

August 2018

## **General Practice Forward View: Extended access to primary care services**

### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

#### **What is meant by extended access to primary care?**

The General Practice Forward View (GPFV), published in April 2016, is a five-year plan that details ways to improve and strengthen general practice services. One of the ways included in the plan was for GP practices to offer additional appointments outside the usual opening hours, which are 8am to 6.30pm on Monday to Friday, including at weekends and bank holidays.

#### **How long will the extended access hours cover?**

Patients will have access to one and a half hours of extra appointments after 6.30pm each week day, as well as on Saturday and Sunday mornings. There will also be extra appointments for patients during usual opening hours – the timings of these appointments will depend on the need in each area.

#### **How did you decide what weekend hours to provide?**

The CCGs in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent have looked at the activity from two existing pilot sites in Stafford and Surrounds and Cannock Chase to find out when people were using primary care services outside of the normal opening hours. Feedback was also gained from patients, the public and local GP providers on what weekend service they believe would meet the needs of local patients in the future.

#### **Is extended access an optional requirement?**

No. Extended access to primary care services is a national requirement for local clinical commissioning groups to buy extended access services for 100% of the practice populations in their area by September 2018.

Extended hours services must be available to the everyone and not for specific groups or patients. It must also be offered on an equal basis to appointments within the usual opening hours.

#### **Does the requirement apply to same day or pre-bookable appointments?**

Patients will be able to access pre-bookable and same day appointments on weekday evenings and at the weekend, which means:

- Patients can book an appointment, in advance, via their own practice
- Patients can access a 'routine' appointment on the same day e.g. on a Saturday or Sunday if they choose to in premises available within the local area

**Will this mean that every practice is now open seven days a week?**

This is not about every practice being open seven days a week. It is about having extra appointments to what is available now. This means that practices will work together to cover the extended hours. For example, patients may need to visit a different practice for their appointment.

**If I attend a different practice, will the clinician be able to access my medical records?**

Yes – all clinicians delivering the service will have access to the medical records of patients in that area. Choosing to accept one of the extended access appointments is your way of giving your consent for your records to be used in this way.

**Does this mean I will be guaranteed an appointment when I want it?**

The service will mean that additional appointments are available and access to appointments will be improved. However, there will still be a limit as to how many appointments can be provided and therefore it would not be possible to guarantee appointments.

**How many extra appointments will be made available?**

The requirement in the GPFV is for practices to provide an additional 30 minutes for every 1,000 patients per week.

**Does the extended access service include Bank Holidays?**

Yes.

**Will all extra appointments under the extended access service be with a GP?**

No - patients will be directed to the most appropriate healthcare professional to meet their needs. This is not always a GP and so practices are working towards involving other primary care professionals as part of the model. Initially this will mainly mean nurses and advanced nurse practitioners, but it could also include physiotherapists, mental health nurses or pharmacists in the future.

**Is there a minimum appointment time for patients?**

Each appointment will be between 10 and 15 minutes, which means there will be four to six appointments available per hour.