



Practice Communication Policy

Telephone

Patients of our practice are able to access a member of our medical or clinical team by telephone to discuss their clinical care. When telephone communication is received, the urgency and nature of the call is gathered to determine if the call will be transferred immediately or if a message will be taken for the call to be returned. In non-urgent situations, patient calls should not interrupt consultations with other patients. Our practice team members are aware of each practitioner's policy on accepting and returning telephone calls. Patient messages taken for follow-up by a general practitioner or other practice team member are documented for their attention and action or, in their absence, for the designated person who is responsible for that absent team members' workload. This is done by electronic messages, (F8) through our software and can be marked as urgent when forwarded to the appropriate person. If a patient has not asked for a message to be left for a doctor or other staff member but the information relayed is assessed to be clinically significant this information is then relayed to the appropriate person. Staff then insert the details of all calls and telephone conversations assessed to be significant in the internal electronic message which is linked to a patient's medical file.

Only a member of the medical or clinical team can provide treatment or advice over the telephone. Patients are advised through information contained in our practice brochure, website, in person and on the telephone and from the practice team member receiving the call, if a fee will be incurred for the telephone advice to be provided.

Electronic communication

Whilst not encouraged, our practice allows patients an opportunity to obtain advice or information related to their care by electronic means, but only where the general practitioner determines that a face-to-face consultation is unnecessary and that communication by electronic means is suitable. Our practice will only provide information that is of a general, non-urgent nature and will not initiate electronic communication (other than SMS appointment reminders) with patients. Any electronic communication received from patients is also used as a method to verify the contact details we have recorded on file are correct and up-to-date.