

# Better Access to GP Services

# FAQ



**Heartbeat**

Connecting health and care communities

## What is changing?

We have increased the number of appointments available within the Better Access service. These appointments are available 6.30pm–8pm Monday to Friday and between 9am–5pm Saturdays.

Providing you are registered with a GP practice in Richmondshire, you'll be eligible to access the service.

## How can I access the service?

You can pre-book an appointment in the Better Access service by calling your usual GP practice reception team, via your practice website or by using the NHS app.

## How do I know where my appointment will be?

You will be notified of the location whilst booking your appointment. You will also receive a reminder text notification on the day of your appointment.

## What if I can't get an appointment on a day to suit me?

The Better Access appointments are on a first come, first served basis. If there are no appointments available for your preferred day and time, you can ask your practice to book the next available slot on your preferred day and time.

## Will the healthcare professional I see be able to see my health record?

Yes. You will be asked to give your consent for your record to be shared with the person who carries out your consultation. If you do not want your record to be shared in this way, you will not be able to book an appointment in the Better Access service.

## What type of appointments are available?

Better Access will look and feel like routine general practice.

## Why is my appointment not at my usual GP practice?

Practices in Richmondshire are working together with Heartbeat, our local GP Federation. This means our patients can be seen in the Better Access service at any one of our locations, regardless of which practice they are registered with.

## How will my usual GP be made aware of what has been discussed at my Better Access appointment?

The person you see for your appointment will be able to enter all the details about the consultation into your record using the IT system. Your own GP will be able to follow up your consultation if necessary.

## If my usual GP practice uses 'triage' method, how will this fit in?

Better Access is the same as your regular GP service – it is routine primary care. You may find that you go through the usual triage process with your practice reception team before being offered an appointment to make sure that you see the right person for your needs.



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### **Will I be able to book other additional services e.g. blood testing, nurse appointments?**

Yes. You will be able to book an appointment with a wide range of healthcare professionals.

### **How far in advance can I book a Better Access appointment?**

You will be able to book appointments up to two weeks in advance.

### **Will pharmacies be open at the time of my Better Access appointment?**

If the hub you attend has a practice dispensary, this may not be open during the Better Access hours. If you are given a prescription you may need to take it to a local community pharmacy.

### **Can I drop in or ask for a same day appointment?**

While this is not a drop-in or walk-in service, there will be some on-the-day appointments available for people who need them.

### **Will there be a priority system e.g. if I work during usual GP practice hours?**

No. All appointments in the service are available to everyone on a first-come, first-served basis.

### **What if I am running late for my Better Access appointment?**

Should you arrive late for your appointment it will be at the discretion of the healthcare professional whether they are able to see you or not.

### **Who might I see for my appointment?**

GPs will see patients with the greatest needs first. You may be offered an appointment with any of the following healthcare professionals:

GP (Doctor)  
Advanced Nurse Practitioner  
Physician Associate  
Pharmacist  
Nurse  
Health Care Assistant  
Phlebotomist

The reception team at your GP practice will book you an appointment with the right person for your needs.

You might have an appointment with someone who does not work at your usual GP practice, but you will still receive the best possible level of care.

### **What if I need to rearrange or no longer need my Better Access appointment?**

If you need to cancel or rearrange your appointment, please contact your own GP practice reception team.

**REMEMBER:** if you no longer need your appointment, please cancel it so someone else can have it.

The logo for 'Better Access' features the words 'Better' and 'Access' in a dark blue, sans-serif font. The text is enclosed within a circular border composed of small red dots. A trail of these red dots extends from the right side of the circle, curving upwards and to the right.

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