

REPORT ON PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ABOUT GP OUT OF HOURS

1. