

## **Enhanced Access Services**

From October 2022, new arrangements came into place across England for additional primary care capacity outside the core hours of GMS contracts (8.00am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday excluding public holidays), formally known as enhanced access services.

These are available from 6.30pm to 8.00pm Monday to Friday and 9.00am to 5.00pm on Saturdays. The changes are designed to improve access, promote patient choice and support primary care resilience.

## **Background**

Since at least 2013, practices have been offered the opportunity to provide additional appointments outside GMS contract core hours through a specific type of contract offered across the country. In July 2019, these arrangements and responsibilities transferred to Primary Care Networks under the new contract.

A Primary Care Network (PCN) comprises of GP practices working together with community, mental health, social care, pharmacy, hospital and voluntary services in their local areas.

The PCNs in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight which build on existing primary care services and enable greater provision of proactive, personalised, co-ordinated and more integrated health and social care for local people close to home.

PCNs are led by Clinical Directors who may be a GP, general practice nurse, clinical pharmacist or other clinical profession working in general practice.

Across Hampshire these contracts have led to a range of arrangements following old CCG configurations and boundaries. Some contracts would be led through a separate provider acting on behalf of the PCN.

## **New arrangements**

Across Hampshire all PCNs have taken on the contracts to provide the service at a PCN level (this equates to 34 PCNs serving Hampshire). This brings the provision of these services closer to local communities and their local primary care providers.

The new arrangements aim to remove variability across the country by putting in place a more standardised and better understood offer for patients.

PCNs now employ a wide range of roles, in order to offer a wide range of specialist roles, alongside GPs, to ensure our patients get the right help as soon as possible. These additional roles support PCNs to use the Enhanced Access capacity for delivering routine services. It provides an opportunity to develop a better blend of appointments including taking advantage of digital opportunities for those who prefer this form of appointment, facilitating convenient access for patients and flexible working for staff. Introducing a more multidisciplinary offer means patients can access a broader set of services, such as screening and vaccination.

It is for the PCN to determine, based on discussions with their ICB and engagement with their patients, the exact mix of in person face-to-face and remote (telephone, video or online) appointments, how many appointments are for emergencies, same day or pre-booked (including screening, vaccinations and immunisations) and which services should be available when and what skill mix is needed to deliver these.

Local arrangements are possible for PCNs to subcontract some or all of their service to other providers or work with others across a larger footprint, which could include a neighbouring PCN.

Over the Spring and Summer of 2022, local ICB teams were in discussions with their PCNs regarding their plans and supported PCNs with their engagement with patients and Patient Participation Groups, to help finalise their offer to patients.

Over 63,500 local people shared their valuable views through surveys, which were available both online and in paper, with the key themes used by the PCNs to help inform how they will provide enhanced access. Key themes from the feedback were around preferred appointment times, access to wider services, continuity of care, barriers to access and travel.

The ICBs covering Hampshire will continue to support PCNs as they deliver these services.