

Telephone and Electronic Communications Policy

Current as of March 2023

Review Annually

Our practice manages all telephone calls, messages and emails from patients in a timely and professional manner. Patients are advised that a response can be expected within a 48 hour time frame. All incoming emails receive an automatic response, advising of the response time to emails.

Rose Cottage Medical Centre has 4 incoming phone lines. If all lines are in use at any time, the next incoming call will be directed to our on hold message where it will be picked up by the next available receptionist. The on hold message, advises patients that if they are experiencing a medical emergency, to hang up and dial 000.

At Rose Cottage Medical Centre, we expect our staff to answer incoming calls immediately. No call should wait more than 3 rings unless in very busy circumstances.

If staff do need to place a call on hold, they first need to identify if the call is relating to an emergency. If the call is not an emergency, they ask permission to place the caller on hold for a short time.

If the patient is calling for an emergency, the staff are trained to follow our Guide to triage, and Identify the patient using 3 types of approved patient identifiers.

If the call is not a medical emergency, the Rose Cottage staff member is to identify the patient using at least 3 types of approved patient identifiers. These include family and given names, date of birth, address etc.

If a message is to be passed on to another member of clinical or administration staff, the patient will be informed of the 48 hour expected time frame, for non-emergency matters.

Reception staff will handle any requests promptly if the request is possible.

The practice has a message service for calls received outside office hours. The message also advises of after-hours care options. The first receptionist rostered for the day checks and responds to any message left on the message service as part of the opening procedure.

Rose Cottage Medical Centre does not make appointments via email. If an email is received asking to make an appointment, our Practice Manager will encourage the sender to phone reception staff.

All contact with patients is documented in the patients health record, with a reason for contact and any information giving to the patient.