

Why is Park Surgery changing to an 0844 number?

We have conducted a number of patient surveys over the past few years and know that you have probably experienced difficulties in calling this surgery – particularly if you call at peak times. We were therefore aware that we had to improve the management of telephone calls to the surgery.

By switching to an 0844 number the surgery is able to increase the number of phone lines into the surgery, and route your call through to the right person. This means that your call will be answered more quickly than before and you will be less likely to hear an engaged tone when you call in.

Do 0844 numbers cost the same to call as 0870 numbers or premium rate numbers?

No. Premium rate calls cost between 10p to £1.50 a minute. National Call rate numbers (usually known as 0870) cost about 8p a minute to call. 0844 numbers cost just over 4p per minute to call (plus VAT this equals 4.9p) , which is equivalent to BT standard daytime rate of 4p for the first minute of a call.

Does that mean I end up paying a fortune to call my Doctor in order to pay for their new phone system?

Again no. Not only is the cost of the call you make to them roughly the same as if it had been to a local number, because the telephone system is more efficient, you are likely to be on the phone for less time. Previous surgeries have found that call durations have halved, meaning that it will often cost you less in both time and money to book an appointment.

Can't I just use the old number for the Doctor?

When you call your GP's old number, you will hear a message explaining that the number has now changed to 0844 815 15 11 so you won't be able to call in on the old number any longer.

Will I have to wait in a queue, and if so, how long for?

This is more unlikely with our new system, but may still happen from time to time, particularly at peak times of day. Obviously we have a limited number of staff available to answer the phones (we normally have 9 people answering the phones from 8 am) but you will be informed of your place in the queue and should no longer hear the engaged tone when dialling in. This means that you should no longer have to go to the time, trouble and expense of phoning us repeatedly before you are able to speak with a member of staff.

Will I hear anything different when I call into my GP?

Yes. We have recorded a new greeting and a new options menu, so you can choose which department or service you wish to be transferred through to. Once you choose the service you require, you should be put straight through. The menu is kept to a minimum of options to maintain a balance of simplicity and efficiency.

The options are:

For doctors appointments	press 1
For nurse appointments	press 2
For Ultrasound appointments	press 3
For Home visits	press 4
For Repeat Prescription information	press 5
For the Medical Secretaries	press 6 - see second option list below
Press 0 to repeat this message	
Or please hold for assistance	

We have also introduced the following option list for patients who need to speak to their doctor's secretary regarding referrals or for other information:

The options are:

For doctors Skipp, Dean, King, Tariq Jahangir and Wolff	press 1
For doctors Fisher, Holwell, Athaullah, Ramaswamy and Rizwan	press 2
For doctors Maggs, Roberts, Potiphar and Loganathan	press 3

What about out of hours?

If you ring the surgery number out of hours, or when the surgery is closed for training, you will hear a recorded message giving you the phone number of West Sussex Doctors on Call ie 01903 690111. Please make a separate note of this number.

Can I request a repeat prescription over the phone?

Please note we no longer accept repeat prescription requests over the phone. To ensure accuracy and for your protection and security our policy now is that repeat prescription requests must be submitted in writing.

If, however, you have a query about your repeat prescription you will be able to leave a message, clearly stating your name, date of birth, daytime contact number and a brief message. Messages are monitored regularly.