

## SHP PATIENT EVENT – 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2021

### ATTENDEE FAQs

**Please note we have posted the questions in the way they were asked by our patients attending the Patient Event.**

**Question: Please explain again the concept of Total triage?**

SHP has created a dedicated team called the acute care team to help all registered SHP patients who require an appointment with a healthcare professional that is urgent. The acute care team includes our Care Navigators who will be the first member of the team who patients will encounter at our reception desks, telephone or through our online website. Care Navigators at SHP undergo extensive training to help patients navigate and signpost the appropriate healthcare professionals within SHP or through other healthcare organisations, which may be more appropriate including community pharmacists, opticians, or in some cases emergency services.

Care Navigators that take telephone calls at our Contact Centre from patients are supported by dedicated doctors and other allied healthcare professionals including the nursing team, advanced nurse practitioners, clinical pharmacists and more recently physician's associates, paramedic practitioners and a first contact physiotherapist. The information that the Care Navigators have taken from the initial patient encounter is reviewed and processed by the clinical team.

Through this triage processing, patients are given the appropriate advice through our Care Navigators and offered consultations with the right healthcare professional within SHP. Consultations may take the form of face-to-face consultation, video call, telephone call, text messaging or online communication depending on the clinical need, priority and appropriateness for the patient. At all stages of this triage process, the team at SHP will ensure that patient encounters that are deemed urgent are dealt with safely and within appropriate time frames. Our acute care team at SHP are constantly ensuring that we are reviewing and adapting our processes through analysing data, receiving patient feedback and monitoring changes in our area through the pandemic in order to provide the best urgent care within primary care we can for our patients.

**Question: Strategic plan - what does your improvement plan look like for next 12 months and what measures are you implementing to achieve Customer satisfaction?**

We are working hard on delivering our COVID-19 action plan, and reviewing and adapting our unlock action plan as required.

Patient satisfaction and feedback is of utmost importance to SHP. We are working currently with our telephone provider to provide feedback on every patient encounter, as well as constantly monitoring and responding to concerns, comments and feedback we receive directly via our 'Have your Say' page on our web site, by email, in writing and in personal at any one of our sites.

Patient feedback and regular communication with our official SHP PPG members is also invaluable in helping us achieve improved patient care and services, both now and in the future.

**Question: Telephone statistics - what are you measuring and can we see the improvement tracker?**

Our telephone system is measured using multiple parameters and reviewed by our managers and team, alongside the telephone provider. Statistics from the system can be complex and best interpreted through the system provider and Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group, and working together we make ongoing improvements.

The Independent Review commissioned by Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group showed we have made significant strides in addressing the problems and concerns from patients. The report summary shows that call times have reduced, however there are still periods of longer wait times associated with high demand.

We continue to work hard, with our system provider, to improve access and have an action plan in place for further improvements and staff recruitment.

Visit our web site to view the summary from our patient event held on the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021, which includes the summary outcomes from the Independent Review.

**Question: When will there be sufficient staff to answer phone lines in a timely manner? & Question: I am puzzled that when phoning at 8 o'clock and being told the surgery is closed I redialled immediately about 10 seconds later, to be told the calls were at full capacity and I couldn't be put through. If the volume of calls is such that within ten seconds of lines opening capacity is full, then surely many more staff are needed on the phones - is it because of costs? This surely isn't acceptable?**

Many patients have been critical of the sometimes long wait times for telephone calls to be answered by our Contact Centre. SHP are not alone in this criticism, but we are working hard to continually improve and reduce the time it takes for us to answer your telephone call.

All incoming telephone calls for appointment requests are answered in our central Contact Centre. We have reconfigured our telephone system to present callers with options so that you can select the team you want to talk to and this has led to reduced waiting times for those callers who are requesting appointments.

Our telephone system holds up to 50 callers in a queue to be answered. We have been asked why callers get a message to say our phone system is at capacity and told to try again later then get cut off. This is the equivalent of the old engaged tone when all lines were engaged. We have been advised that 50 calls waiting in a queue is an acceptable limit but we are open to patient feedback. We have also been asked why the system has stopped telling the caller where they are in the queue until they get down to position 15. Again, this is following advice as we are told

that callers often hang up if they are informed that they are at a high number position in the queue rather than wait to be answered. Again, this is something that we are always seeking patient feedback on.

We continue to see high demand into our Contact Centre and have made significant progress in improving access for patients, with call waiting times reduced in comparison to 2020.

We continue to work hard, with our system provider, to improve access and have an action plan in place for further improvements and staff recruitment.

