

# Glenlyn Medical Centre

## Healthwatch Feedback & Practice Response

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### Introduction

Thank you for your comments; we value your input. Our Patient Participation Group (PPG) has reviewed this response document and will assist in implementing identified actions as appropriate.

Many of the issues highlighted are not unique to Glenlyn but reflect wider systemic pressures across the NHS. General Practice is experiencing record levels of patient contact without corresponding increases in workforce or funding. **Ensuring timely and equitable care is an evolutionary, not revolutionary, process of rethinking how services are delivered.** Nevertheless, we recognise the validity of the comments made and reiterate our utmost commitment to addressing them to the best of our ability.

### Ease of Appointment Booking

#### Healthwatch Feedback

Patients commented that whilst "many people recognised improvements in recent years," there remains "a significant challenge for many patients to book an appointment," particularly due to online form issues. It was recommended that clearer navigation support for patients and a consistent approach to making online forms available are needed.

If you would like this letter or information in an alternative format, for example large print or Easy Read, or if you need help communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please contact the Practice

## Glenlyn Response

Patients can book either by phone or by completing the online form (via the Glenlyn or NHS websites), and the same information is gathered whichever method is chosen. We are working with our service provider to make this clearer on the website appointment page.

We understand that accessing appointments remains a major concern and "sets the tone" for future interactions. All applications for appointments with our GPs or Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPs) utilise a 'single point of contact' approach, where, regardless of the method of submission, all requests go through a triage process to ensure fair and equitable access based on clinical need, rather than when or how a patient contacts us.

We are committed to improving access by reducing call wait times, clarifying and ensuring consistency of online forms, and helping patients navigate available appointment options.

### In response to concerns about being "turned away" by reception staff

Patients are not simply turned away. They are engaged with and, as noted above, placed into the triage process. We have strengthened our clinical forms processing through a dedicated triage team — consisting of a GP, an Advanced Nurse Practitioner, and a Medical Assistant — who review requests throughout the day. All appointment requests, whether made online, by phone, or in person, are clinically assessed to ensure appropriate care.

### Regarding form submission out of hours

We recognise the frustration caused by not being able to submit clinical forms outside of practice opening hours, but will be open during the core service hours, in line with our contract. This limitation exists because all clinical requests require same-day triage to ensure patient safety and fairness. We will work to improve communication around this so that patients better understand when and how clinical forms can be submitted and processed.

It is important to note that administrative forms (for example, requests for medical certificates or updates to personal details) generally remain open outside of core clinical triage hours.

### Actions

- Continue monthly monitoring of triage system performance.
- Continue regular feedback and staff training sessions.

- Continuous improvement of the practice website and reception materials to clarify the triage process and its benefits.

## Appointment Booking Methods

### Healthwatch Feedback

Patients commented on inconsistencies when using different booking channels (NHS App, phone, online forms).

### Glenlyn Response

We strive for consistency across all access routes. Triage is applied regardless of the method used to ensure clinical prioritisation.

As noted above, booking for GP, Advanced Care Practitioners (ACP) or Paediatric Nurse appointments goes through the triage process due to the need to prioritise patients based on clinical need. Where clinicians wish to arrange a follow-up, we encourage them to send patients an online booking link during their appointment or to direct the patient to visit reception immediately after their appointment.

Appointments for Practice Nursing & Healthcare Assistant (HCA) services (immunisations, dressings, well-woman etc), and Blood Tests are available to be booked either by phone or via online booking invitation.

Our recall team send regular invitations for patients to book their long-term condition reviews and preventative health measures, such as screening or immunisations.

Staff have been reminded to ensure that patients can access appropriate support across all channels by phone, online, or in person.

### Actions

- Developing patient-friendly materials explaining the appointment process.
- Continuous improvement of the integration between online, phone, and in-person booking methods.
- Continuing staff training to ensure consistent messaging and patient support.

## Socials & NHS App

We are reinvigorating our online presence with our new Facebook page that went live yesterday (<https://www.facebook.com/GlenlynMedical>).

We intend to capitalise on our already significant, and engaged population using the NHS App – something in the region of 86.2% of our patients have access and use it to mostly order repeat prescriptions. We were amongst the first practices in the UK to allow almost all patients full access to their medical records, and we will be further encouraging patients to check their test results, and manage appointments through the app.

## Phone Lines

### Healthwatch Feedback

Patients commented that call-back options have improved but concerns persist about long waits and occasional call drop-offs.

### Glenlyn Response

We acknowledge the importance of a reliable phone service, especially for patients who may be digitally excluded or require urgent reassurance. While improvements have been made, further enhancements are underway, including exploring the use of AI to increase phone system capacity.

### Call Handling in Glenlyn

Over the last few years we have evolved our telephone offering. We have addressed issues with call back with the telephony provider to improve call-back functionality and reduce call drop-offs, and we audit call wait times and missed calls to tailor teams at peak times and provision the service to meet these needs rather than the '8am rush'. We are always reviewing and reinforcing staff training to improve response times and patient experience.

