

Ashwell & Bassingbourn Surgery Patients Group



Ashwell Surgery

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Ashwell & Bassingbourn Surgery – Response to Spring 2023 Patient Survey - Sept 2023

This report has been prepared by representatives of both Ashwell & Bassingbourn Surgery and the Ashwell & Bassingbourn Patients Group following the Spring Survey into patient expectations of the Surgery and the Appointments system.

The report aims to summarise the results of the survey. But we thought it would also be an opportunity to explain the capabilities of the Surgery and how it is working to improve the services it provides. It also suggests how patients can get the best out of the services on offer.

We'd like to thank the many patients who completed the Survey, and whose views have contributed to this response.

Survey Results Summary

- 370 questionnaires were completed – a really positive number of responses
- Preferred way to contact the surgery:
 - Telephone: 42%
 - Digital / website: 23%
 - In person: 21%
 - Email: 14%
- Expected wait time to be seen for a new, acute (urgent) condition:
 - Same day: 40%
 - Within 24 hrs: 24%
 - Within 48 hrs: 14%
 - Same day triage: 12%
- Expected wait time to be seen re an ongoing / routine (non urgent) condition:
 - Same day: 3%
 - Within 1 week: 42%
 - Within 2 weeks: 43%
 - Within 4 weeks: 12%
- Expected contact attempts by Surgery re a booked appointment:
 - Once: 8%
 - Twice: 57%
 - Three times: 19%
 - Until successful: 16%
- Preferred appointment type:
 - Face to face: 62%
 - Telephone: 1%
 - Video: 1%
 - As guided by Surgery: 36%
- Usage of Online / Digital Services:
 - Confident to use: 20%
 - Need to refresh how: 15%
 - Not used, but could: 49%
 - Not confident or aware: 16%

The Surgery – Background Context

- Our Surgery is obliged to follow operational guidelines set by the Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB). [The Homepage – Hertfordshire and West Essex NHS ICB](#)
- Our Surgery is part of a local group of NHS surgeries in Baldock and Letchworth and together are called Icknield Primary Care Network (PCN). Through our PCN we can offer access to a wider range of Healthcare professionals such as Physiotherapists, Social Prescribers, a Mental Health Nurse, and Pharmacists.

Primary Care Networks - practices working together – Hertfordshire and West Essex NHS ICB

- Our Surgery is run by 3 partners with support from a Practice Manager (Katie Prince), our Patient Services Manager (Jo Coleman), Dispensary Manager (Julie Payne), Medical Secretaries, and a dedicated team of Clinical Staff, Patient Coordinators and Dispensers.
- There are 15 Patient Coordinators and 3 Dispensers looking after the Surgery administrative and dispensary functions. Duties include issuing repeat medications, assisting with the medication review process, dispensing medication, stock checks, booking appointments, responding to emails, assigning online consultations, scanning letters and making referrals, processing patient registrations and organisation of patient notes.
- There are approximately 8000 patients served by Ashwell & Bassingbourn surgeries.
- Patients generally have the option to be seen at either Ashwell or Bassingbourn for a ‘face to face’ appointment. But this is subject to the number of appointment slots available at each location, or the availability of the person you wish to see.

	Surgery Opening Times			
	Ashwell		Bassingbourn	
	Morning	Afternoon	Morning	Afternoon
Monday	08:30 - 13.00	14:00 - 18:30	08:30 - 13.00	14:00 - 17:30
Tuesday	08:30 - 13.00	Closed	Closed	14:00 - 18:30
Wednesday	08:30 - 13.00	14:00 - 18:30	08:30 - 13.00	Closed
Thursday	08:30 - 13.00	14:00 - 18:30	08:30 - 13.00	14:00 - 17:30
Friday	08:30 - 13.00	14:00 - 18:30	08:30 - 13.00	14:00 - 17:30
Saturday	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Sunday	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed

Dispensary Opening Times

As above, however sometimes when affected by staff shortages the Dispensary will close between 12.00-13.00.

If this is the case, please speak to a Patient Coordinator at Reception on arrival who may be able to assist you with collecting your medication.

