



## APPOINTMENT ADVICE

Orchard Surgery  
Dereham

### Request an appointment with a GP/Clinician

Use this form at any time to get help from a healthcare professional. We aim to respond within **6 working hours**.

If you have any requirements for Disability Access please **ask reception**.

Please be aware that any replies from the surgery may appear in your Junk Inbox.

Required field(s) are indicated by \*

#### Request an appointment with a GP/Clinician

Are you completing this form on behalf of:

Yourself

Someone else (e.g. a child or dependent)

#### About you

Your First Name(s): \*  
First Name(s) as appears on your passport.

Your Last Name: \*  
Last Name(s) as appears on your passport.

Postcode: \*  
The one used to register with your GP.

Your Date of Birth: \*  
Your date of birth is required to verify your identity.

Sex: \*  
 Male  Female  Other  
As on your medical record.

Your Email: \*

### IMPROVING YOUR SURGERY

ORCHARD Surgery's patient registrations increased significantly during the last couple of years, and the PPG has been interested in the staffing challenge this presents for the surgery.

We were pleased to hear that the surgery is making excellent progress in the recruitment in sufficient numbers of the right kind of clinicians and support staff to meet its changing patient base.

The surgery is also particularly focused on preventing patient inconvenience necessitated by staff sickness or absence. Some patients will have noticed cancellation issues, particularly over the recent summer, but the surgery is taking clear steps to prevent this remaining an ongoing problem. It is reducing its use of locums and has already recruited new GPs.

In the meantime, back office staff are benefiting from improved career and promotion opportunities, all of which is contributing to improved morale. If you've seen, for example, that Orchard is recruiting new care navigators, it's likely that others have just been promoted.

Where are all these new staff going to work? In October 2024 Orchard was able to begin the first major refurbishment of the surgery since it was built. Three new consulting rooms are being constructed within the left arm of the waiting room, as changes to working practices mean this space is no longer as busy as it once was. The work will take a few months, so please be nice to the builders as well as the staff!

**BOOKING appointments is consistently the No. 1 topic raised by patients with the PPG. We regularly pass on improvement suggestions to the surgery and are in turn updated on changes to their procedures.**

Here are a few useful pointers about how things currently work – and why. Bear in mind that the surgery continues to recruit a range of clinicians so it can best support its patients, and you may not necessarily be directed to see a GP.

#### The '8am' rush

First, let's look at the '8am rush'. At this time of day the surgery is expecting to receive urgent patient requests, for example if your child has been ill overnight (although it should go without saying that in an emergency or life-threatening situation you should be calling 999, not the surgery).

#### How consultations are allocated

Phone calls and submissions via the Orchard website at [www.orchardsurgerydereham.co.uk/digitalpractice/consulting-room/](http://www.orchardsurgerydereham.co.uk/digitalpractice/consulting-room/) are dealt with by 'care navigators' trained by the surgery to refer you as quickly as possible to the most appropriate service or individual.

During this period a duty doctor works alongside the care navigator team to advise in cases where a patient's treatment pathway is less obvious, so there's more chance your initial face-to-face or telephone consultation should be right first time.

#### Call queue and web form

The sheer volume of requests necessitates the telephone 'call queue'. Submissions via the website are reviewed in real time by the care navigator and duty doctor as they come in, so you may prefer to consider this option if the queue is long. The website form is turned off later in the morning when available urgent appointments for that day are full.

Although the phone lines remain open until 6pm – and appointments can also be booked at the front desk – those needing urgent attention are advised to call/visit in the morning, as calling later might not allow enough time to fit in an appointment within that day's working hours.

#### Routine appointments

What about booking routine or follow-up appointments? Normally these can be booked up to two weeks ahead because that's as far as Orchard's duty rotas are scheduled. The surgery agrees it's not ideal to ask patients to have to make their own diary note to make another appointment in, say, three months' time, but experience shows booking appointments with long lead times leads to a higher incidence of patient 'no shows'.

Please cancel your appointment if you don't need it. Another patient will be grateful you did so. And if your phone number changes, please tell the surgery, as they can't send you appointment reminders without your correct number.



# SOCIAL PRESCRIBING



We briefly looked at the concept of 'social prescribing' in our last issue.

Many things can affect your health and wellbeing including non-medical problems such as work or financial stress, money worries or loneliness and isolation. In its most recent newsletter, Breckland Council cited one particular example where an individual with bipolar disorder, obesity, social isolation and excessive alcohol consumption was helped by the Social Prescribing Team and support organisations.

