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**Forest Health Care**

Cinderford Medical Centre  
Valley Road  
Cinderford  
Gloucestershire  
GL14 2NX

## **Rapid Health Total Triage – Forest Health Care new online booking system starting July 14<sup>th</sup> 2026**

Have you struggled to get a GP appointment?  
Have you waited to see a GP but then your problem has worsened so you have had to call and speak to the GP on duty?  
Have you called and been told there are no appointments, so you are booked with the duty GP that you haven't seen before?  
Have you booked several appointments just in case and then not needed to use them?

We have listened to patient feedback and recognise that accessing appointments has been a difficult and frustrating process for you for some time.

As a Practice we are constantly striving to enhance our services in order to deliver the best care to all of our patients. As part of this, we are excited to announce our new appointment system, 'Smart Triage', which launches on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2026.

With the ever-growing demand within the NHS, we are continuously looking at ways we can improve the booking process and increase capacity.

To achieve this, and ensure patients are receiving the best possible care, we have opted to use the Rapid Health triage tool which will allow us to maximise availability, and ensure patients are seeing the right clinician in the appropriate time frame.

**This will only be for GP and Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPs) appointment requests initially, the system for booking to see nurses and having blood tests and annual reviews etc. will remain the same, please contact reception as normal on 01594 820820.**

Rapid Health is an online facility accessed via one click from our website that allows patients to book appointments, without needing to phone the practice. All patients will be asked to answer a few questions using the online form. Your answers will help the system find the right appointment for you. This also means the clinician will have the relevant information prior to your appointment, enabling them to have more time to provide quality care to you.

The system works by asking a series of medically designed questions which are clinically triaged according to urgency and need. It is therefore extremely important that

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all questions are answered honestly, accurately, and with as much detail as possible so patients can be prioritised safely. It focuses on symptoms not diagnosis.

Once submitted, the system allocates appointments based on clinical urgency and availability. This means patients may not always be offered the first appointment they would personally prefer, but the system is designed to ensure that those with the greatest clinical need are prioritised appropriately.

General Practice continues to face significant demand and capacity pressures nationally. The traditional “first come, first served” approach does not always ensure that the patients who need urgent care most receive it first. Clinical triage allows medical need, rather than queue position, to determine priority.

This also allows patients to be directed to the most appropriate clinician for their problem. Not every condition requires a GP appointment, and many patients may be better supported by another suitably qualified healthcare professional within our wider clinical team, such as our ANPs.

This should result in shorter waiting times, especially for more urgent medical issues, and focusses on “getting it right first time” – seeing the most appropriate member of the team for your medical issue. It will also help prevent the 8am rush and long waits on the telephones.

The new platform also allows patients to raise admin requests (such as fit notes) and find trusted self-care information for a wide range of symptoms and health conditions.

From the **14<sup>th</sup> July 2026**, all online contact with the surgery will come through Rapid Health, which will be accessed via our practice website.

**Do not worry** if you are unable to use the website you can still phone the surgery or visit the front desk in person.

### **Further Information and Support**

We will be contacting patients again nearer our “Go Live” date with any updates and further information. Please keep an eye on our website, Facebook page and in practice for updates also.

### **Rapid Health FAQ**

#### **What is Rapid Health?**



Rapid health is triage tool approved by the NHS which allows you to book appointments quickly and offers more patient choice and availability by offering you the right appointment with the right clinician first time.

### **How do I book an appointment?**

The link to access Rapid Health will be posted on the home page of our website. There will also be posters in the practice with the link and a QR code.

However, we understand that not everyone can use online services, and our reception team will still be available on the phone and in person.

### **Can I use Rapid Health through my NHS App?**

Yes.

### **What do I do if I want to see a specific GP?**

When you are booking an appointment, the GPs and ANPs with available and suitable appointments will be shown.

### **What do I do if I want to pre-book an appointment?**

Our GP and Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPs) appointments will be available, across all of our sites. After completing the Rapid Health questions an appointment will be offered within an appropriate timeframe.

### **Will all Clinicians be on Rapid Health?**

To start with only ANPs and GP appointments will be available to book.

### **I was not offered an appointment, what do I do?**

Once you have completed our triage questionnaire we will offer an appointment in the most appropriate time frame. If you have not received an appointment, reception will be informed, and your issue will be triaged by a clinician. Reception will be in contact within 48 hours but usually much sooner and in most cases the same day.

