

Total Triage

Frequently asked questions

January 2026

New Appointment System – “Total Triage”

From February 2nd 2026 we are evolving the way appointments are requested at Witterings Medical Centre. We will be using a piece of software called SystmConnect which will enable us to move to a total triage approach.

Total Triage is an approach recommended by NHS England to improve access to primary care. Its aims are to:

- Ensure patients receive the right care, from the right person, at the right time
- Improve fairness and consistency in how appointments are allocated
- Deal with urgent problems more quickly

We understand that change can raise questions and cause concerns. This document answers common questions and explains what the new system means for you.

Thank you for your patience and support as we make these improvements.

1. How do I request an appointment?

You will no longer need to spend time phoning or waiting in a queue to request a GP appointment.

All GP appointment requests will now need to be requested via an online form. If you cannot do this yourself please do not worry. Our reception team can complete these requests with you over the telephone.

The online request system will be available Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays) from 07:30am.

Requests can be submitted via:

- The Witterings Medical Centre website (www.witteringsmedicalcentre.co.uk)
- The NHS App

The medical form will ask questions about your health concern. Please include as much detail as possible to help our clinical team assess your request safely. You may also upload photos if appropriate.

Once submitted, you will receive confirmation that your request has been received.

2. What if my problem is urgent?

You no longer need to telephone the surgery to make urgent requests.

If you have a problem that you think needs the attention of the medical centre within 72 hours, complete an online request via the **NEW PROBLEM** option. This will be reviewed by a doctor before deciding the most appropriate outcome.

You may be signposted to another service, such as the NHS Pharmacy First scheme (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/primary-care/pharmacy/pharmacy-services/pharmacy-first/>), which has been commissioned by NHS England to enable community pharmacies to manage many common conditions without GP involvement. This includes prescribing antibiotics, where appropriate.

There is a limit to the number of urgent requests we can safely manage each day. If we reach our safe working capacity and you feel your problem cannot wait, the system will direct you to contact 111, 999 or to attend A&E.

If you have a medical emergency or life-threatening condition, do not use the online form. General Practice is **not** an emergency service - call 999 or attend A&E. If you are unsure please contact NHS 111.

3. What if I don't have internet access or struggle with online forms?

If you are unable to complete the online form, a friend, family member or carer may submit a form on your behalf.

If this is not possible, please telephone the medical centre and one of our receptionists can help complete the request with you.

If you have specific communication needs or require additional support, please let us know.

4. What about nurse and other healthcare appointments?

Appointments such as:

- Practice nurse
- Blood tests
- Dressings
- Injections

do not require an online request and can continue to be booked by speaking to a receptionist.

5. How do I submit an administrative or medication request?

SystemConnect can also be used for non-medical queries, including:

- Fit notes ("sick notes" or Med3s)
- Prescription queries (although it remains quicker and easier for you to request regular repeat medication via the NHS App)
- Medical letters and insurance form requests

Administrative requests are reviewed by our administrative team and dealt with as quickly as possible.

6. What happens after I submit my request?

Every request is reviewed (triaged) by a dedicated Duty Doctor.

They will assess:

- The urgency of your problem
- The type of care you need
- Who is the most appropriate person or service to help you

You will be contacted with the most appropriate outcome.

Outcomes may include:

- Advice by text or phone
- A same-day appointment
- An appointment within 3 days
- A routine, non-urgent appointment
- Referral to another appropriate service (for example, pharmacy, physiotherapy, social prescribing)

7. How and when will you contact me?

Please make sure your contact details are correct and that you tell us your preferred method of contact so that we can contact you back.

If the doctor decides that you do need an appointment, you may receive a text message or email with a personalised booking invitation link to self-book an appointment online.

If you cannot receive text messages, please let us know on the form.

8. What is self-booking?

For some requests, we may send you a secure link allowing you to book your own appointment online.

These links expire. If you have difficulty using a link please contact reception.

9. Will I get an appointment quicker by speaking to reception?

No. All GP appointment requests — whether submitted online or by phone — are triaged in the same way.

Reception staff will not allocate GP appointments directly. This ensures fairness and clinical safety for all patients.

10. What if I have more than one medical problem?

Please submit one medical issue per online request.

If you are seeking advice for multiple people (for example multiple children) please submit a request for each person. If you do not do this you may be asked to go back and submit forms for each person.

This allows you to provide enough detail for each problem and helps our clinicians manage requests safely and efficiently. It is also important as each request is attached to the patient's record.

11. What if I think I need a home visit?

If you believe you are too unwell to attend the practice and need the assessment of a doctor, please telephone us directly rather than using the online form.

Home visit requests are decided on based upon the individual needs of a patient. It is important to understand that home visits are not undertaken simply because of transport problems or logistical difficulties in attending the surgery. If a patient is able to attend a hospital out-patient appointment then it is expected that they would also be able to attend a GP appointment.

More information about home visits can be found in our home visiting policy which can be viewed on our website.

12. What is SystmConnect and is it secure?

SystmConnect is the online consultation system provided by TPP, an approved NHS supplier. TPP also produce the software that your GP medical records are held in.

Your information is:

- Secure
- Encrypted
- Stored in UK-based NHS-approved data centres
- SystmConnect meets national NHS information governance and security standards.

No artificial intelligence (AI) is used by SystmConnect.

Helping Us Help You

Although this change represents an evolution in the way contact with the practice is made, we also recognise that, since October 2025, the vast majority of patients have been using online consultations to contact us for routine appointments.

Of course, electronic means of communication are not easy for everybody and we will endeavour to support you in adapting. As more requests are made online, our phone lines will be less busy — improving access for patients who genuinely need to contact us by telephone.