The Surgery – Medical Staff

- 3 x Full Time GPs
- 1 x ¾ time GP
- 2 x GP Registrars (qualified doctors completing their induction to General Practice)
- 1 Physician's Associate
- 2 Healthcare Assistants
- 1 Practice Nurse
- 1 Mental Health Nurse
- 2 Practice Pharmacists
- 1 Physiotherapist
- 1 Phlebotomist
- 1 Pharmacy Technician
- GP numbers are supplemented by using locum doctors on a freelance basis to cover periods of annual leave

The Surgery – Treatment / Patient Response Capacity

- The clinical team each begin their day with allocated time to read and process electronic communications, patients' clinic letters and their own pathology and radiology requests.
- Each Partner GP has 20 x 15 min appointment slots per day for 4 days per week (phone or in-person). Each appointment requires preparation time beforehand to check patient notes, and time afterwards to update the patient record.
- Our Non-partner GP delivers 25 x 15-minute appointments per day x 3 days per week.
- Each day, one GP (known as the 'duty doctor') starts the day with no pre-booked appointments, to be able to respond to urgent medical cases requiring a same day response.
- Each GP Registrar will see an average of 15 patients per day
- Our Physician's Associate works four days per week and offers 21 x 15-minute appointments per day
- Between our two Healthcare Assistants we offer an average of 28 x 10 minute appointments every day plus weekly domiciliary visits.
- Our Practice Nurse works two and a half days and offers an average of 85 appointments per week.
- The Mental Health Nurse is provided by the PCN and accessed via the Patient Coordinator at the Surgery.
- The Physiotherapist is provided by the PCN and accessed via the Patient Coordinator.
- The Phlebotomy (blood test) service is commissioned by the ICB. The service operates from Ashwell Surgery on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning offering approximately 66 appointments per week.
- Our pharmacists hold clinics on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursday afternoons and offer approximately 40 x 15-minute appointment slots per week.
- Overall, on average our surgery can deliver approximately 800 practice-based medical appointments per week.

The Surgery – Medical Services provided

- Patient appointments represent only a small part of the total responsibilities and tasks required from the GP Surgery. The image below shows the full scope of those responsibilities:



Patients – Ways of Accessing Services /Contacting the Surgery

○ Telephone

- We recognise that the current telephone system has problems and is not fit for purpose. The Surgery (with input from the PCN and ICB) has identified a replacement system that is widely used and technically supported. It will allow a call-back option to avoid having to wait in a queue. NHS England funding is imminent. Patients will be advised when the new system will become operational.

○ Ashwell Surgery website

1. Online Consultations

Currently provided by “Accurx”: [Accurx | The simple way to communicate about patient care](#)

This service is available during Surgery opening times only. The service is accessed by completing a simple online form (no username or password is required) which can be used to:

- Seek help for a non-urgent medical issue, and the Surgery will respond.
- Make or change an appointment.
- Request a sick note
- Request help with other admin matters.

2. SystemOnline

To use this system, you will need a Password and Username.

To obtain your log in details to access this service, you need to go into the Surgery in person, with **one form of photo ID** such as valid passport or drivers’ licence and with **a proof of address**, such as a utility bill addressed to yourself and dated within the last three months.

Once you have been issued with your Username and Password, you will be able to use the Patient Online Service to:

- Order your repeat prescriptions
- Make an appointment
- Cancel an appointment
- Change your contact details
- Review your summary record, medications and known allergies
- View your test results (subject to the GP’s discretion)

3. NHS App

Patients can download the NHS App and access certain parts of the App without any input from our Surgery, such as repeat prescriptions, booking and managing appointments and getting health information and advice.

To view your health record, you would need to follow the process above for SystemOne Online Access. Once enabled by our Surgery, you should be able to view this information using the App.

For more information:

[Online services – Ashwell Surgery](#)

○ In person

- Patients are welcomed into the Surgery to book an appointment or speak to the Patient Coordinators.

○ Emails

- Our Surgery currently utilises “Accurx” for online communications, so we would discourage patients from using email as a form of online contact.