Your GP can refer you to the Social Prescribing Team, but as a patient of Orchard Surgery you can also self-refer. Visit [www.breckland.gov.uk/social-prescribing](http://www.breckland.gov.uk/social-prescribing) to find out more.

## About the PPG

Orchard Surgery's Patient Participation Group is a voluntary group of patients who meet quarterly with the surgery to support it with constructive feedback, suggestions and assistance.

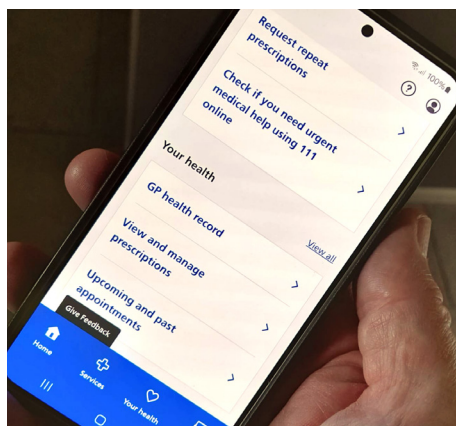
All registered patients are welcome to join. To keep things manageable we currently have a limit of 15 on membership, and you can apply as a candidate via the surgery website. At the time of writing we do have vacancies within the group.

Although the PPG isn't able to intervene in individual cases, we welcome patients' queries and comments on Orchard Surgery. If you would like us to raise your views or have any general suggestions you'd like us to discuss, please email our chair at [orchardderehamppg@gmail.com](mailto:orchardderehamppg@gmail.com)

We aim to include views from as wide a selection of patients as possible, from occasional service users to those with long-term needs. We are particularly keen to hear from those who may feel their views would otherwise be under-represented, including those with particular health or special interests.

Follow the PPG on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/Orchard-Surgery-PPG-102674409550299](http://www.facebook.com/Orchard-Surgery-PPG-102674409550299)

## NHS App update



Previous PPG newsletters have looked at the surgery's online services which are available to patients using SystemOnline, Airmid and the NHS App.

The surgery has asked the PPG to make you aware that the NHS App's functionality has come on in leaps and bounds in recent months, so if you haven't already tried it we'd recommend doing so.

If you're starting from scratch you'll need to ask the surgery to set you up an account. But if you're an existing online services user you can arrange a login for the NHS App without needing to use photo ID. Just ask the surgery for a special PIN. This will enable you to use your existing SystemOnline/Airmid credentials.

## IN BRIEF

### Pharmacy First



Pharmacy First

In our last newsletter we noted that Orchard Surgery advised patients that Pharmacy First – the new Government scheme whereby several specific conditions can be diagnosed and prescribed for by your pharmacist – was still in its early stages.

The surgery is pleased to confirm this scheme is now fully operational in all Dereham's pharmacies.

### Physio self-referral

#### Book Appointment

##### Available Sessions

Period	08/10/2024 - 22/10/2024
Location	Dereham Hospital - Beetley Unit - NR19 2EX
Session Type	All types
Clinician	All clinicians

Show

Date	Earliest Time	Latest Time	Location
Tuesday 22 Oct 2024	14:30	14:30	Dereham Hospital - Beetley Unit - NR19 2EX

Patients with muscle and joint issues can self-refer to the Norfolk & Waveney Community Musculoskeletal (MSK) Service, which offers appointments at Dereham Hospital among its sites.

Once registered you'll need the Airmid app or a SystemOnline account to receive messages and to book/manage appointments, but the process is very easy thereafter. Visit [norfolkandwaveneycommunityhealth.nhs.uk/mask/refer-yourself/](http://norfolkandwaveneycommunityhealth.nhs.uk/mask/refer-yourself/) or call 01493 809977.

You'll still need a GP referral if you're aged between 12-16, have learning or communication difficulties, require a home visit, or have non-MSK complications such as stroke.

### Feedback wanted!

The PPG encourages patients to provide as much feedback as possible on their experiences of Orchard Surgery to Healthwatch Norfolk at [feedback.healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk](http://feedback.healthwatchnorfolk.co.uk).

The organisation's brief includes looking for trends rather than assisting with specific issues, but it then engages directly with the surgery to help improve the patient experience. Please tell them what you think, as it really works.

Produced by the Orchard Surgery Patient Participant Group

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