**Question: Please ensure that you provide an action plan with timings on how you will reduce the waiting times for answering the phone, and how you can book an appointment well ahead rather than having to call on the day, and not get an appointment. When will on line booking for appointments resume?**

As already referenced above, we continue to work hard with our system provider to improve access and have an action plan in place for further improvements.

Being able to book appointments online is constantly being reviewed as we adapt to changes with the pandemic, and as we begin to deliver our restoration and recovery plan, alongside other practices in the Solihull locality and Solihealth - 24 GP practices across Solihull, covering a population of 220,000 people.

**Question: Strategic plan - what does your improvement plan look like for next 12 months and what measures are you implementing to achieve Customer satisfaction?**

We are working hard on delivering our COVID-19 action plan, and reviewing and adapting our unlock action plan as required.

Patient satisfaction and feedback is of utmost importance to SHP. We are working currently with our telephone provider to provide feedback on every patient encounter, as well as constantly monitoring and responding to concerns, comments and feedback we receive directly via our 'Have your Say' page on our web site, by email, in writing and in personal at any one of our sites.

Patient feedback and regular communication with our official SHP PPG members is also invaluable in helping us achieve improved patient care and services, both now and in the future.

**Question: When will you return to the full service on online consult?**

We are continuing to see a significant increase in registered patients getting in touch and requests for appointments.

We continue to focus on patients being able to access us through our telephone system, and improving patient access for the majority of patients and telephone answering times.

Online consult will be fully restored when appropriate and we have the improved tools available. However, Online Consult does still allow patients to request non-urgent assistance on specific aspects of healthcare from the practice. In order to ensure that the service is clinically safe for patient use online, we have revised the services available, which are now as follows:

- Sick notes (Fit to Work) requests
- Repeat prescriptions requests
- COVID vaccine queries
- Childhood immunisations queries
- Smears queries

**Question: The online worked a treat and I didn't have to worry about losing my job using work time to get an appointment?**

Online Consult allows patients to request non-urgent assistance on specific aspects of healthcare from the practice. In order to ensure that the service is clinically safe for patient use online, we have revised the services available.

Online consult will be fully restored when appropriate and we have the improved tools available.

We continue to work hard, with our system provider, to reduce call waiting times and improve access, with an action plan in place for further improvements.

**Question: Why is Online Consult restricted and why can't I book an appointment online?**

To continue to address the increase in patient demand and in digital use as outlined in the NHS Long Term Plan - <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/>, Online Consult allows patients to request non-urgent assistance on specific aspects of healthcare from the practice.

We undertook an audit of how the service was being used. Online Consult is for non-urgent clinical queries only, but it was apparent that the service was sometimes used for areas that it wasn't designed for, which could potentially result in a risk to patients. In order to ensure that the service is clinically safe for patient use online, we have revised the services available, which are now as follows:

- Sick notes (Fit to Work) requests
- Repeat prescriptions requests
- COVID vaccine queries
- Childhood immunisations queries
- Smears queries

**Question: Are there any plans to bring back the ability to book telephone and/or face to face appointments via the Patient Access app? This was an invaluable service for workers, those with chronic conditions needing regular appointments, and is sorely missed. Some patients are likely to not book appointments when they need them without this service.**

As we move out of the pandemic, there will be more options to book appointments online as appropriate.

**Question: What are the plans for recruiting and retaining additional GPs so that patients will get a satisfactory service?**

SHP is led by 18 GP Partners and has a team of 140 staff that includes another 15 GPs so as a patient of SHP you have access to 33 GPs in total, along with a large team of Healthcare Professionals.

Primary Care Networks, PCNs, were introduced by NHS England in 2019 and all GP Practices are now required to be part of a PCN. The aim of the PCN is to widen the skills mix in General Practice and employ a variety of health professionals creating a multi-disciplinary healthcare team and enable patients to see the healthcare professional that best meets their immediate needs.

The Extended Healthcare team at SHP now includes:

- Clinical Pharmacist
- Social Prescriber Link Worker
- First Contact Physiotherapist
- Physician Associate
- Trainee Nurse Associate
- Pharmacy Technician

And, we are in the process of recruiting a Paramedic and a Mental Health Practitioner.

**Question: Been trying 6 weeks to get an appointment?**

We are sorry to hear this. We are currently experiencing unprecedented levels of demand, post COVID-19 lockdowns. Throughout the pandemic we have been largely working on urgent care. We have seen an increase in routine appointments face-to-face and endeavour to open up more appointments to be booked in advance, as restrictions allow.

**Question: why can't we go back to being a single practice? & Question: What consultation was given to patients before being moved from Jacey Practice to SHP?**

SHP is now one large GP provider that is a single practice Primary Care Network. Primary Care Networks, PCNs, were introduced by NHS England in 2019 and all GP Practices are now required

to be part of a PCN. The aim of the PCN is to widen the skills mix in General Practice and employ a variety of health professionals creating a multi-disciplinary healthcare team and enable patients to see the healthcare professional that best meets their immediate needs.

