

Briefing for patients: More appointments for GP services in the evenings, at weekends and bank holidays in your area

30 July 2018

From 1 August 2018, your local NHS is introducing a wider range of times when most people living in Braintree Town, Chelmsford, Silver End and parts of the Colne Valley can get appointments at a GP practice.

Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is pleased to announce the local roll-out of national plans, called Extended Access, for appointments into the evening, at weekends and at bank holidays. Extended Access will allow people who might not be able to get to their GP surgery during normal 'working hours' to see nurse practitioners, GPs and healthcare assistants at other times.

The CCG has been working with GPs at Elizabeth Courtauld Surgery in Halstead and North Chelmsford Health Centre in Springfield, Chelmsford, to introduce appointments between at those two locations to patients registered at most practices in Braintree, Chelmsford, and the Colne Valley area from 1 August.

This is the start of a phased launch, with other parts of mid Essex getting Extended Access appointments in the autumn. Due to IT systems that differ from those at the Extended Access centres, people registered at Blandford House in Braintree or, in the Colne Valley, Brimpton House, Hilton House, the Castle Surgery or Coggeshall Surgery will not be able to book Extended Access appointments until 1 October.

From that date, appointments will also be available from two further hubs – Longfield Medical Centre in Maldon and another in the Braintree area currently being finalised. There should be no impact on appointments for patients registered at the practices offering Extended Access appointments due to the planning and extra resourcing for the project.

People wanting an Extended Access appointment book it through their own practice as they would any other appointment. Please note, these are *not* walk-in appointments – all appointments should be booked in advance, either online or through a person's own GP practice. Appointment will be with the most appropriate clinician for their condition, which may be a nurse practitioner, paramedic, GP or other healthcare professional.

Dr Caroline Dollery, Chair of Mid Essex CCG and a local GP herself, said, "This is great news for patients across our area, as people who struggle to get to weekday appointments in the daytime can now access professional NHS services more easily.

Issued by the Communications and Engagement team, Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group

Telephone: 01245 459381, email: MECCG.ppe@nhs.net

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“In most cases, people going to their GP practice have a condition for which nurse practitioners and allied health professionals can offer the right advice and treatment, and the new service follows this model. It’s part of wider plans at the CCG to build a strong foundation for primary care – our GP practices – and make sure they continue to serve our local population long into the future.”

A website offering more details of the Extended Access Service will be live from 1 August and available via bit.ly/ExtendedAccess.

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