

## **Patient Partner**

Please note that Ashgrove Surgery has launched an automated telephone appointment booking system which patients can use around the clock. Known as Patient Partner, the automated system enables patients to book, cancel or amend appointments at any time without the need to speak to a receptionist. The automated system has been designed to make it easier for patients to call at any time to manage their appointments, freeing up telephone lines for other queries and urgent problems.

Ashgrove Surgery is committed to providing excellent patient care, but as one of the largest surgeries in Pontypridd, pressure on the phone lines can cause delays. Ashgrove Surgery wants to make it as easy as possible for patients to get in touch with the practice and Patient Partner will offer improved flexibility and access for our patients.

Callers can schedule, amend or cancel routine appointments with their GP, in addition to specific clinics such as phlebotomy. This system allows patients to notify the surgery if their appointment is no longer needed, enabling appointments to be reallocated to other patients.

Ashgrove Surgery hopes that as patients get used to the system, more people will use it. We realise that not everyone will want to use the automated service and if people prefer to speak to a receptionist to make an appointment, they may do so or use our My Health Online system.

The new system is simple to use. Calls are made to the surgery's usual number. Callers then select the Patient Partner option from the menu (option 1), entering their personal identifiable information for security purposes. The system detects spaces in the doctors' and nurses' diaries, and the patient can then choose their preferred appointment time by pressing a button on their touch tone phone. They can also use the system to check, amend or cancel appointments. Patient Partner was developed by unified communication specialists Voice Connect who have worked with GP surgeries for over 20 years. It is currently installed at around 800 surgeries across the UK.