

Orchard Surgery Dereham

PPG NEWS

ORCHARD SURGERY PATIENT PARTICIPANT GROUP | SPRING 2025



CONTACTING THE SURGERY



In recent months Orchard Surgery has been making it easier for patients to make appointments. For example, it recently introduced a new telephone system which includes a ring-back capability. PPG members who've used this service confirm it works very well when the call queue is long.

New enhanced access

The surgery has also introduced new enhanced access appointments via phone or face-to-face for patients that have difficulty attending during normal surgery hours. Face-to-face appointments take place on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings between 7.30am and 8am and some evenings. Specific clinics such as coil/Nexplanon, steroid injections and flu/Covid clinics are held over some weekends. You should submit your request for an appointment by calling or using the web form in the normal way.

Booking appointments

For urgent same-day attention it's difficult to avoid the 8am rush, but it can be quicker to use the 'Request an appointment with a GP/clinician' form on the surgery's website. It collects the same information as you would

give on the phone, and is available until noon unless that day's appointments are full.

Care navigators

Calls and web submissions are handled together by care navigators in the order they are received (with a duty doctor on hand to advise where a treatment pathway is less obvious). The care navigator uses your answers to identify the most appropriate doctor, nurse or healthcare professional to help you as quickly as possible.

Phone lines stay open until 6pm. Routine appointments can be booked up to two weeks ahead (unfortunately appointments with longer lead times lead to a higher incidence of 'no shows'). Because the surgery's doctors can see and treat several patients in the practice in the time that it takes to carry out one home visit, these visits are set aside for patients who are unable to attend the practice because of a medical condition.

Keep your details up to date

Please keep your phone number up to date so you receive appointment reminders. And remember that in an emergency or life-threatening situation always call 999.

REFURBISHMENT UPDATE

The refurbishment of the surgery – which commenced in October 2024 before the Toftwood closure was announced – is continuing on schedule with completion for the end of March. Three new consulting rooms have been constructed, and the old carpets have been replaced by hospital-grade flooring for better infection control.

Decorating is being completed with a new reception desk, and the potholes in the car park are being resurfaced.



One of the new consulting rooms.

CLOSURE OF TOFTWOOD

At the time of writing, the bulk transfer of patients from Toftwood to Orchard Surgery is in process. The PPG is aware how much additional work has been involved on Orchard's part to ensure this goes smoothly – especially to ensure continuity of prescriptions and care of long-term conditions. Suggestions from the PPG have been incorporated into Orchard's communications with the new patients.

PPG members have been keen to ensure this change does not detrimentally affect the service Orchard's existing patients receive. While there have been some changes in Orchard personnel, we have been assured that the surgery's overall staffing plan has been enhanced to take account of the increased number of registered patients.

You can check the surgery's website to read about its clinicians. You'll see some new faces there as it has been busy recruiting and is continuing to do so.

OUT OF HOURS HELP

111 online

Get help for your symptoms

If you think you need medical help right now, 111 online can tell you what to do next.

I want to get:

help for my symptoms or injury >

dental help >

mental health help >

a prescription or medicines information >

help with an existing medical condition >

Call 111 or visit 111.nhs.uk for help out of hours.

With Norwich Walk-In Centre's capacity and hours cut from April 2025, the PPG asked Orchard Surgery the best course of action for out-of-hours medical help.

The simple answer is to call 111 or to use 'NHS 111 online' at 111.nhs.uk (the latter only for patients over five years old). These work as a triage service to direct you to the best place to get help for your symptoms or injury, dental help, mental health help, a prescription or medicines information, or help with an existing medical condition.

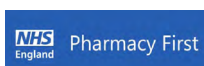
If your symptoms mean you need a callback from a 111 nurse, you will be offered one and given a timeframe (you cannot request a callback). Online users or people who have called 111 go into the same callback queue and the waiting times are the same.

You may also have read about a new service called GP Front Door, staffed by experienced GPs, advanced nurse practitioners and emergency care practitioners between 9am and 9pm every day within the Emergency Departments

at NNUH, QEH and the James Paget. We understand this operates similarly to a walk-in service in that you cannot book appointments in advance, which is why Orchard Surgery recommends using the 111 services in the first instance before going to A&E except in an emergency.

Pharmacy First

Don't forget that **Pharmacy First** – the Government scheme whereby several specific conditions can be diagnosed and prescribed for by your pharmacist – is fully operational in all Dereham's pharmacies.



Self-referral

You can also self-refer to a number of specialised services such as physiotherapy and sexual health – see orchardsurgerydereham.co.uk/services/referrals/ for a current list of services for which you can do this.

Self referrals

There are a number of services locally that you are able to make self referrals to.

Carers >

Drugs and alcohol >

Exercise >

Maternity >

Mental health >

Physiotherapy >

Sexual health >

Stop smoking >

Speech and language therapy >

Young carers >

Youth counselling >

Weight management >

Self-referral options on the Orchard website at orchardsurgerydereham.co.uk/services/referrals/

IN BRIEF

Cancellation texts

Following feedback from the PPG, Orchard Surgery now sends text confirmations to patients that have cancelled their appointments.

We publish monthly missed appointment figures on the PPG Facebook page, and we hope to see these numbers reduce over time. Please remember to cancel if you cannot attend, so that another patient gets an opportunity to use the clinician's time.

NHS App accounts

The NHS App's functionality continues to expand fast, so the PPG recommends trying it.

If you're starting from scratch you'll need a new authenticated account from the surgery, but users with existing SystmOnline/Airmid credentials can request a special PIN to log into the NHS App without needing photo ID.

About the PPG

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

Join us

Apply via surgery website or at reception. All registered patients are welcome to join the PPG, although we currently have a limit of 12 on membership.

Contact us

The PPG isn't able to intervene in individual cases, but we welcome patients' queries and comments on the surgery. If you would like us to raise your views or have any general suggestions you'd like us to discuss, please email orchardchairppg@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 us

Follow [Patient Participation Group for Orchard Surgery](#) on Facebook.



Produced by the Orchard Surgery Patient Participant Group

Scan for Facebook page
Contact orchardchairppg@gmail.com

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