Saxmundham Health has started up a new Paramedic and ‘Urgent Care’ scheme to improve services to patients.

From the beginning of July patients calling the Practice because they want to see a doctor or nurse that day will either be seen or telephoned by a member of the ‘Urgent Care Team’. This team is made up of an on-call doctor, a Nurse Practitioner, Paramedic and a Pharmacist.

Requests for a home visit will be triaged by Jo Pemberton, who was a frontline Paramedic for 15 years before joining the Practice recently. During her time in the Ambulance Service, Jo received training in Enhanced Clinical Triage and worked out of the 999 ambulance centre in Essex, assisting in triaging emergency calls. For the last five years she was based in Saxmundham.

Jo’s role at Saxmundham Health will involve triaging all home visit requests and some other calls, in the morning, in order to determine the best outcome for the patient. This could be a visit from the GP, Paramedic or via a telephone consultation. She will also contact patients who are unable to give a reason for their request for an appointment, or if we need more information to identify the best clinician for their needs. Additionally Jo will be available for some urgent clinic appointments in the afternoon.

The first point of contact for most telephone calls to the surgery remains our Care Navigation Team. Their job is to assess patients’ needs and direct them to the most appropriate member of staff so we can provide the best and most efficient care. Patients calling the surgery may find that they will be asked a few more questions by the Care Navigation team in order to direct them to the most appropriate resource (Urgent Care Team clinician, self referral to physiotherapy or podiatry, for example). Access to the Paramedic or the Urgent Care Team can only be requested by the Care Navigation Team, not the patient, because we need to ensure only appropriate calls go forward to this team.

Saxmundham Health would like to reassure patients that all phone calls, either to request an appointment or discuss the need for urgent care, are handled confidentially in our Care Navigation suite at the rear of the building away from the waiting area, or in a consulting room.’

Our hope is that by freeing up doctors from this work they will be able to see more patients in their daily clinics and therefore more appointments will be available.

New Saxmundham Health Paramedic Jo Pemberton