

Feedback from the PPG discussions on Extended Access – 8th March

The issues raised at the PPG event can be grouped as follows:

1. Practices working together
2. Access to “own” GP
3. Record Sharing
4. Appointment booking
5. Hub locations
6. Rural issues
7. Workforce
8. Support services
9. Digital challenges
10. Prevention of abuse of the system
11. Overlap with other services
12. Cross-border issues
13. Communications and Advertising

1. Practices working together

- In order for the scheme to work, practices need to work together
- Patients recognise that single, small practices do not have the capacity to deliver the extended hours appointments
- Working together might/should include sharing workforce (clinical and admin)

2. Access to “own” GP

- Patients will need to be clear that it is very unlikely that they will see their own GP
- Most patients already accept this within their own practice
- Communications/messages about the service need to make this clear

3. Record Sharing

- Sharing of patient records is key to making the service work
- However, patient confidence in data sharing is crucial – this needs to be worked on
- The new GDPR regulations need to be fully taken into account

4. Appointment booking

- Unlike the current scheme, a single telephone number should be used to make all appointments at a practice/group of practices (including normal hours)
- Practices should offer the evening/weekend appointments as well as/at the same time as normal hours appointments

5. Hub locations

- Hubs need to align with bus routes
- Other delivery points need to be considered (supermarkets?)
- Can/should Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) data be used to identify the ideal hub locations?

6. Rural issues

- In rural areas, the appointments need to be spread around so that patients might have, for example, 2 evenings a week when the appointments are close to their home
- Transport issues should be considered – can the scheme include/fund patient transport?
- The cost of travel for low-income, rural-based patients needs to be considered

7. Workforce

- Will/should the adoption of the new service require GPs to adopt different shift patterns?
- A key challenge will be to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of GPs/other clinicians and admin staff to run the appointments at the hub locations
- The new service might/will put extra pressure on already fragile GP practices, and may have an impact on safety – how can these risks be addressed?

8. Support services

- Arrangements need to be made to address: pharmacy opening hours, x-rays, phlebotomy, diagnostics etc.

9. Digital challenges

- For many patients, they don't have access to digital devices/technology
- Even where they do have access, coverage is often poor/limited
- However, the service should include the use of e.g. on-line booking and booking apps

10. Prevention of abuse of the system

- Processes will be needed to ensure that patients do not abuse the system by, for example, making multiple bookings, excessive DNAs etc.
- Can/should the booking systems ensure that "normal" hours appointments are filled first?
- Can/should the booking systems ensure that the host/hub practice doesn't fill the evening/weekend appointments?

11. Overlap with other services

- There needs to be clarity over how the new scheme fits with existing GPAF and DES schemes

12. Cross-border issues

- Where patients live near the Telford and Wrekin border, there needs to be clarity over whether patients are able to book into practices that are nearer their home, but not in their county (this is possible with the current GPAF scheme)

13. Communications and Advertising

- Getting the comms and advertising right is key to success
- All of the above issues need to be clearly considered and included in advertising
- As far as possible, the comms and advertising need to be consistent across the county.
- PPGs could/should have a role in this, and should be involved in ongoing monitoring of the service