

# FRESSINGFIELD & STRADBROKE MEDICAL CENTRES – PLEASE HELP US TO HELP YOU (Updated Summer 24)

YOUR QUESTIONS	WE LISTENED
Why can't the practice have more GP's?	Practices are funded based on the number of patients registered. Therefore, unfortunately, we do not have the funding to recruit a further GP. General practice represents 6% of the overall NHS spend, whilst undertaking 90% of all activity in the NHS. We are always looking at other ways to improve appointment availability for our patients by employing other healthcare professionals, such as advanced nurse practitioners, paramedics and pharmacists, and upskilling our nursing team so they can offer a wider variety of appointments.
Why are you so busy?	Data published in 2024 showed that there were around 29.8 million appointments delivered by GPs and their teams in just one month, compared with 24.2 million in the same month pre-pandemic. This increase in demand is having a huge impact on practices like us. Nationwide the number of patients each GP is responsible for has increased 18% since 2015 and means that each GP is responsible for an average of 2,294 patients. Our practice provided over 4000 more appointments in 2023 than 2022. The data for 2024 is showing that demand is increasing even more.
Can I see a clinician face to face?	Yes, when <u>booking ahead</u> for an appointment we provide you the choice to come to the practice to see a clinician. We assess (triage) urgent on the day requests as they come in. If we did not have this on the day telephone assessment system in place we would not be able to offer the amount of appointments that we do. The clinicians are highly experienced in telephone triage and assessing whether concerns can be dealt with via the telephone or whether a face-to-face follow up assessment is required.
Can I self-refer for certain medical conditions?	<p>Yes, you can self-refer for the following-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physiotherapy via - <a href="https://physioselfrefer.co.uk">physioselfrefer.co.uk</a></li> <li>• Podiatry via - <a href="https://podiatryreferrals.co.uk">podiatryreferrals.co.uk</a></li> <li>• Mental Health Wellbeing via - <a href="https://wellbeingnands.co.uk">wellbeingnands.co.uk</a></li> <li>• Get help with your symptoms - 111 online can provide help and tell you what to do next about your symptoms - <a href="https://111.nhs.uk">https://111.nhs.uk</a></li> <li>• For Stop Smoking, Be Active or Health Weight Services – you can self-refer via <a href="https://feelgoodsuffolk.co.uk/">https://feelgoodsuffolk.co.uk/</a></li> </ul>
How can Pharmacies help me?	<p>Pharmacies can give you advice on a range of conditions and should be the first port of call for minor complaints. The Pharmacy First scheme was launched to ease pressures on practices, this service enables pharmacies to help patients with the following 7 common conditions in addition to the services and help they have always been able to offer.</p> <p>Acute Ear Infection (Age range 1 to 17 years)          Impetigo (Age range 1 year and over)          Infected insect bites (Age range 1 year and over)          Shingles (Age range 18 years and over)          Sinusitis (Age range 12 years and over)          Sore Throat (Age range 5 years and over)          Uncomplicated urinary tract infection (women 16-64 years)</p> <p>Further information is available via-  <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/pharmacies/how-pharmacies-can-help/">www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/pharmacies/how-pharmacies-can-help/</a></p>

<b>What are the opening times of the Dispensaries?</b>	<b>The dispensary at Fressingfield is open: 8:30am to 1pm &amp; 3pm to 6:30pm every weekday The dispensary at Stradbroke is open 8:30am to 12:30pm every weekday &amp; between 3:45pm and 6:15pm on a Monday and Friday.</b>
<b>Why do you close between 1pm &amp; 3pm?</b>	<b>Some patients have asked why we have to close between 1pm and 3pm each day at Fressingfield. The dispensers need this protected time in order to process your medication requests safely. Without this protected time we wouldn't be able to get your medications ready for you on time. At Stradbroke we are able to utilise the time when the surgery is closed to patients.</b>
<b>What are the timescales?</b>	<b>We need 1 weeks' notice to process your repeat medication request. If you request your medications on a Monday, your medication would be available the following Monday and so on.</b>
<b>Why do I have to wait at the hatch?</b>	<b>Patients have also asked why they have to wait at the hatch when they can see people in the dispensary. The dispensers have to follow strict protocols and have to finish the process they are following safely which means that the patient may have to wait at the hatch whilst they safely complete their processes. If staff are disrupted it can lead to mistakes which can have severe consequences.</b>
<b>Why are medications not available when I come to collect them?</b>	<b>Nationally there are huge shortages of medications so we are finding it difficult to source some. Even when we do believe we have ordered the medications to fulfil your orders, often when we receive our deliveries we do not receive all the items we requested.</b>
<b>How can I order my medication?</b>	<b>Please use the NHS App or drop your prescription into either surgery.</b>
<b>I can't see my medications when I order via the NHS App?</b>	<b>The NHS App is a national system and is outside of our control. Patients are telling us that they can't always see their medications when they come to order them via the NHS App. The App will not let you see your medications if you try to order them too early. If your medications are due and you cannot see them in the App, you can free text the details of the medications you wish to order in the free text box on the App. The dispensary will then be able to process your medications from this free text information. You can also use this free text box to specify collection at Stradbroke, otherwise this will automatically default to Fressingfield. We provide a 'forward order' system, this means that when you come to collect your medications the dispensers will give you a date to collect your next medications. This saves you having to re-order the medications.</b>
<b>Staffing Pressures</b>	<b>We like many other practices and pharmacies are struggling with staff shortages. We have been advertising to find trained dispensers for many months, but unfortunately, we are just not able to recruit which places huge pressures on our team. Our team try really hard to get your medications ready on time. We receive many phone calls asking if your medications are ready to collect and dealing with these phone calls can increase the pressures on our team. If you have provided the necessary 1 weeks' notice then your medications will be ready. Please note that sometimes we may need to temporarily close our dispensaries at either site if we do not have sufficient staff to safely man both dispensaries.</b>
<b>Why am I having to wait longer for someone to answer the phone?</b>	<b>We can receive up to 250 calls every day, this equates to around 60,000 calls per year. We appreciate that sometimes you may have to wait longer if our staff are dealing with complex calls that may take longer to deal with or if lots of patients all phone in at the same time. We have recently upgraded our phone system to offer a 'call back' function. When you choose the call back function it holds your place in the phone queue and our care navigator will phone you back. The role of the care navigator is a very challenging one; we unfortunately have lost a number of our care navigation team recently and feedback regarding their reason for leaving is the challenging patient behaviour they face. We are currently training a number of new members to the team.</b>
<b><i>Please be kind to our staff. Everyone at the practice is working hard to support our patients, but sadly, our staff are increasingly experiencing rudeness and abuse from some patients, which is very unpleasant when they are simply trying to do their job. Patient abuse is causing staff to leave which ultimately puts more strain on serving our patients.</i></b>	

