



Telephone Triage Explained

Telephone Triage is a process by which the patient appointment system is managed in a GP surgery by the duty doctor. We have been running this system since the start of the COVID19 pandemic which is now embedded. It is a method by which a GP, or Advanced Nurse Practitioner telephones the patient and assesses through a detailed history whether the patient's medical problem can be managed without the patient having to come in for a face to face appointment. This may be appropriate in cases when patients wish to discuss blood results, hospital letters or X-ray/scan results. However if the patient needs to come in then a face to face appointment will be made with the appropriate healthcare professional be it a GP, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Pharmacist, Nurse or Healthcare Assistant. There may be occasions when you are deemed suitable to attend the Porthceri Central Vale Hub, speak to a Mental Health Practitioner or physiotherapist.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Is it to stop me getting an appointment? No, not at all – It is to ensure that all the patients that need to be seen are seen by an appropriate health care professional. It is also a tool for which a telephone consultation can be used to appropriately manage patient's concerns even if a face to face appointment is not required.

How does it work? Any patient who requests a GP or Advanced Nurse Practitioner appointment will receive a phone call from one of the team either in the morning, or afternoon. The GP or Advanced Nurse Practitioner after speaking to the patient decides to either bring them to be seen Face to Face, or book them in to be seen on another day. However the problem may also be dealt with appropriately in another way. (e.g. blood test arranged, referral completed, appointment with Practice Nurse arranged or prescription query discussed) This system has been used successfully for several years across many GP surgeries in the UK. It has been evidenced that this process significantly improves access for patients.

Why is the Practice doing it?

- **To improve access.** The ability to significantly reduce “**did not attend appointments**”
- **To optimise GP appointments.** With an ever developing and diverse workforce less complicated needs can be dealt with allied health professionals and other members of the health care team.
- **Prudent Healthcare.** Seeing the right person the first time at the right time.
- **Reduce waiting times.** Feedback from patients in the past has highlighted that for certain things they do not want to have to attend surgery and feel that a telephone consultation will be far more appropriate.

We are regularly auditing our appointments system to ensure that it is achieving the goals and expectations of patients. This process is only one of the processes put in place to help us improve access and reduce risk. We will continue to work with patient participation group (PPG) to identify and improve areas of concern.

WQMC is committed to listening to feedback and working with patients to improve and develop our services.