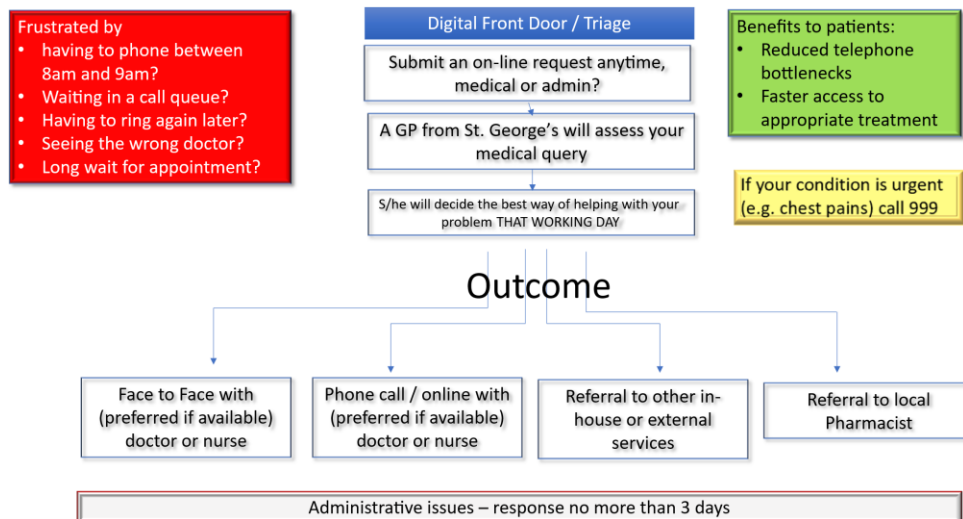
For nursing, healthcare assistant or blood appointment please contact reception via phone as usual.

Can I use the system for administrative queries (e.g. doctor’s letter, test results)?

You should use the same system by clicking one of the “Admin request” options from 7.30am till 6 pm and you will receive a reply within 3 days.

I cannot use a computer or smart phone! Help! I can’t fill in the Form.

Don’t worry, you will still be able to talk to a Receptionist at the Practice on the telephone, who will give you the right help and fill in an online request form for you.



When you click on the arrowed button above you get the below:-

Please log in using
system online or your
NHS app or
systemonline login if
you have one

**But you CAN continue
WITHOUT a login – it
will ask you for your
name etc later.**

You can also send a
query on behalf of a
patient (e.g. child,
elderly).

- Choose your category
- Confirm it's not an emergency on the following page
- Fill in the requested details on the next page
- Tell us who you are if you haven't logged in on the following page
- Submit the enquiry.

We will contact you back with your chosen method of contact to offer an outcome or appointment. Responses to medical problems the same day (if submitted before 5pm), administrative problems no more than 3 days.

Frequently asked questions (FAQ) and concerns:

These are taken from the audience at the AGM. Questions and the Doctors' responses are given.

Q. I only use SystmOnline – is that a disadvantage.

A. *There is no advantage or disadvantage in how you access the system, as you will be directed to exactly the same system to enter the request. Currently, the only way to access the system online would be via our website, but we hope that the system will be integrated and available via the NHS App very soon.*

Q. Can SystmOnline be used exactly as it is now? [For appointments or online queries]

A. *You will be able to continue to use SystmOnline or the NHS App to order repeat prescriptions, but you will no longer be able to book a GP appointment via that route, you would need to use the new system for all GP appointment requests. Nurse appointments, blood tests et cetera will continue to be booked as they are now, by telephoning the practice or in person.*

Q. Is confidentiality going to be a problem, filling in an online form with personal details?

A. *Everyone in the Practice already understands the principles of confidentiality. When the requests come into the system, they are automatically distributed to the appropriate teams (doctors, admin et cetera), depending on the type of request that was sent it, therefore the forms will only be being accessed by the appropriate staff members for dealing with the request.*

Q. Will the doctor/s dealing with the triage have a big burden that might cause a bottleneck?

A. *That shouldn't happen as demand will be gauged as for example with the 'Monday morning bulge'. The doctor/s are experienced and confident that the workflow can be managed. With all the available information it should be relatively easy to prioritise, also some requests will be dealt with very quickly.*

Q. People are used to using online all day, however the DFD opening hours are restricted?

A. *The hours of 7.30am to 5 pm for clinical requests and 7.30 am to 6pm for administrative requests, should provide a satisfactory service within the parameters that the staff can provide.*

Q. Can patients provide videos of their conditions e.g. rashes, lumps?

A. *It will be possible to use the system for photos, not videos*

Q. Will it be possible for 3rd parties to complete the forms e.g. carers

A. Yes

Q. Will there be monitoring of the system?

A. *Very definitely, on an ongoing basis but a formal review after 3 months. Family and Friends type feedback can be given. The Practice want the system to be as good as possible, flexible and adaptable.*

Q. Although technology is the focus, please don't lose the St. George's ethos! The professional development process must be good.

A. *Absolutely, we are all agreed about that.*

Q. What happens if due to hacking the system goes down.

A. *That threat exists at the moment even before the new system is established. There are still the phones but it would be difficult. However there are Business Recovery Plans in place.*

Q. Can you reach the elderly with the system?

A. *Carers or family members can complete the online process or a receptionist can do it over the phone. Adjustments will be sought, to be as pragmatic and humanitarian as possible. The annual review will also pick up those whose needs are not being met, for example those with dementia.*

Q. Texts work well when arranging blood test appointments.

A. *Blood testing works well thus but other tests are more complex and may have to be made by phone.*

Knock Knock

Who's there?

Doctor

Doctor Who?

No, it's Doctor Jelpke; thank you for using our Digital Front Door triage system, could you come in to see a doctor at 2pm this afternoon? 😊

Thanks to Claire Bicknell

Coming up in our August issue:

- Our next episode of our Podcast – 'Nicotine Nation'
- 1-31 Happiness Happens Month; 1-7 World Breastfeeding Week; 4-10 National Allotments Week; 18 Never Give Up Day

If you found this Newsletter useful please download and read the regular monthly Newsletter from St George's Patient Forum. You can access it via the website <https://www.sgmp.nhs.uk>

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