

1.1.1 Scheduling care

Practices must have a flexible appointment system to accommodate patients' clinical needs, including determining the order in which patients are seen. Practice staff should be able to quickly and accurately identify patients' needs for urgent care as well as non-urgent, complex, planned chronic care and preventive healthcare consultations. It is important that all staff, but particularly administrative staff, are trained in triage procedures.

RACGP 4th Edition Standards

- 1.1.1** *Our practice has a flexible system that enables us to accommodate patients' clinical needs.*

Assessment methods

- Interview with GPs and staff

Surveyors will interview the GPs, nurses and administrative staff, who should be able to describe the appointment system used. Staff should be able to discuss how patient's varying health needs are managed, such as handling urgent situations, non urgent needs, as well as complex care, planned chronic disease management, preventive healthcare and patients needing longer consultations. Staff should also be able to demonstrate the triage processes used at the practice.

- Appointment system review

Surveyors will review the practice's appointment system to confirm that appointment timeslots are left blank each day to accommodate any urgent patient consultations.

Meeting the Standards

It's important that all staff at the practice understand the appointment system used, and be able to confidently describe how different patients' needs are managed. This includes handling urgent situations, non-urgent needs, complex care, planned chronic disease management and preventive care. Staff must be trained in triage processes and be able to demonstrate how they identify and manage urgent medical matters.

It is recommended that triage resources be displayed in the reception area, and wherever staff might be answering the phone.

Best practice

The practice's policies and procedures manual will include details of the practice's appointment system, including how patients' clinical needs are managed, and triage processes.