### **My problem is personal, and I only want to tell a GP.**

The information which you provide is saved to your medical records and is reviewed by the clinician during your appointment. If you require our assistance when booking an appointment but want the reason to remain confidential then this is ok. Every employee at the practice adheres to our confidentiality policy.



## **Under 16s.**

For children under 16 years-old Smart Triage works slightly differently. You will be able to use Rapid Health to submit your child's medical request, but you may not be able to book your own appointment. If you are not able to make your own booking, the request will be reviewed by someone at the practice, and they will get back to you within 48 hours.

## **How Does It Work?**

1. Submit Your Request: You can contact us via our online form on our website, through the NHS app, or by calling the practice in the usual way but using the online tool is much quicker

2. An appointment in the appropriate timeframe may be offered with a GP or ANP. The appointments will be offered across our sites at Cinderford, Ruardean and Westbury. Where appropriate, both telephone and face-to-face consultations will be offered up to two weeks in advance. If your problem is clinically urgent, the system will offer you same day appointment slots to choose from.

Or.

Clinical Review: A clinician will review your request usually that day and decide the best course of action. This could include:

A same-day appointment (face-to-face or by phone)

A scheduled appointment at a later date.

Advice or self-care guidance

A referral to another service (e.g., pharmacy, physiotherapy, or specialist care)

In many cases you will be sent a link so you can book an appointment directly without having to call the practice. (Timeframe – contact within 48 hours but often same day)

3. Follow-Up: If needed, the clinician will arrange follow-up care.

## **Safety.**

Smart Triage is approved as a Class 1 medical device by MHRA (Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency) and meets all of the NHS security and clinical safety standards. Your data is held securely on the platform for a limited time, after



which it is automatically removed and stored on your medical record. We'll be updating our Privacy Policy with more information about data security.

## **Benefits of Rapid Health Triage**

*Faster Access to Care:* By reviewing requests clinically, we can prioritize urgent cases and ensure you are seen as quickly as possible.

*Continuity of care:* This system will enable you to see the same GP (if you wish). There is a wealth of evidence to show that continuity of care improves patient experience and outcomes. Of course, you are free to see or speak to a GP of your choice if it is possible, but most patients will recognise seeing the same GP each time is beneficial.

*Right Care, First Time:* You will be directed to the most appropriate service or clinician, reducing the need for multiple appointments.

*Convenience:* Online forms and digital tools make it easier to contact us at a time that suits you. This is called a digital front door and is a key part of the government's NHS plan for improving capacity and access to the NHS.

*Improved Efficiency:* By managing demand more effectively, we can reduce waiting times and improve access for all patients including those most vulnerable.

*Better Use of Resources:* This system allows us to focus our resources on patients who need them most.

## **Potential Disadvantages**

*Not Immediate:* While we aim to respond quickly, there may be a short wait for non-urgent cases as requests are reviewed but this will usually be on the same day and most of the time the same morning or afternoon you submit your request.

*Digital Access:* Patients who are not comfortable with online forms or digital tools may need extra support to use the system. Our reception team will help you with this if needed. The phone and front desk are still available.

*Change in Process:* For some, this new way of accessing care may feel different from what you're used to. We are here to help you adapt and answer any questions you may have. But it is needed with resources more stretched than ever in the NHS we need to ensure you get the right help at the right time.

## **How You Can Help**

**Make sure we have your updated details and especially a valid email address**

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There are three ways to change your details: via the NHS app, the change your details section on our website or via a form that can be found in reception.

*Be Patient:* As we transition to this new system, there may be some teething issues. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work to improve our services. The system works with email addresses so initially there will be the need to ensure you have an email or the right email address on your notes.

### **Support for Patients**

We understand that not everyone is comfortable with digital tools or may need assistance. If you need help using the online system or have any concerns, please let us know. Our team is here to support you.

### **Feedback Welcome**

Your feedback is important to us. If you have any thoughts or suggestions about the new system, please share via our friends and family test available either online or in reception.

We believe that Rapid Health Total Triage will help us provide better care for you. This system is new to us as well, but we will do our best to answer your queries and to make the new system work for everyone.

Many Thanks,

Forest Health Care