

## **Digital Triage Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**Updated 27<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

### **When will the online appointment system, Engage Consult be open?**

For admin enquires via Engage Consult this will be open 07:00-19:00. Engage Consult (for medical queries) will open Monday-Friday at 07:00-13:00 and 14:00-16:00. The system for medical queries will close when capacity is reached and advise you to call the practice if your request is urgent, phonelines remain open as usual for Nurse/HCA appointments. Please note our phonelines will close between 1-2pm, with emergency line available only.

Engage Consult will be closed on weekends and bank holidays.

### **What if I do not have access to the internet or struggle to complete forms?**

You can ask another person to complete you online Engage Consult form on your behalf or telephone the practice and the Patient Services team will be happy to complete the form with you over the phone. The triage team will contact you if they need any clarification on the details you have submitted. There is an option on the online form to add further information and if you have any problems describing the reason for your submission, please add this at the end of your consultation and the triage team will contact you.

### **How does the new appointment system, (Engage Consult) work?**

Submit an Engage Consult form via our website or using the NHS App which will then be assessed and prioritised by the clinical/admin team. We aim to respond to every submission by email, text, or telephone on the day. Most patients will be offered an appointment on the day they submit their online consultation. The Engage Consult questions have been written by the practice to get the right information to enable our triage team to get you the right appointment with the right person. All the data submitted by patients is accessed by Windrush Medical Practice staff only and not by a third party.

### **What if I don't have a mobile phone?**

You can still use the Engage Consult form if you don't have a mobile phone, you just need access to the internet such as on a computer or tablet device. You do need to provide a contact number of some kind, but this could be a landline if you don't have a mobile phone.

### **Can I complete an Engage Consult form or request an appointment on behalf of someone else?**

Yes, you can submit the Engage Consult form on behalf of the patient (the form will allow you to indicate this) and can put the contact number that we should either contact the patient or their representative on. Please note that due to patient confidentiality we cannot discuss anything about one of our patients unless they have explicitly given permission for us to do so.

### **Will you provide any practical help with completing the online Engage Consult form and the NHS App?**

Yes, we will advertise these sessions on our websites and promote in our waiting room. When you next call the practice to help with your online Engage Consult form, ask reception when the next session is. Currently we have the following sessions in the practice waiting room:

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July – Friday 5<sup>th</sup> July 830am-1pm and 2-430pm

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> July – Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July 830am-1pm and 2-430pm

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July 9am-1pm

### **Do I use Engage Consult form to book my routine Nurse/HealthCare Assistant Appointment?**

No. For all pre-bookable appointments with our Nursing and HCA teams (including blood tests, ECGs, dressings, immunisations, long term condition reviews, health checks, smear tests and contraception reviews) please contact the practice on 01993 70291.

### **How do I book a regular appointment with my GP?**

You can still use the Engage forms to submit a query about an ongoing medical condition. The Triage team will review all of these and book you an appointment with your own GP if appropriate.

### **How do I submit an administrative query**

The online consultation system must also be used for your administration queries such as requesting a sick certificate, test results and any other administrative query you may have.

### **How long will it take to hear from the practice?**

Once the information you have provided on you Engage Consult form has been triaged by our clinical team you will be contacted on the day of the submission. When the surgery contacts you, it will either be by text, email or by a phone call. You may be offered either an appointment with the most appropriate person within our team, such as a doctor, pharmacist, nurse, health care assistant etc, advice, or you may be directed to healthcare services within our community. Most patients will be offered an appointment on the day they submit their online consultation. Data on appointments is reviewed internally and externally by NHS Digital, this is known as “GPAD” data, this is to ensure that patients are being offered an appointment where appropriate within a suitable timeframe.

### **What if the time/day of the appointment doesn't work for me?**

There is a section on the form where you can write down the times that you aren't available, which our team can avoid when getting in touch with you. If your request is triaged as severe and sudden in onset, then you will be required to be available at all times.

### **Why do I need to complete an online Engage Consult form or answer the questions the reception team ask me?**

So that the team who look at all the information submitted can provide you with the appointment or advice you need with the right person in the right time period. The practice now has several additional practitioners working alongside the GP's. These include Clinical Pharmacist, Advanced Nurse Practitioners, GP Assistants and Social Prescribers. It may be more appropriate for you to see or speak to them. By assessing each request based on the information provided, it ensures that access is given based on medical need.

### **Why is the appointment system changing?**

Feedback from our recent patient survey has requested that we look at our appointment booking system, especially telephone waiting times, choice/booking options and continuity with clinicians. We have listened to this feedback and have made the decision to introduce the new appointment system Engage Consult. This will eliminate waiting on the telephone for administrative or clinical enquiries, which in turn frees the phone lines for urgent queries, home visit requests and vulnerable patients.

### **Will I get an appointment quicker if I speak to reception instead?**

The reception team will no longer be booking appointments directly without them being triaged by a clinician. All methods of completing the Engage Consult forms, either online, in person or over the phone will be assessed equally. Most patients will be offered an appointment on the day they submit their online consultation.

### **I don't feel comfortable telling reception about my medical issue.**

Please be assured that anything you discuss with a receptionist will be treated with absolute privacy and respect. All staff within the practice, including receptionists, sign a confidentiality agreement, meaning anything you discuss with them is not shared inappropriately.

### **What if English is not my main spoken language?**

In the same way that clinicians frequently use an official translation service on the phone the receptionists will also be able to access this if the patient they are speaking to is on the phone or in person in the surgery. Engage also has a translation service, so that you can complete the form in your main language.

### **Does this mean I won't see a GP anymore?**

No, the idea is the opposite. Completing Engage Consult forms is just a preliminary way of collecting information to ensure you are seen by the right person in the right way, at the right time, not a way of deflecting medical issues that need contact with a GP.

### **Who will be reviewing the Engage Consult forms?**

The Engage Consult form will be triaged by a GP and/or Senior Clinicians in the practice, the admin queries by the reception or GP Administrators.

### **If the receptionist will not make an appointment, how do I get an appointment on the day if I need to see a doctor as I am unwell?**

The triaging clinician will be able to determine the urgency of the request and deal with more urgent queries on the same day.

### **If I complete the Engage Consult form either online, in person or over the phone who will get back to me?**

You will be contacted on the same day as the Engage Consult form has been submitted either by email, text, or telephone. After the triage process, the appropriate team member will be in contact with you– that might be a receptionist, GP assistant, pharmacist, nurse, Health Care assistant, Social Prescriber – depending on the nature of the query submitted.

### **Will I still have a choice of which doctor they see?**

There is an option to specify which doctor you would like to see. We will try to meet this request, doctor's availability permitting. We will also ask the patient if you are happy to wait for the consultation with the requested GP, but this may mean that you will have to wait longer for your query to be dealt with.

### **What happens to a request that I send overnight or at the weekend?**

The form is available during working hours. The form is not available during evenings, weekends and Bank Holidays for patient safety.

### **Will my request be saved to my record?**

Any request you submit about a medical issue will be saved to your record so that whoever calls you or sees you about your problem has your information to hand. If you send us a question about an administrative issue, we will only save this to your record if we think it would be helpful to do so (or if you ask us to).

### **Will this disadvantage me or my elderly or vulnerable relative?**

For those with access to a mobile phone or internet, the new Engage Consult form will be a more convenient way to contact the practice, which should free up our phone lines for those who really need it – especially those who cannot access the internet for whatever reason. If you or your relative cannot use the Engage Consult form, please contact us on the phone as you normally would, and we can deal with your query or make you an appointment as you need.