



North Central London
Clinical Commissioning Group

'Enhanced Access' to General Practice

Public engagement slides

Updated June 2022

Introduction



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- We want to provide an update on upcoming changes to ‘enhanced access’ to general practice. Enhanced access is the provision of appointments outside of a GP practice’s core hours of 8am to 6.30pm (e.g. evenings and weekends).
- From October 2022, Primary Care Networks (groups of local GP practices working together) will take over the responsibility for providing enhanced access for the patients in their area.
- This is a national change. A national specification, released at the end of March 2022, describes the enhanced access service that must be provided by Primary Care Networks (PCNs).
- There are some differences between the national specification and what’s currently provided for our patients in North Central London (NCL – which includes the boroughs of: Islington, Barnet, Camden, Enfield and Haringey).
- However, we are committed to making sure that there will be no reduction in the overall amount of primary care appointments available for people across the week and on bank holidays as a result of these changes. What may change is the way that you access these appointments – for example, how you book them and where you might go to be seen.

How is 'enhanced access' currently provided across North Central London (NCL)?

There are currently two forms of 'enhanced access' provision in general practice:

- Extended Access Hubs (weekday evenings 6.30-8pm, and weekends and bank holidays 8am-8pm):
 - The CCG currently commissions a number of extended access GP hubs in each borough, which can be accessed by any registered patient in that borough.
 - They offer both pre-bookable and on the day appointments, and NHS 111 can also book patients in.
 - There are some differences by borough reflecting different patterns of demand, use and investment.
 - London is the only region to consistently offer Sunday provision.
- Extended Hours access:
 - GP practices receive direct funding to provide 'extended hours' to expand their own practice's core opening hours and provide additional early morning, evening and weekend sessions.
 - The timing of these sessions is determined by the practice and must include emergency, same day and pre-bookable appointments.

Why are things changing?

- From 1 October 2022, national funding for these two forms of access will be combined and given to Primary Care Networks (PCNs) to provide an enhanced access service for their patients.
- PCNs are groups of GP practices working together – with each other and with other partners - to deliver nationally set services (we have 32 PCNs in North Central London).
- A national specification, released at the end of March, describes the enhanced access service that must be provided by PCNs.
- PCNs need to submit plans to show how they will deliver this access for patients by 31 July 2022 (draft plans) and 31 August (final plans).
- PCNs are required to show that the plans that they develop are based on engagement with patients, are responsive to known patient views, and reflect the patient need in their area.
- The CCG is responsible for assuring the PCN plans and ensuring that they form part of a joined up approach across North Central London.

What is in the national specification that's similar to what we have now?

- **Capacity:** the overall number of hours that need to be provided for patients is similar to what's provided now.
- **Hub locations:** the locations for face to face appointments need to be convenient for the PCN's patients to access and, as a minimum, equivalent to the current number of hub sites.
- **Type of appointment:** PCNs will need to provide a mixture of face-to-face and remote (telephone, video, online) appointments and the ability to pre-book appointments in advance, as well as booking on the same day.
- **Staff you'll see:** appointments will continue to be available with GPs and Practice Nurses in addition to other roles.

What's in the national specification that's different to what we have now?

- **Hours of operation:** The specification does not include any requirement for services to be provided on a Saturday evening between 5-8pm, or on Sundays or Bank Holidays. This would be a change for patients in London (and NCL). Even though the overall quantity of provision would be similar to what patients have now, the specification asks that it is provided Monday – Saturday only.
- **More focus on appointments that can be booked in advance:** The specification has more focus on making sure pre-bookable appointments are available for patients – this would help patients to access appointments that they can book in advance for 'planned care' in the enhanced access service. By 'planned care', we mean appointments for things like regular monitoring of a patient's long term condition, immunisations or screening for example. There is less focus in the specification on providing 'same-day' care - and there's likely to be a reduction in the availability of appointments for NHS 111 to book into.
- **Different service models:** Because we have 32 PCNs, there might be an increase in the number of different enhanced access services available in North Central London, compared with what we have now (we have five borough-based models). There is also no requirement in the specification for patients to be able to access hubs outside of their PCN area (at the moment patients can go to any hub in their borough).
- **Telephony and IT** and how these work together between the GP practices within the PCN may improve. The specification asks PCNs to make sure that all practices and the PCN have the ability to book into/cancel appointments, make referrals/request tests, view/update patients' records.

What changes are likely in North Central London?

- Enhanced access services are currently available for all our residents in North Central London. You may already have used these services either at your own practice or at another practice or healthcare site.
- What's changing from October is that Primary Care Networks will become responsible for providing most of these enhanced access appointments for their patients.
- In North Central London, there will be no reduction in the overall amount of primary care appointments available for people across the week and on bank holidays as a result of these changes. However, there may be changes in the way that you access these appointments – for example, how you book them and where you might go to be seen.
- We want to know what's important to you, and your experience of using these services previously. This will help our Primary Care Networks to make their plans. Our Primary Care Networks will also be talking to their patient groups over the coming weeks, and many will be doing a survey to help them make their plans.

Timeline



The timeframes for these changes have been set nationally and include:

- National specification for what PCNs need to deliver – 31 March 2022
- PCNs to submit draft proposals for how they will deliver enhanced access for their patients – 31 July 2022. These plans will be informed by engagement with patients.
- PCNs and CCG to agree final plans - 31 August 2022
- PCNs to start delivering the new service – 1 October 2022

PCN plans will need to set out a number of things including: how their plans have been informed by engagement, what services will be provided, the mix of appointment types available and where the location for face-to-face appointments will be. PCNs will also describe how they will communicate with patients and the public about the 'enhanced access' service – how it's accessed, what is available and when – through multiple routes.

The CCG is responsible for assuring the PCN plans and making sure that they form part of a joined up approach across North Central London.

Questions and comments

We hope this slide deck has been a helpful introduction to what's happening with enhanced access.

If you have any comments, feedback or questions, please let us know by emailing:

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