

FROME VALLEY MEDICAL CENTRE



Welcome to Your Guide to FVMC

Message from the Practice Team:

We've put this newsletter together to help you understand **our Practice and what goes on behind the scenes**. Our aim is to work with you and not to make matters more difficult than they need to be, particularly when you may be anxious or worried. However, our work is very much dependent on the contract we are issued by the NHS and the money we receive to carry out this work. There are also many other external factors which are out of our control.

We know that getting through to see us can feel harder these days, and we truly appreciate your patience. The simple fact is that the health needs coming to our Practice are now more **varied and complex**.

People are living longer, often with **multiple long-term conditions**, taking more medications, and needing more follow-up care. At the same time, we're supporting more patients who are waiting for **hospital or specialist appointments**, which can now take many months longer than before. Any complications that arise during those waiting periods are managed by our team here at the Practice.

Patient expectations are also changing. Researchers have described this growing **complexity** as a major reason why General Practices are under pressure (BMJ, Oct 2025).

Despite these challenges, we're doing everything we can to:

- **Prioritise** those who need to be seen most urgently
- **Innovate** how we manage demand
- **Work collaboratively** with a skilled mix of healthcare professionals
- **Use new technology** to deliver care safely and efficiently

The NHS is moving more towards use of the **NHS app**. We would encourage you to download the app and take control of your health.

We hope you enjoy learning more about how the Practice operates and why.

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How Online Consultation Triage Works in Our Practice



💡 We receive between 100-240 forms per day - most arrive in the morning!

💡 Every clinical form is reviewed by a trained healthcare professional.

💡 Most weeks over 1,000 forms are triaged - ensuring timely care for every patient

At our Practice, we use Klinik to make it easier for patients to get the right care, first time.

When you submit an online consultation form, our triage process begins straight away - combining smart technology with expert clinical judgement.

👤 Step 1: Submitting Your Form

Patients can complete a clinical consultation form online via Klinik, or our Care Navigators can help those without internet access. Forms cover everything from urgent medical problems to routine questions, medication requests, and health advice.

🤖 Step 2: AI-Supported Triage

Klinik's AI system gives each form an initial assessment, helping identify the urgency of the issue based on the information you provide.

👩‍⚕️ Step 3: Reviewed by a Clinician

Every single form is then manually reviewed by a clinician - usually an Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP). This double-checking ensures every patient is handled safely and appropriately.

📁 Step 4: Allocated to the Right Clinician

After review, your case is directed to the most suitable member of our team. Depending on your needs, you might be supported by a:

- GP (for complex or urgent issues)
- Advanced Nurse Practitioner
- Mental Health Nurse
- Clinical Pharmacist
- Physiotherapist
- Nurse
- Or another appropriate care pathway

Cases are prioritised as:

- Urgent: handled the same day
- Routine: scheduled for a later appointment

🔄 Step 5: Ensuring Continuity of Care

Where possible, we aim to connect you with the same clinician who's managed your health concerns before. This helps build trust, improves your care, and supports better health outcomes.

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How Online Consultation Triage Works in Our Practice

Why This Matters

This modern triage process helps us manage demand safely and makes sure every patient is seen by the right professional for their needs.

What the Numbers Show

Recent data from our practice shows:

- **Peak days:** Over 230 forms (e.g. 15.09.25, 05.10.25)
- **Busiest times:** Early in the week & Friday PM
- **Average weekday submissions:** 140–180

DO YOU USE THE
INTERNET?

Do you have a smart
phone, laptop or
tablet?



Do you shop
online?

Do you facetime your
grandchildren?

If so, you can submit a
request for an
appointment online.

This is the **quickest**
and **easiest** way to
contact us.



By doing this you are
freeing up our phone lines
so we can help those that
are unable to.

If you would like help with
learning more, please pop
into reception and a
member of staff will be
happy to help show you.

Thank you for continuing to use Klinik.
Your online consultations help us deliver
faster, safer, and more effective care for
everyone.

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ANP/GP Appointments and Consultations

If our Triage Team decides that you need an appointment with an Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) or a GP, your appointment will be allocated based on clinical need.

- **Urgent problems** that cannot wait 24 hours will be offered a **same-day Duty Appointment**
- **Routine requests** will be allocated the **next available appointment**. Due to high demand, this may involve a wait of around **4-6 weeks**. If your symptoms worsen, change, or you are concerned while waiting for your appointment, please contact the Practice again via the online consultation system or telephone, or seek urgent medical attention if appropriate.



In line with current Government guidance, consultations are **10 minutes long**, and patients are asked to discuss **one problem per appointment**. This helps clinicians see as many patients as possible and reduces delays for others. If you have more than one concern the clinician may ask you to book a further appointment so each issue can be assessed safely and thoroughly.

