

# Improving 7-Day Access - FAQs

## **What does 7 day access mean?**

**Answer** - GP Practices or a group of practices working together (called a hub) offering additional appointments beyond 6pm on weekdays and additional appointments on a Saturday and Sunday.

## **What are Primary Care Services?**

**Answer** - Primary care is the service practice it provides the first stage of care for minor ailments and ongoing patient support/needs close to where the patient lives. It is the patient's main source of regular medical care by health professionals from a GP practice setting

## **What are GP hubs?**

**Answer** - GP Practices or group of practices working together (called a hub) providing additional appointments after 6pm during the week and on a Saturday and Sunday

## **We were only asked our views about this service two years ago – why are we being asked again?**

**Answer** - In Spring 2016 we undertook a public consultation about urgent care services. During that consultation, we also asked the public and clinicians to tell us where we should locate primary care services that provide additional evening and weekend appointments. Nine hubs (practices working together) across the DDES area were chosen as the preferred option by the public. It was agreed to implement and then review these changes after six and 12 months of operation. This was to ensure the service covered the full winter period to truly understand the impact. In this review, we looked at who used our primary care services, when and why? The need to change as established after we reviewed public and clinician feedback, including patient views, activity, capacity, impact on other services, practice requirements, value for money, transport and pharmacy provision. The review highlighted that the hubs were valued but some were significantly underused.

## **Why did you open 9 GP hubs in 2017 if you knew that would be too many and the appointments would not get used?**

**Answer** - We listened to people's views in the 2016 consultation and made a decision based on those views that we would provide the service from nine hubs across the DDES area, we knew that we would not have sufficient capacity to fill these service however we wanted to give the public what they asked for with a condition that a review was built in to assess usage and the option to change . We have done that and the review shows us that the hubs are underutilised and offer low value for money.

## **Why are we not being asked our views about the locations of the three hubs?**

**Answer** - The review shows us that in the Durham Dales locality the GP hub in Bishop Auckland is the most used with 86% attending in comparison to 21% in Stanhope and 21% in Barnard Castle. In the Easington locality, the Peterlee hub is the most used with 42% in comparison to 27% in the Easington hub and 23% in the Seaham hub. In the Sedgfield locality the Newton Aycliffe hub was the most used (64%) in comparison to the hub in Spennymoor (51%) and Sedgfield (24%). We took

this on board as well as the feedback from the pre-engagement which was carried out between December 2017 and August 2018. The CCG engaged with 862 members of the public made up of patients and stakeholders from patient reference groups, health networks and hard to reach groups. This feedback showed us that 8 out of 10 people were prepared to travel further to a hub, 99% of people were prepared to travel up to five miles to a hub, 59% up to ten miles and 24% up to 15 miles.

**Is the only thing we can influence the opening times?**

**Answer** - No, as well as the opening times of the hubs we are also seeking your views about what else would make the option work, do you think we should offer pre bookable appointments outside of normal GP practice hours for shift works for example, what additional services are needed for frail or housebound patients, is transport to the hubs a concern?

**I have never heard of the GP hubs, did you promote them?**

**Answer** – Yes, the “Talk before you walk” campaign has been ongoing, both before changes to services were made in April 2016 and since this date. Posters are up in surgeries advising patients to contact NHS111 for an appointment when their GP surgery is closed. Social Media regularly shares this message, along with press releases and we have extensive list of communication drive we could share. We acknowledge we need to communicate more and are in the process of working with patients groups and our county counsellors to get this message across in the right way.

**Are the current nine hubs staffed by GPs?**

**Answer** - No the current 9 hubs are not all staffed by GPs as this would not be financially viable. Richardson Hospital is a nurse led service only and only those patients that call NHS111 and are profiled as needing to see a nurse,(NOT A GP) on the same day, will be sent to the Richardson Hospital based on where they live and if that site is the closest. If a patient needs to see a GP, Richardson Hospital will not profile as an option for the call handler as the GP is based in Bishop Auckland, therefore the patient will be booked in at that site.

**What will happen to the staff when six of the hubs close?**

**Answer** - This service review is not about reducing services, it is around providing the same amount of capacity but in a different way. All staff will still be required however will need to work differently

**Can you see a GP in the new hubs?**

**Answer** - This will depend on your clinical need however our services will be GP led and therefore if a GP is required we will be able to access this capacity

**How do you get an appointment during the evening or a weekend?**

**Answer** - By phoning NHS 111, patients who need to be seen urgently on the same day will be offered an appointment with a healthcare professional either at their own GP surgery or at a hub nearby.

**Can you walk in?**

**Answer** - People must book an appointment first: *it is not a walk in service.*

**I heard NHS 111 were not sending patients to the hub at Barnard Castle on purpose so that you could close it down, is that true?**

**Answer** - Richardson Hospital is a nurse led service only and only those patients that call NHS 111 and are profiled as needing to see a nurse on the same day will be sent to the Richardson Hospital based on where they live and if that site is the closest. If a patient needs to see a GP, Richardson Hospital will not profile as an option for the call handler as the GP is based in Bishop Auckland.

**People said they used the hubs when they could not get a GP appointment in their own practice, what are doing to solve that problem?**

**Answer** - GP practices provide same day GP appointments based on patient need, if a patient is assessed as needing a same day appointment and the practice is full the practice will book in the patient to the hub.

**Do the hubs have access to your medical records?**

**Answer** - Yes the extended GP access services have full access to patient records

**If you reduce the hubs down to one in the Dales at Bishop Auckland how will patients get there, will you be providing transport?**

**Answer** - This is something you can give your views about in the consultation, we do currently have patient transport available and we also offer home visits to housebound and nursing home patients and those not able to travel due to their condition. Also noting that prior to this change Durham Dales only ever had one service at Bishop.

**When will you make a decision about this?**

**Answer** - Once the consultation finishes the CCG will take into considering all of the feedback and present a report to the executive committee early January 2019

**How will we find out about the final decision?**

**Answer** - We will publicise the decision on the CCG website and email all those that took the time to feed in to our consultation

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