

## **A simple guide to using Choose & Book**

*A guide compiled by Yvonne Bennett – a patient at Thornley House surgery*

First of all you discuss with your GP which hospitals or clinics are suitable for you and your condition (the hospital or health worker you want to see may not be able to deal with your problem). If you don't want to make your appointment there and then, you will be given a printed form containing a reference number and a password. The unique password provided ensures that only you or your chosen representative are the ones that can access the service. It will also contain a telephone number and internet address.

You now have 3 choices, you can..

- Return to the **Practice** with the information sheets and get them to book it for you. Remember to take your diary with you
- Book the appointment using the **telephone**, or
- Book the appointment using the **internet**

No matter which way you choose, decide which of the hospitals you would prefer. (You may wish to discuss this with a relative or friend)

### **Booking your appointment by telephone**

1. Make sure you have the forms with you
2. Have a diary by your phone
3. Phone the number given on the sheet

My experience is that the staff are very friendly and helpful. Make sure you make a note in your diary or on the form. Keep this in a safe place as confirmation is not normally sent. Some hospitals do send out appointment letters.

### **Booking your appointment online**

1. Make sure you have the forms with you
2. Have a diary by your computer
3. **Log in to the Choose and Book online service** using the address provided on the form you received from the surgery
4. **Select Book Appointment** at the bottom of the screen
5. The clinics that are available are displayed
6. **Select the clinic whose appointment availability you would like to view**
7. **Follow the onscreen instructions**

If you prefer, you can also print out instructions '**Steps to booking and appointment**' from the choose and book website. When you have made your appointment you print out a copy of the confirmation.

I have used both these methods and personally I find booking online very easy. There is no time limit. You can look up timetables of public transport if you have them. Check with someone if they are going to be taking you. Double check convenience and do not feel rushed. You can always go back to a previous screen and pick another appointment.

### **Things to think about**

No matter which method you use for Choose and Book, think about what is best for you - **the patient!** Does the hospital or clinic have a good reputation in dealing with your particular condition? Is it convenient for you to get there (**see the HTMC website for the transport link**)? Is it easy for relatives to visit you if you need to be admitted (which may be an important part of your recovery)? You can check information on line about the various hospitals. If you don't have on line facilities at home you can use a friends or relatives or even the local library, but remember someone may be looking at your screen. If it is at the library you could always ask for a computer in the corner or do they have one screened off from other users for privacy. **DON'T FORGET TO LOG OUT!** once you have finished using the choose and book service.