Many concerns can be managed effectively by a **telephone consultation**, and a proportion of our appointments are now delivered this way. Some issues do require a **face-to-face appointment**, and our team are trained to book these appropriately. Patients may also request a **face-to-face appointment** if they prefer. If you are initially consulted by telephone and the clinician feels they need to see you in person, they may ask you to attend the Practice later during the same session.

We are very keen to promote **continuity of care**. Seeing the same clinician for an ongoing issue helps build trust and leads to better outcomes, higher patient satisfaction, and safer, more efficient care. It allows clinicians to better understand your medical history, preferences, and needs over time, reducing the risk of gaps or errors and supporting preventive care - especially for complex or long-term conditions. If you have an ongoing issue, **please request to see the same clinician wherever possible**.

If you are unable to attend your appointment, please let us know as soon as you can so it can be offered to another patient. You can cancel via the NHS app, your appointment text reminder, via an online consultation or by calling the Practice.

Housebound Patients / Home Visits

We are able to support patients who are housebound with home visits and ongoing care.

To be registered with us as housebound, you will need to be assessed by one of our GPs. Housebound means that you are unable to leave your home due to a medical condition.

If you are registered as housebound and require a home visit, please contact the Practice by 10:30am on the day of the request. You can do this either by completing an online consultation form or by calling the Practice. This allows us time to assess your request and arrange a visit if appropriate.



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Nursing Appointments

Our Nursing team plays an important role in providing safe and timely care for patients.

Due to patient demand, our Nursing appointments are booked weeks in advance. Some patients require two or more appointments a week as they have complex requirements.

To help the team run effectively please arrive on time for your appointment. Please cancel your appointment if it is no longer needed so that it can be allocated to other patients. You can cancel via the NHS app, your appointment text reminder, via an online consultation or by calling the Practice.

What Our Nurses Can Help With

Practice Nurses and healthcare assistants can provide many routine and specialist services, including:

- Blood tests, ECG's and blood pressure checks
- Wound care and dressings
- Injections and vaccinations (including flu/Covid and childhood immunisations)
- Cervical screening (smear tests)
- Long-term condition reviews (such as asthma, diabetes, or COPD)
- NHS Health Checks including Stopping Smoking
- Family Planning

Appointment Lengths

Different types of appointments need different amounts of time. For example:

- Blood tests or injections usually need a shorter appointment
- Reviews or multiple issues may need a longer appointment

Allocating appointments carefully helps us to:

- Reduce waiting times
- Use our nursing team's skills effectively
- Provide safe, high-quality care
- Make sure appointments run on time



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Referrals



When your GP makes a referral to a specialist or hospital service, it means they believe you need further assessment, tests or treatment that can't be provided in the surgery.

What happens next:

1. **Referral sent** - The administration team will send the referral electronically or through a referral management system, depending on the type of service.
2. **Triage and review** - The hospital or specialist service reviews your referral to decide which clinic or specialist is most appropriate. They may contact you directly to arrange an appointment or request more information.
3. **Appointment offered** - You'll usually receive a letter, phone call or text with your appointment details. In some cases, you may be asked to book your appointment yourself through the NHS e-Referral Service.

Timescales:

- Once the referral leaves the surgery, **the timescales are outside our control.**
- Waiting times vary between hospitals and specialities and can depend on demand, urgency, and staff availability.
- If your GP marked your referral as **urgent**, hospitals aim to prioritise you appropriately - but this still depends on their capacity. If the hospital triage your referral as less urgent we are unable to expedite your referral unless your symptoms change.
- For **routine referrals**, waiting times can sometimes be several weeks or months.

What you can do:

- If you haven't heard anything after a few weeks, you can contact the **hospital appointments team** directly (their number is usually on your referral paperwork or text).
- The surgery won't usually have any more information once the referral has been accepted by the hospital.
- If your condition changes or worsens while you wait, please contact the surgery so we can review your symptoms.

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Prescriptions

How to Request a Repeat Prescription

Step 1: Check Your Medication List

Your repeat medication list shows which medicines you can re-order without seeing a GP.

You can view this list via:

- The **NHS App** or your online services account (e.g. Patient Access)
- Your **paper prescription slip** from the pharmacy
- Our **reception team**



Step 2: Request Your Medication

You can request a repeat prescription using one of the following options:

✓ Preferred: **Online (NHS App)** - The quickest, safest, easiest way and requests made online are processed first.

