

# Wallingbrook Health Group

Chulmleigh • Winkleigh

Dr Will Sherlock • Ms Karen Acott • Dr Deepun Gosrani  
Dr James Jarvie • Dr Matt Owen • Mrs Lucy Harris

## **We're changing the way GP appointments are made**

From Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020, the way we arrange GP appointments is changing.

Instead of making appointments on request, we've introduced a system that will make it quicker and easier to get the help you need.

The new system – **eConsult** – allows you to tell us about your symptoms in an online form. We'll then contact you by the end of the next working day to let you know the next step, which might be a face-to-face appointment.

If you're unable to fill out an eConsult form, you can still phone your surgery (or walk in). A Patient Services Advisor will then ask some simple questions about your condition and fill out the form on your behalf.

This change applies to patients of Wallingbrook Health Centre and Winkleigh Surgery.

*The information that follows will take you through the process in more detail and explain why we are making this change. So, please read it carefully.*

## **How do I fill out an eConsult form?**

You can fill out the eConsult form on any device (computer, tablet or phone) at any time. It only takes a few minutes and there are no passwords to remember.

Simply go to the surgery's website – [www.wallingbrook.co.uk](http://www.wallingbrook.co.uk) – and click on the eConsult 'button' on the homepage.

Then, follow the instructions. Depending on your responses you may be asked to add some information about your condition and symptoms. These are the same questions your GP would ask in a normal appointment.

eConsult also includes a wealth of information on how to treat yourself. So, you may be able to resolve your issue there and then.

You can also use eConsult to ask for sick notes and to request test results.

If you want to fill out an eConsult form but don't have a device or access to the internet, we will have tablet devices at the surgery.

Correspondence to: Wallingbrook Health Centre, Back Lane, Chulmleigh, Devon, EX18 7DL.  
Tel 01769 580295.

VAT Registration Number 879082282

\*Please note that all calls to and from the surgery are recorded and may be monitored for quality and training purposes.

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[www.wallingbrook.co.uk](http://www.wallingbrook.co.uk)

## **What if I can't fill out an eConsult form online?**

If you're unable to fill out the form yourself, you can phone the surgery (or walk in) and a Patient Services Advisor will ask you some simple questions about your condition. Again, these are the same questions a GP would ask in a normal appointment.

You can also ask for a paper form to fill out.

## **What happens next?**

A GP will then review the information you've given us, and we'll get in touch by the end of the next working day to let you know the next step.

For example:

- If you need to speak to a GP, we'll get in touch to arrange a face-to-face appointment or phone consultation. Depending on the urgency of your situation this could take place the same day. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to wait until your registered GP is next working (as long as this is within a week). If this applies to you, we'll let you know by the end of the next working day.
- If you have a minor ailment, we'll give you treatment advice and, if appropriate, a prescription.
- If you need another service (a physiotherapist, for example) you'll be referred.

## **How will I benefit from these changes?**

Feedback has shown us that patients feel they often wait too long for a GP appointment and spend too long on the phone trying to make an appointment.

The change will allow us to make better use of GPs' time and to prioritise the care of patients who need it most. This means shorter waiting times for appointments.

It also makes life easier for you.

For instance, completing an eConsult form will save you time because you'll avoid unnecessary trips to the surgery. This means you don't have to disrupt your day.

It's also convenient. You can complete the form wherever you are, 24-hours a day, and take as long as you want describing your symptoms.

Plus, it helps people who might be embarrassed discussing their symptoms face to face.

## **Does this only affect Wallingbrook Health Group?**

No, the NHS long-term plan commits all surgeries to change how patients access the surgery. This includes the use of digital tools, like eConsult.

Over 1,000 practices across the UK already use equivalent systems, and more than a million patients have submitted online consultation forms. In fact, most GP practices in Devon already offer online consultations.

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### **What if my condition is life-threatening or serious?**

If your condition is life-threatening, you should dial 999. Life-threatening conditions include heart attack or stroke, severe breathing difficulties, heavy bleeding or severe injuries.

If you need medical help or advice fast – for example, your symptoms are serious but not life-threatening – dial 111 or go online (at <https://111.nhs.uk/>). The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### **How do I get more information?**

We've produced an 'FAQs' document, which provides more detailed information. You can read this online at [www.wallingbrook.co.uk](http://www.wallingbrook.co.uk)

We're also running a 'digital drop-in session' for patients, from 10am to 12.30pm, on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March at Wallingbrook Health Centre, Back Lane, Chulmleigh, Devon. EX18 7DL. This session will provide information, advice and guidance on using eConsult and the NHS app.

Yours sincerely,

The Partners of Wallingbrook Health Group.

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