Primary care consultation launched across East Lancashire

[April 20, 2016](http://www.eastlancsccg.nhs.uk/2016/04/20/primary-care-consultation-launched-across-east-lancashire/)[0](http://www.eastlancsccg.nhs.uk/2016/04/20/primary-care-consultation-launched-across-east-lancashire/#comments)

A consultation on a proposed new model to improve access to GP services in East Lancashire has been launched by NHS East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

The model which has been developed by local GPs, and after initial feedback from patients, incorporates the vision for same day access, 8am-8pm 7 days a week to a GP wherever you are in East Lancashire.

Over the last 18 months, the CCG has been working alongside patients, carers and wider stakeholders such as doctors and pharmacists to develop a vision for how they would like GP services to develop in future. This vision is for GPs and partner organisations to work together more closely; to provide quality joined up care; with equal access to services wherever you live in East Lancashire.

Dr Phil Huxley, Chair of NHS East Lancashire CCG, said: “We have been listening to patients for over 18 months and this consultation builds on that feedback.  We want to improve access to GP services and make it easier for patients.  Our proposals therefore, are based on what we have been told.  We know that many people want later appointments, to fit in with work, other commitments or if they just find it difficult to get an appointment during working hours.  We also know that some people would prefer to see a doctor at the weekend.

“Of all the patients who use NHS services, GPs see 90% of those and this makes the relationship between the GP and their patient very important and extremely valuable to the majority of our patients.  Our proposals seek to strengthen that relationship further.

“When we engaged with patients last year, they told us that the first contact with the practice is the most important. Good quality telephone advice can mean that patients don’t always need to see a GP face to face. GPs also tell us that some patients don’t need a GP appointment but could visit their pharmacy or go online for self-care.”

In developing the ideas, local doctors have started to form a plan to improve GP access in the whole of East Lancashire by working more closely together whilst maintaining continuity of care. The plan reflects some of the changes that patients and practices have said they would like to see.

Currently the CCG funds a GP walk-in centre based at Accrington Victoria Community Hospital serving the whole of East Lancashire. This contract is coming to an end and an alternative to this, but still based in Accrington, is being considered.  Rather than just operating one centre for the whole of East Lancashire, the CCG proposes to introduce additional ‘Health Hubs’ in Burnley, Pendle, and Rossendale and Saturday morning surgeries in Ribblesdale.

The proposals are that:

* Extra appointments are made available in the hubs from later in the afternoon to 8pm Monday to Friday to extend the access that patients have to their general practice. Weekend appointments will be available from two hubs in Accrington and Burnley from 8 am to 8 pm Saturday and Sunday, and Saturday morning in Ribblesdale and Rossendale
* Access to all appointments in the hub can be made by simply ringing your GP surgery
* Dedicated children’s appointments would be available in the hubs due to the demand for late afternoon appointments for children
* Dedicated Care Navigators will be available to advise and help patients decide on the best place for them to access health care based on their need
* The whole system will be integrated which means if one hub is very busy patients can access other hubs. Because the service is run by your local GPs it means the health hubs, unlike other services will have secure and confidential access to patient’s full medical records. This will only be with the patient’s consent and will ensure that the doctor or nurse knows the patient’s full medical history and they receive the right treatment
* Each hub will be located with or near to a pharmacy to ensure that any prescriptions required can be obtained easily and quickly
* The hub would be an additional service to the minor injuries unit at Rossendale and Accrington Victoria Community Hospital, the Urgent Care Centre at Burnley, A*&*E, and the GP out of hours service. These services are not affected by this proposal

The CCG is asking for people to tell them what they think of these proposals and there are a number of ways that this can be done.

The CCG has created an online questionnaire which can be accessed on the CCG’s website at:<http://www.eastlancsccg.nhs.uk/improving-gp-access/>

Paper copies of the questionnaire will also be distributed to every GP practice in East Lancashire so that patients can complete these and post them using the FREEPOST survey address envelopes, or they can be given to the reception staff who will send them to the CCG.

In addition, direct comments are welcome.  You can email your comments to:communications.eastlancsccg@nhs.net.  Or you can write to Communications, Walshaw House, Regent Street, Nelson, Lancashire, BB9 8AS. You can also call us on 01282 644627 for more information.

The survey will run until the 8th July 2016.  The findings from the survey will be published as soon as possible after the closing date