Other ways to order:

- **Via your pharmacy:** Some local pharmacies can order on your behalf - please check with them
- **In person:** Complete a repeat prescription form at reception (if you are unable to order on the **NHS app** or with your **Pharmacy**)

⚠ **We do not accept repeat prescription requests by phone for safety reasons.**

Step 3: Allow Time for Processing

Please allow **up to 5 working days** (excluding weekends and bank holidays) for the Practice to process your prescription and send it electronically to your chosen pharmacy.

We require this time due to the **high daily volume we receive - around 300 requests per day.**

Your pharmacy will also need additional time to prepare your medication, especially for special-order or out-of-stock items.

Step 4: Medication Reviews

To keep you safe, your medications are regularly reviewed by a GP, Clinical Pharmacist, or Nurse Practitioner.

You may occasionally be asked to:

- Attend a **medication review appointment**
- Have **blood tests** or a **blood pressure check**
- Discuss whether the medication is still needed or whether an alternative is more suitable

Medication reviews help ensure that your treatment remains safe and effective.

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Prescriptions

🚫 Step 5: When a Request Might Be Declined

Your prescription may not be issued straight away if:

- A review or monitoring (e.g., blood tests) is overdue
- The medicine is **not on your repeat list**
- The dose or medicine was **recently changed**
- There are **safety concerns**
- You have **requested too early**



If this happens, a member of our team will contact you with advice on what to do next.

📦 Step 6: Collecting Your Prescription

Most prescriptions are now sent **electronically** to your nominated pharmacy.

If you haven't nominated a pharmacy, please let us know - it makes collection easier and faster.

✅ Top Tips for Patients

- Order your medication **7-10 days** before you run out
- Check your **pharmacy's turnaround time**
- Tell us if you've **stopped taking any medication**
- Use the **NHS App** to track your request and view your medication list
- If requesting **early** (e.g. going on holiday), **state the reason** to avoid delays

📦 Repeat Dispensing (RD) Prescriptions

If you receive medications on **Repeat Dispensing (RD)**, they **do not appear on the NHS App**

- RD items are issued in **batches**, usually covering 6 months
- Pharmacies typically release these **every 2 months**
- When your final batch is collected, you will need to submit a new request

! Urgent Prescription Requests

If you have run out or are about to run out of medication:

- Please complete an **Urgent Prescription Request Form** at the reception desk
- Only telephone reception if you **cannot attend in person** (e.g. if you are classed as **housebound** on our records)

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Private (Non-NHS) Work

A large portion of the requests we receive from patients fall under "private work", which refers to services that are not covered by the NHS contractual agreement.



Examples of private work include but are not limited to:

- Insurance claim forms
- Life assurance or mortgage reports
- Holiday cancellation forms
- Employment or HGV medicals
- Other non-NHS medical reports or certificates
- Holiday insurance forms
- PIP (Personal Independence Payment) forms
- Life insurance and pension reports
- DVLA medical forms

Why this is private work

Completing forms, reports, or letters for insurance or other non-NHS purposes is outside your GP's NHS contract.

This work must therefore be done in the GP's own time, outside of their NHS duties.

We charge a fee for completion. Our fees are in line with British Medical Association (BMA) guidance and reflect the time, detail, and professional responsibility required.

It often involves:

- Reviewing your full medical records to ensure accuracy
- Providing detailed and legally sound information
- Completing paperwork to the insurer's specific format
- Occasionally, clarifying or correcting information requested by the insurer

This is careful, time-consuming work that must be done to a professional standard.

It's important to understand that clinicians do not simply sign these forms - they must thoroughly review medical records, verify the accuracy of the information, and may need to contact patients to clarify or confirm details.

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Private (Non-NHS) Work

Fees and timescales

- Fees vary depending on the length and complexity of the form.
- The Practice can confirm the cost before any work is started.
- Payment is required before the completed form or report is released. A receipt will be provided.
- Due to high demand, the turnaround time for private work is typically between 2 to 6 weeks

Duplicate and unnecessary requests

Sometimes, different insurance companies, brokers, or departments send duplicate or overlapping requests for the same information.

Each of these must still be checked, processed, and logged separately by the GP, which adds significantly to the workload and can delay other private or NHS work.

We would kindly ask patients to check whether their insurer really requires another report, or whether a previous one can be shared, before submitting multiple requests.

This helps reduce unnecessary duplication and saves valuable GP time.

Thank you for your understanding.



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Do more with the NHS App!



-  Order repeat prescriptions
-  Use NHS 111 online
-  Find NHS services
-  View your GP health record
-  Book appointments
-  Get reminders and messages

And much more...

You can also use these services by logging in through the NHS website

Need help?

Get support in the app or visit nhs.uk/helpmeapp



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