This has led us to refine our call flows as below:

## Standard Call Flows

Option No	Description	Opening Times	Comments
Option 1	Bereavement Support	8am-6.30pm	<b>Glenlyn-based staff</b> Special support line for people reporting a bereavement or accessing support due to a bereavement
Option 2	Repeat Prescription Queries	10am-4pm	<b>Glenlyn-based staff</b> Our advice is that the patient should check the NHS App prior to calling as you can see the progress of your request there first.
Option 3	Test Results	10pm-4pm	<b>Glenlyn-based staff.</b> Our advice is that the best way to access test results is through the NHS App
Option 4	Referral Updates	10pm-4pm	<b>Glenlyn-based staff</b> Our advice is that the most effective route for referral queries is to call RSS and use their URBN reference number
Option 5	General Enquiries & Appointment Triage	8am-6.30pm	<b>Off-site staff.</b> This service is managed off-site by a team of specialist call-handlers
Option 6	Health Campaigns Hotline	10pm-4pm	<b>Glenlyn-based staff</b> Limited Use, normally when there is an immunisation campaign etc

## Specialist Call Lines

Description	Opening Times	Comments
Emberbrook Community Cardiology Team	8am-6.30pm	<b>Glenlyn-based staff</b> Access to this line is provided once the referral is received by the specialist cardiology service.
Long Term Conditions Team	10pm-4pm	<b>Glenlyn-based staff</b> Patients are usually asked to book their LTC review using an online booking link. This is suitable for most patients, but those with alternative communication needs are able to contact the practice directly.
NHS Professionals Line	8am-6.30pm	<b>Glenlyn-based staff</b> A dedicated phone line for people working in the Health & Social Care sector who need urgent access to primary care support.  For example a paramedic at roadside, with an elderly patient who may or may not require conveyance to hospital, or a palliative care nurse needing EOL support.
Palliative Care Patient Line	8am-6.30pm	<b>Glenlyn-based staff</b> A direct line to staff supporting palliative care patients and their families when most at need. Issued by GP/ACP or PN when seen in practice.

## Accessibility across Our Sites

### Healthwatch Feedback

Patients commented that some felt unable to access their preferred surgery and found the reasons for being allocated a different site unclear.

### Glenlyn Response

While we aim to accommodate patient preferences, operational factors sometimes require appointments or services to be offered on their non-preferred site. We are working to better explain this process and to highlight which services are available at each location.

We are very aware that there is a considerable population with conditions that limit their ability to travel to the alternative surgery, we do our best to offer their services more locally.

*A good example of this is COPD long-term condition reviews, where we have a first-rate clinical set up in Emberbrook, but continue to offer this service in Glenlyn too to meet their needs.*

### Actions

- We will more prominently promote information about local transport and volunteer schemes to assist patients with travel needs.
- Improve visibility of site-specific services on the website and at reception areas.
- Reception, and call handlers will provide clearer explanations when appointments are allocated to a different site.

## Patient Relationship with the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT)

### Healthwatch Feedback

Patients commented that understanding of the MDT approach is improving, but some still feel blocked from seeing a GP when they feel it is clinically needed.

### Glenlyn Response

Building trust in the MDT model is essential as it is a national programme and it is here to stay. We have introduced “Meet the Practice Manager” sessions and have made enhancements to the triage system to ensure patients are directed appropriately.

Concerns about patients seeing multiple different GPs (e.g., a child with recurrent ear infections) highlight the importance of continuity of care. Our new care team system — creating small, consistent clinical teams — is designed to address this.

#### Actions

- Updating explanations of the MDT model on the practice website and in waiting areas.
- We are working to provide clearer understanding of the Additional Roles working in primary care.
- Improved Social Media Presence, and introductions to staff
- Developing communication tools to help staff reassure patients about MDT roles and competencies.
- Monitoring patient satisfaction and addressing concerns promptly.

## Access to Medical Records

### Healthwatch Feedback

Patients commented on difficulties accessing test results and concerns regarding communication between primary and secondary care.

### Glenlyn Response

While the NHS does not yet operate a fully integrated information system, patients can

access their GP records, test results, and correspondence through the NHS App. We are working to raise awareness of this facility and to continue improving upload processes, supported by new technology including AI.

#### Action Plan

- Promoting the use of the NHS App for accessing test results and correspondence.
- Encouraging regular use of the App as a primary source of information.
- Supporting patients who require assistance with benefit applications or legal documentation.

## Communication Preferences and Carer Involvement

### Healthwatch Feedback

Patients commented that communication preferences and carer support were not always being fully met.

### Glenlyn Response

We are reviewing and enhancing our processes for capturing communication preferences, language needs, sensory requirements, and nominated representatives.

Training is underway to ensure these needs are consistently recognised and respected.

We particularly recognise the vital role of unpaid carers and are working to strengthen their involvement in patient care.

#### Actions

- Enhancing staff training to consistently identify and respect communication and carer requirements.
- Introducing system prompts for clinicians to regularly review communication needs.
- We have met with the carer team at ICB who can support, and will do so on an ongoing basis.



## **Hearing from a Diverse Range of Patients**

We are pleased to have received feedback from a broader range of patients, including more working-age adults. However, we continue to seek the views of underrepresented groups such as younger people, patients with disabilities, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Our PPG will support this effort through recruitment events and developing alternative survey methods.

## **Our Commitment**

We are committed to improving transparency, accessibility, and patient-centred care. Your feedback continues to inform every aspect of our service development.

While some changes are limited by external factors, we remain determined to drive improvements wherever possible, within the resources available to us.