

WOODBIDGE HILL SURGERY

Consult Fair Use Policy



At Woodbridge Hill Surgery we wish to ensure fair and equal access to our online consultation platform, telephone lines, appointments, and other practice resources for all patients. The following policy lays out both practice and patient responsibilities to ensure that this can happen.

Your Responsibility for Fair Access

We are committed to providing the best possible service for everyone. To maintain access for everyone, we ask all patients to contact our team in a fair, consistent, and timely manner.

Inconsiderate or excessive use of our resources can prevent other patients from accessing necessary care due to finite availability.

We recognise that you may become more unwell between the time an appointment has been requested and the time of the appointment, and where the situation has changed we would always welcome patients getting back in touch to request a sooner appointment. Likewise, where patients feel they may have missed important information from an initial request for an appointment, we welcome additional information that can inform good clinical decision making. This helps us ensure that you are seeing the right person at the right time for the right reason.

If unfair use severely impacts our ability to deliver safe care, we reserve the right to review and potentially restrict an individual's access to these resources. This process will involve communication and potential action, which, in rare cases of unreasonableness (e.g., breaching the NHS Zero Tolerance Policy) and an irretrievable breakdown of the doctor-patient relationship, may lead to removal from the practice list.

Examples of unfair use could be considered as follows:

- Submitting repeated online requests for appointments when a plan is already in place to see you and where the clinical situation has not changed.
- Submitting an unreasonable number of online consultations, significantly exceeding the average patient use.
- Repeatedly challenging the appointment offers that have been made to you when the clinical situation has not changed.
- Repeatedly not attending booked appointments.
- Any form of abuse or harassment towards our staff.

Our Commitment to You

We promise to:

- Treat all patients with dignity, respect, and equality.
- Provide a personal, friendly, and confidential service.
- Keep you informed about our services.
- Offer access to services based on your assessed clinical need.
- Operate efficiently within our available resources.
- Maintain a confidential practice complaints procedure and welcome all patient feedback.

Help Us Serve You Better

To help us manage resources effectively:

- **One Request Per Issue:** Submit only one online consultation per issue, including all necessary information. Repeated submissions or chasing will not speed up the response.
- **Appointments:** Keep your appointments or cancel with sufficient notice.
- **Be Patient:** Please bear with us if there are delays; this may be due to an emergency or another patient needing extra time. We will try to keep you informed.
- **Responsible Use:** Use our services responsibly and do not expect immediate treatment for non-urgent or routine conditions.
- **Consider Alternatives:** For minor conditions, use self-care, pharmacies, or NHS 111 where appropriate.
- **Utilise the Full Team:** The GP is not always the most appropriate clinician; please use the services of other professionals in the practice where you have been advised that this is appropriate.
- **Prescriptions:** Allow the standard 48 hours for repeat prescription processing and do not pressure staff for earlier fulfilment.
- **Update your Information:** Keep us informed of changes to your name, address, and phone number.
- **Respect Staff:** Treat us with respect. Verbal or physical abuse will not be tolerated.
- **Home Visits:** Only request a home visit if you are physically incapable or too ill to attend the surgery. All requests will be triaged.

Irretrievable Breakdown of the Doctor-Patient Relationship

In situations where behaviour is persistently inconsiderate or unreasonable this can lead to a complete breakdown of trust. In these situations, we will take steps to manage the situation, so that we can continue to meet your care needs without disadvantaging the wider patient population:

- We would inform you in writing that there is a problem with the way the system is being used, and that it is unfairly impacting on the practices ability to deliver care.
- At this point we would offer you the opportunity to meet with a member of the partnership team and practice management to explore your perspective, and where it would be helpful, we can agree on a contract of reasonable access.
- Following this if the situation cannot be resolved or further breaches occur, we will commence the process for removal from the practice list. We will inform Primary Care Support England and the patient in writing, explain the reason, and provide information on how to register with another GP.

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