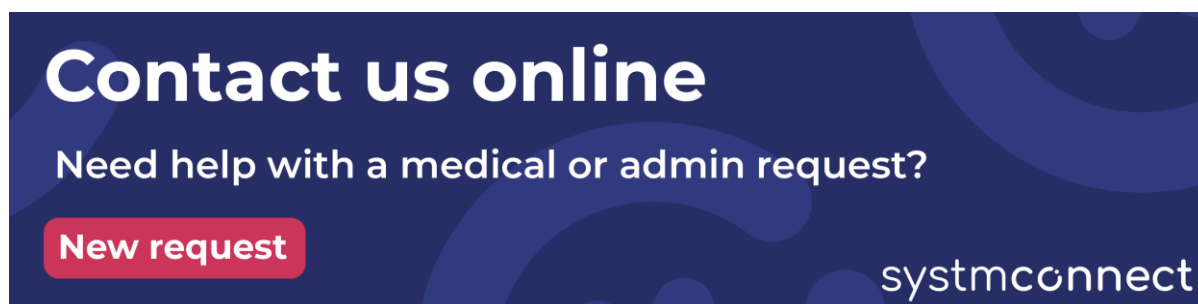
Using the online form helps our clinicians gather the right information from the start. Please add as much information to the requests as possible. This will allow us to make appropriately safe decisions and ensure everyone is treated fairly.

We appreciate your patience while the system settles in and thank you for helping us improve the way we care for our community.

Constructive feedback is welcomed.

Visual guide for computer users

Visit our website (www.witteringsmedicalcentre.co.uk) and look for the following banner:



When you click on the banner, you will be taken to the Witterings Medical Centre's dedicated SystemConnect homepage which looks like this:

A screenshot of the SystemConnect homepage. At the top left is the 'systemconnect powered by systmone' logo. At the top right is the 'The Witterings Medical Centre' logo and address: 'The Witterings Medical Centre Cakeham Road, East Wittering, Chichester, PO20 8BH'. The main heading is 'How can we help?'. Below this is a yellow box with emergency instructions: 'If you need medical help right now, please call 111 or go to [NHS 111 online](#) in an emergency call 999. If there is no applicable option below, please use an alternative contact method. For general health and self help advice please use the [NHS website](#).' Below the yellow box is a small text: 'Log in to attach images to your request and get help faster.' There are two blue buttons: 'Continue with systemonline' and 'Continue to NHS login'. Below these are two sections: 'Medical request' and 'Admin request'. Under 'Medical request' are two boxes: 'Non-urgent medical condition' (Get help with a non-urgent health problem.) and 'New condition' (Get help with a new health problem.). Under 'Admin request' are three boxes: 'Register as new patient', 'Doctor's letter' (Ask for a report or letter, for example for insurance.), and 'Fit note' (Ask for a fit / sick note.). There is also a 'Medication request' box (Medication reviews and prescription requests.) under the 'Admin request' section.

You are given the choice of logging in via SystmOnline or NHS login (the blue boxes). This is **optional** but will save you needing to add your details each time you send a request.

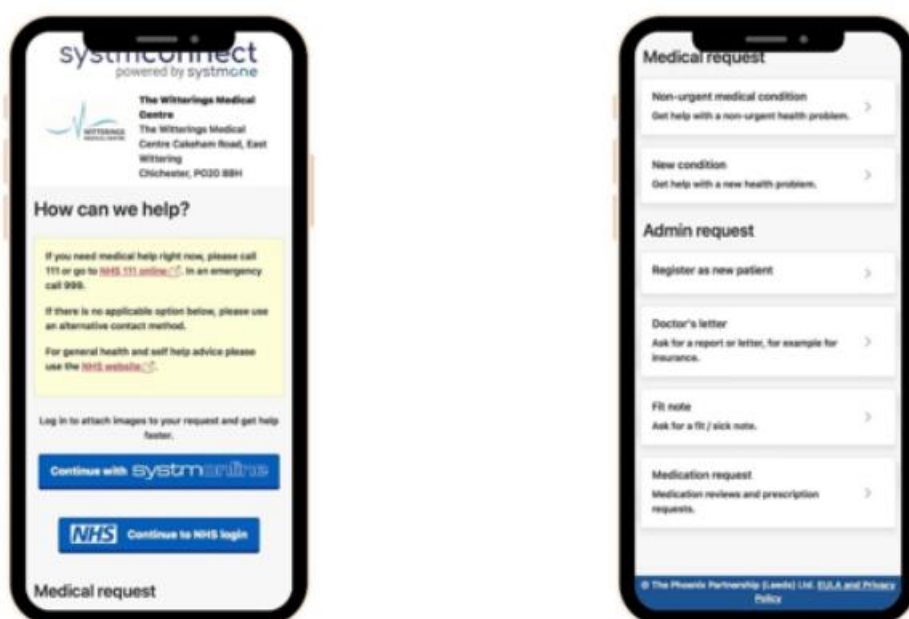
You then have the choice of selecting a medical request option or an admin request option. Medical request options are “non-urgent” or “new condition” - **choose NEW CONDITION for any URGENT requests.**

Visual guide for mobile device users

Via our website and look for the following banner:



When you click on this banner, you will be taken to the Witterings Medical Centre's dedicated SystemConnect homepage which looks like this:



You are given the choice of logging in via SystemOnline or NHS login (the blue boxes). This is optional but will save you needing to add your details each time you send a request.

You then have the choice of selecting a medical request option or an admin request option. Medical requests options are “non-urgent” or “new condition” - **choose NEW CONDITION for any URGENT requests.**