

## **More GP appointments for East Lancashire residents**

An innovative new scheme has been launched in East Lancashire to increase the number of GP appointments available to patients in the area. The scheme, known as extended GP access was first suggested in a public consultation in 2016 when NHS East Lancashire CCG proposed to improve GP access across East Lancashire.

The GP extended access scheme has been tried and tested in Hyndburn since January this year and now will be available for residents of Burnley, Pendle, Ribblesdale and Rossendale. Patients registered with GPs in each area will be able to benefit from extended GP access in a system set up and run by local GPs to improve access to GP services.

Every GP practice in each area of East Lancashire will be involved in the new extended GP access system. NHS East Lancashire has commissioned a local group of GPs working across the whole of East Lancashire called the EU Federation of GPs to introduce the scheme in each area.

The extended GP access scheme means that patients can make an appointment by telephone or face to face with their GP practice to see a GP or practice nurse, from 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm at night on week days and from 10 am to 4 pm on a Saturday and Sunday. The system has been set up by local GPs working collectively to improve access to GP and practice nurse services. The appointments available in these extra weekday and weekend hours are in addition to the usual GP surgery opening hours from 8 am to 6.30 pm.

The GPs will be able to access the full medical record and history to enable a thorough assessment and course of treatment. It also means that the patients record will be updated which will provide continuity of care. Appointments are being made for GP and nurse consultations from extended GP access hubs in Burnley, Hyndburn and Pendle. Rossendale and Ribblesdale will follow.

Burnley – St Peters via Burnley Group Practice

Hyndburn – Peel House Medical Centre

Pendle – Yarnspinnners via Reedyford Practice

Rossendale – Haslingden Health Centre via Dr Mackenzie & Partners from the 24<sup>th</sup> September

Ribble Valley – currently patients can access any of the other areas with a local site anticipated to go live by the 1<sup>st</sup> November

Dr Richard Robinson, Chair of NHS East Lancashire CCG, said:

“The system is run by local GPs and nurses and is very simple and easy to use. It is up and running in Hyndburn where I work as a GP and is working well. It has just been launched in Burnley and Pendle and will be launched later in Rossendale and Ribblesdale.

“To book an appointment for a weekday evening or on Saturday 10 am til 4pm or Sunday 10 am til 4 pm, patients simply need to ring their own GP practice and ask for an appointment. The system means that patients can be booked into the evening and weekend appointments if they cannot be seen during normal surgery hours”

He added:

“It is early days for this new system but already we are receiving good feedback and we hope that it will meet the needs of the majority of people who need improved access to GP services. It builds on a tried and tested model that we developed in Hyndburn earlier this year and it will be a new and welcome addition to NHS services throughout the area”

The GP extended access system is run by local GPs working together to improve primary care services under the name of the EU Federation of GPs. GP Federations are typically run by local GPs in each area and have been established to develop and improve primary care services specifically to suit local needs. The service was launched in Hyndburn in January this year, and now that it is tried and tested it will be rolled out across East Lancashire to ensure that 100% of the population have access to extended GP services by the beginning of October.

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