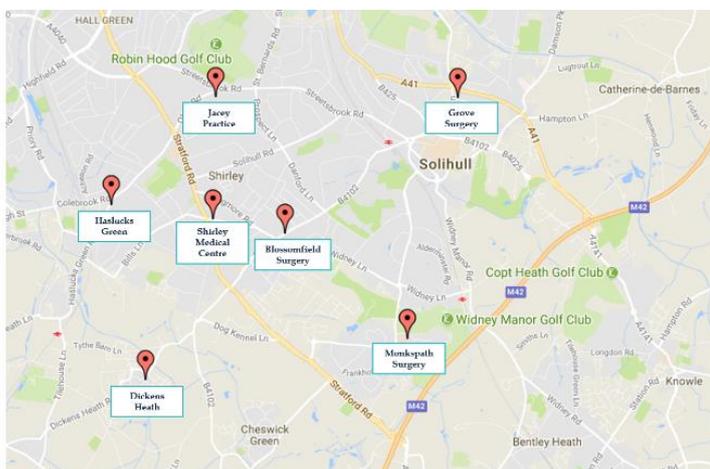
We have 55,000 registered patients that we provide primary care services to and we deliver these services from our seven GP Surgery sites. The Jacey Practice is part of SHP and one of our seven sites. In 2019 we started an EETF project which is NHS England's Estates and Technology Transformation Fund. We used this to re develop and extend our Shirley Medical Centre building to create the SHP central Contact Centre for incoming telephone calls and also the Acute Care Hub for managing the same day and more urgent needs of our registered patients.

SHP is led by 18 GP Partners and has a team of 140 staff that includes another 15 GPs so as a patient of SHP you have access to 33 GPs in total along with a large team of Healthcare Professionals.

Our aim is to meet the growing needs and expectations of our patients; without losing continuity of care, and we work together to find new and innovative solutions that will provide high quality, excellent care for all.

**Question: Is my surgery Haslucks Green Road going to open again that I registered with as I cannot travel far? & Question: Customer needs - do you understand your customer expectations and what actions are you taking to meet these e.g. patients living in close proximity to health care centres but having to travel to centre further afield?**

At SHP PCN we plan for the delivery of healthcare services across our network of sites by dividing services into two. Those that are needed for the Acute, more Urgent Care needs of our patients and those that meet your more Planned Care needs such as annual reviews of patients with long term conditions and specialist clinics such as Child Immunisations and Minor Operations for example. Patients now have the benefit of being seen closer to home for routine appointments, and for complex and specialist needs they can be seen at sites with specialist clinics and healthcare professionals. All sites are within close proximity. Our seven surgery buildings are shown here on the map and together they form the network of practices that form SHP.



**Solihull Healthcare Partnership**

Blossomfield Surgery, Dickens Heath Medical Centre, Grove Surgery  
Haslucks Green Medical Centre, Jacey Practice, Monkspath Surgery,  
Shirley Medical Centre

**Question: Why are complaints I have ever made replied to? Why are replies to complaints not happening? & Question: why does it take so long to receive a response following a complaint?**

As a consequence of changing how services are delivered across SHP, we have actively encouraged feedback as a mechanism to listen to patient's views of the changes made.

There are a variety of ways that patients can provide feedback, and make complaints and comments to the practice – in writing either through the post or by hand at any of our seven sites, online through the 'Have Your Say' area of the SHP website, allowing you to make a complaint, provide feedback or provide a compliment.

As we have actively encouraged patients to raise their concerns this has resulted in an increase in the number of complaints to manage and a delay in the overall process. Every complaint will be acknowledged within three working days, and will then be investigated with the aim to respond back within 40 working days, in line with NHS England's complaints policy. Some will be beyond the standard timeframe, especially those which are more complex.

If you log a complaint via social media you may be asked to complete an online complaints form – this will ensure that the complaint is not lost within the system and responded to in line with the complaints policy.

The telephone system can help with call related complaints as all incoming and outgoing calls are logged, recorded and monitored.

Nationally there is a delay in responding back to complaints, but we will endeavour to meet the timeframes within our policy as much as possible.

**Question: I worry that I will never see my GP face to face ever again. Please tell me I am wrong? & Question: When is SHP going to resume seeing patients face-to-face?...many GP Practices have been seeing their patients in practice but there appears to be no such facility being proposed by SHP.**

We have been seeing patients face-to-face throughout the pandemic, with an increase in face-to-face appointments as COVID-19 restrictions have eased.

