

Frequently asked questions

What are Patient Advisers?

Patient Advisers provide patients with a first point of contact that directs them to the most appropriate source of help. Staff who are Patient Advisors have undertaken appropriate training that enables them to advise of the most suitable service for patients calling the practice to ensure that are seen by the right service, at the right time, in the right place.

When is this happening?

The role of Patient Advisers is to be rolled out across Warrington in stages from Monday 11th June 2018.

Why do we need Patient Advisers?

Research shows that sometimes, patients contact their GP practice when other services – both inside the practice and in the wider community - are probably best placed to help.

What are the benefits of Patient Advisers?

Patient Advisers make it easier for patients to get an appointment with the most appropriate professional – this could be with a healthcare assistant, practice nurse, clinical pharmacist based in your practice (who may be able to prescribe your medicines in the same way as your doctor) or your GP.

Alternatively, they can advise you of the most appropriate source of help or advice - this may be your local pharmacist who can't prescribe medication, but can offer advice about medicines that can be bought over the counter for short term minor illness.

Patient Advisers can also offer patients access to the most suitable community service and have access to a directory of local services in order to help them direct patients to the most suitable place for help and support. For example, if you're a carer and need some additional support Patient Advisers could signpost you to Wired Carers.

Who does this affect?

All patients in Warrington registered with an NHS GP.

Why will Patient Advisers ask me why I want an appointment - aren't you just trying to block me seeing my GP?

To help patients access the correct service, when you call your GP practice, your Patient Adviser will need to know a little about why you need an appointment.

Patient Advisers aren't being nose-y or obstructive in your request to seeing a GP, they genuinely want to help.

This new approach is not about denying our patients an appointment; actually, our Patient Advisers want to do the opposite. Patient Advisers have a number of alternative types of appointments available to them and they need to offer you the most appropriate appointment to help with your problem. The most appropriate appointment may be with the GP or for example, perhaps with another member of the practice team.

Do I have to answer any questions a Patient Adviser asks me?

No. If you don't want to answer the questions which the Patient Adviser asks you are not obliged to do so. However, by doing so they can make sure that those people who really need to see a GP are able to and also help those people who would benefit from help/advice from a more appropriate healthcare professional/service.

Patient Advisors haven't got any medical training - how can I be sure the advice they give me is right?

The purpose of this new role is to advise patients/carers about alternative sources of help and advice that is available and most relevant to patient needs. Advising patients is not a clinical consultation and it is not designed to make a diagnosis or plan treatment. If an appointment with your GP is the most appropriate service, you will be offered an appointment.