Fair Usage Policy

SystmConnect Total Triage

January 2026

1. Purpose of this Policy

This Fair Usage Policy explains how patients may appropriately use the Practice's **SystmConnect Total Triage system.**

The system is designed to ensure **safe, timely, and equitable access** to clinical care by allowing the Practice to prioritise requests according to **clinical need and urgency.**

This policy supports patient safety, staff wellbeing, and the effective use of limited NHS resources.

2. Appropriate Use of SystmConnect

Patients may use SystmConnect to submit requests for:

- New/urgent or ongoing medical problems
- Medication-related queries
- Administrative requests (e.g. fit notes, letters)
- Follow-up queries where advised by the Practice

Each submission must relate to **one problem** and **one patient** only and should be **clear, accurate, and truthful.**

3. Urgent and Emergency Conditions

SystmConnect **must not** be used for emergencies**.**

Patients should:

- Call **999** for life-threatening emergencies
- Attend **A&E** or contact **NHS 111** for urgent conditions requiring same-day assessment outside Practice hours

Using SystmConnect for emergency conditions may result in **dangerous delays**, for which the Practice cannot accept responsibility.

4. Fair and Reasonable Use

To ensure fair access for all patients, the Practice expects that patients:

- Do not submit multiple requests for the same issue unless advised
- Do not submit multiple requests within a short timeframe
- Use the system only when clinically or administratively necessary
- Do not attempt to bypass clinical triage decisions or appointment availability

Submitting multiple or unnecessary requests will **not result in faster care** and may delay assessment for others.

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5. Misuse of the System

Misuse of SystmConnect includes, but is not limited to:

- Submitting repeated duplicate requests without clinical justification
- Providing misleading, false, or exaggerated information
- Attempting to circumvent clinical triage decisions
- Using the system on behalf of another patient without appropriate authority

The Practice reserves the right to **restrict or suspend online access** where misuse occurs, while ensuring that **alternative access routes remain available** in line with NHS guidance.

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6. Clinical Triage and Responses

All requests submitted via SystmConnect are **clinically triaged.**

- Requests are prioritised by **clinical urgency**, not by submission time
- Not all requests will result in an appointment
- Responses may include advice, signposting, investigations, prescriptions, or referral to another service

Submitting multiple requests does not alter triage outcomes and may delay processing.

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7. Patient Responsibilities

Patients are responsible for:

- Providing accurate, complete, and honest information
- Monitoring messages and responses from the Practice
- Seeking further help if symptoms worsen or change
- Informing the Practice of changes to contact details

Failure to provide accurate information may affect patient safety and clinical decision-making.

8. Appropriate Language, Behaviour and Zero Tolerance

The Practice operates a **Zero Tolerance policy** towards abuse, aggression, or threatening behaviour.

When using the SystmConnect Total Triage system, patients are expected to communicate in a **courteous, respectful, and non-abusive manner**, as they would during any face-to-face or telephone interaction.

The following behaviour is **not acceptable** and will not be tolerated:

- Abusive, offensive, or insulting language
- Aggressive or intimidating behaviour
- Threats (explicit or implied) towards Practice staff or the Practice
- Discriminatory, derogatory, or harassing language of any kind

All information submitted via SystmConnect forms part of the patient's **medical record** and is treated as a formal communication.

Where Zero Tolerance behaviour occurs, the Practice may take **proportionate action**, which may include:

- Terminating or not progressing the online request
- Restricting or removing access to SystmConnect, while ensuring alternative access to care remains available
- Taking further action in line with NHS guidance, Practice policy, and contractual obligations

Any action taken will be **reasonable, lawful, documented**, and is intended to protect staff wellbeing and the safe delivery of NHS services.

9. Equality and Accessibility

The Practice is committed to providing **equitable access** to care.

Patients who are unable to use online systems, or who require reasonable adjustments, may access services via **telephone or in person**.

No patient will be denied care due to an inability to use SystmConnect.

10. Data Protection and Confidentiality

Information submitted through SystmConnect is processed in accordance with:

- UK GDPR
- Data Protection Act 2018
- NHS confidentiality requirements

Patients are responsible for ensuring they use a **secure and private device** when submitting requests.

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11. Practice Discretion

The Practice reserves the right to:

- Amend this policy as required
- Take proportionate action where misuse impacts patient safety or service delivery
- Act in accordance with NHS contractual obligations and professional standards

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12. Acceptance of Policy

By submitting a request via SystmConnect, patients confirm that they have **read, understood, and agree** to comply with this Fair Usage Policy.