**Question: I would like to know when we can return to the previous excellent service? When I call my surgery, and see my doctor. I am unhappy about having to re explain what is doing on with my health and hope that one person has the big picture. There is no follow up on any issues. Patient care seems to not be important. Easy access Face to face needs to return.**

SHP has created a dedicated team called the acute care team to help all registered SHP patients who require an appointment with a healthcare professional that is urgent. The acute care team includes our Care Navigators who will be the first member of the team who patients will encounter at our reception desks, telephone or through our online website. Care Navigators at SHP undergo extensive training to help patients navigate and signpost the appropriate

healthcare professionals within SHP or through other healthcare organisations which may be more appropriate including community pharmacists, opticians, or in some cases emergency services.

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We often get asked why our GPs are not seeing patients face-to-face, but we can assure you that they are. From the start of the COVID-19 pandemic to May 2021, we have seen a steady month on month increase in face-to-face appointments and we are now delivering over 7,000 face-to-face appointments per month.

**Question: What percentage of Staff are supporting COVID vaccinations, and is this affecting the service to patients?**

Throughout the pandemic SHP have been working hard, in partnership with GPS Healthcare, to deliver the vaccination programme to our patient population. Initially our GPs rose to the challenge to support the vaccination roll-out. Since the initial stage, we have employed additional staff specifically for the Vaccination Centre. The delivery of the COVID-19 vaccination programme has had no impact on the delivery of services and care provided by SHP to its registered patient population.

**Question: Websites are the go-to place for many people, so why is yours not kept up to date? 'Latest News' has an item on phlebotomy dated October 2020. The Appointments section refers to Covid being detected in China at the end of last year. We're now half way through 2021! There are many more instances that give the impression that someone is not on top of things at SHP. It would save so much hassle for you and patients if your website was up to date and topical.**

We have continued to provide patient updates and information on our web site, including a series of regular communication updates, COVID vaccine updates and the latest news. As part of the development of our communications plan, and following patient feedback, we are continuing to review our web site to improve the patient journey and ensure accurate information and updates are always available for our patients.

The web site is just one way we communicate with our patients, we use various channels for the latest official registered patient updates and information from SHP to reach all patients. These include social media (primarily Facebook and Twitter), on-site communications across our sites (posters, noticeboards, etc.), local media, printed materials and importantly SHP PPG. We aim to communicate with patients across all methods to reach all patients, to ensure access for all.

**Question: how do I order my repeat prescriptions if I am unable to call or visit the practice?**

Pre the COVID-19 pandemic, we were upscaling our digital technology to support online prescription services. At this point we allowed prescription requests via online form through the SHP website, patient access services and via the surgery prescription post-box.

It is important to recognise, due to the pandemic, we adapted our services to support our patients and in doing so, we opened our telephone lines for repeat prescription ordering to all patients.

As we are moving to business as usual (BAU), we are now able to revert back to using the following prescription ordering services as stated previously, but with an added online application called the NHS App. So just to recap, you can use.

- Online services – using the national “NHS App” or our Patient Access service
- In person, using the right sided counterfoil in the prescription box outside each of our sites. Please ensure you write on your request which pharmacy you would like to the prescription sending to.
- By post

The added advantage of using our online services, is for example, The NHS App, as it allows you to:

- view your COVID-19 vaccination status
- order repeat prescriptions
- view your medical record
- get health advice
- register your organ donation status
- review which pharmacy your prescriptions are sent to

It is important to note: our policy states patients can use our telephone line for ordering repeat prescriptions under specific circumstances, which must be noted within your medical records.

These special circumstances include patients aged over 75-year-old, those with severe frailty or those who are long-term house-bound.

This also ensures our telephone lines are freed up to support our vulnerable patients who require this service.

**Question: This policy does assume a patient can either use the Internet options or can deliver to a surgery or can reach a post box. Excluding help from friends and family. How will they learn about this and access services?**

Equality and inclusion are very important within SHP. To ensure we practice this effectively, our policy states patients can use our telephone line for ordering repeat prescriptions under specific circumstances, which must be noted within your medical records.

These special circumstances include patients aged over 75-year-old, those with severe frailty or those who are long-term house-bound.

It is important to note, we are continuing this service for these vulnerable patients, so those other patients who are fit and able to do so, can order their repeat prescription via either the online NHS App or Patient Access, online via form on our website or via the post-box outside the surgery. This will ensure, we keep telephone lines free and available for our vulnerable patients.

**For more updates and information, please visit our web site - [solihullhealthcarepartnership.nhs.uk](https://solihullhealthcarepartnership.nhs.uk) and our social media on [facebook.com/SolihullHP](https://facebook.com/SolihullHP) and Twitter @SolihullHP**