Patients – Which healthcare professional should I see?

- **Patient Coordinator**

Our trained Patient Coordinators will ask you a series of questions to direct you to the most relevant service to meet your needs, this may be one of the following:

- **Community Pharmacist**

Depending on your care need, you may be offered an appointment with a Community Pharmacist. The patient coordinator can refer you for this service and you will be contacted by your community pharmacy of choice with an appointment time.

- **Physiotherapist**

For most muscular-skeletal problems, such as neck pain, or knee pain, you may be offered an appointment with a first – contact Physiotherapist. The patient coordinator can refer you for this service and you will be contacted initially via telephone to discuss your symptoms.

- **Mental Health Nurse**

Depending on your care need, you may be offered an appointment with our Mental health nurse. The patient coordinator can refer you for this service and you will be contacted by our mental health nurse, usually on the same day.

- **Practice Nurse**

Depending on your care need, you may be offered an appointment with a Practice nurse. Practice Nurses offer appointments for smears, child immunisations, travel vaccines, injections and complex wound dressings.

- **Healthcare Assistant**

Depending on your care need, you may be offered an appointment with a healthcare assistant (HCA). HCAs offer appointments for diabetic checks, injections such as flu, shingles, pneumococcal and B12, NHS Health checks, simple wound dressings and blood pressure checks.

- **Social Prescriber**

A social prescriber is a person who works with GP Practices to connect patients to non-medical sources of support in their communities. They help patients address their social, emotional, and practical needs that affect their health and wellbeing.

Contact with our social prescriber is currently made through a clinical referral. More information on social prescribers and what issues they can support you with can be found here:

[NHS England » Social prescribing](#)

- **Extended Access**

This service is provided by the PCN at Sollershott on Monday – Friday between 18.30 -20.00 and weekend mornings and offers pre-bookable appointments with healthcare professionals detailed above. This service should be booked via the Ashwell Surgery Patient Coordinators. Patients should not contact Sollershott Surgery directly nor arrive there without a prior appointment issued via our Surgery.

- **GP / Physician's Associate**

Depending on your care need, if you cannot be assisted with one of the professionals above, you may be referred by the patient coordinator for advice from a GP or Physician's Associate.

Patients – Alternative healthcare services

- **NHS 111**
 1. Available 24 hrs a day, every day.
 2. They can issue prescriptions when appropriate.
 3. They can advise if you need to be seen or speak to a GP, and how or where to access which service (e.g. GP telephone consultation, go to A&E, or request an ambulance)

- **Urgent Treatment Centre**
 1. **Welwyn**

This service is available without pre-booking from 8am to 10pm every day. See website for details: <https://www.enhersts-tr.nhs.uk/services/urgent-treatment-centre/>

 2. **Addenbrookes (Cambridge)**

This service is available without pre-booking from 8am to 00.30am every day. See website for details: www.cuh.nhs.uk/our-services/urgent-treatment-centre/

- **Accident & Emergency.** For use if no other service is available and your medical issue is urgent.

- **Phone 999** if you feel you are seriously ill and are unable to go to A&E or the Urgent Treatment Centre.

The Surgery – Actions taken already in response to the Survey

1. All routine appointments with a doctor are 15 minutes.
2. Patients can decide if they would like their appointment in person, on the phone, or via online video.
3. The message on the phone system has been changed / updated and shortened.
4. The hold music on the phone has been changed.
5. All staff wear name badges to provide a more personal service
6. The new easier to navigate Surgery website is now 'live' but is still being 'fine-tuned'.

The Surgery – Additional service revisions being investigated

- The heating system in Ashwell Surgery has not been working properly. This is being investigated and will be addressed by the Autumn. Quotes for the work will be sourced in the interim.
- The Surgery is also investigating the provision of some seating with arms for the benefit of patients with mobility issues.
- Staff to wear uniform
- Staff to answer the phones in a standard manner
- New telephone system as soon as funding available
- Production of quarterly newsletters

If you have any questions or comments about this report please email Peter Chapman (Chairman of the Patients Group) at peterchapman70@yahoo.co.uk