



## Bow and North Tawton Medical Practices

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**We are writing to you to let you know about some changes that we will be making to our appointment system from 30<sup>th</sup> May 2022.**

As a response to the Covid pandemic and to ensure the safety of both staff and patients, GP surgeries across the UK had to make significant changes to the way that they consulted with their patients. Throughout this difficult and challenging time, we are very proud that we continued to offer an open-door policy at the surgery and offered face to face appointments where they have been needed for our 5,700 patients.

Many of our patient community have welcomed and very much valued the opportunity to consult with their healthcare team in different ways – for example by telephone or through online consultations. As things take another step towards returning to something a bit more like normality across society, we have been looking at how we balance the needs of all our patients against the available resource of GPs, paramedic, nurses and HCAs who continue to deal with a large workload due to long waiting times and delays in hospital. We also need to consider the need for measures to protect us all from Covid such as social distancing which are still going to be required in the longer term within healthcare settings – including the need to wear a facemask.

**All requests for a same day 'urgent' appointment must be submitted in the morning by 11 am**

The reason for this change is that it is not possible for the clinical staff to receive and make calls all day long, due to the increase in face-to-face appointment capacity.

**A GP will review all requests and make a clinical decision where same day care is required; this is not decided by administrative staff.**

A clinical review of our daily phone call activity, undertaken by our GPs, shows us that many items on the same day list are not in fact urgent for that day. We have had excellent feedback from patients about the ability to pre-book a telephone consultation, so we are going to increase the availability of pre-bookable telephone consultation slots which you will be able to book directly online or through the reception team, in the same way that you might have previously booked a face-to-face appointment. Following an initial telephone consultation, we will then make a plan with you as to what needs to happen next, which may include needing to see a clinician face-to-face.

**Further to patient feedback, we are also introducing a new online consultation provider, AccuRx**

We are very grateful to our patient community that use our online consultation form, as this enables the GP to quickly understand the nature of the problems (in your own words) and decide on a plan, which may be a follow up telephone consultation, a face-to-face appointment or a referral to another member of the team. If you are unable to submit an online consultation yourself for whatever reason, our Patient Services Team will guide you through this process on the telephone and submit the online consultation on your behalf.

**We aim to review all requests made by telephone or via online consultation within two working days, and where appropriate offer an appointment within six weeks.**

We will continue to see patients face-to-face on the day based on clinical need as we have always done, ensuring that all our patient community are able to access the appropriate care from the appropriate person and at the appropriate time.

**Thank you for your ongoing support.**

  
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### Partners:

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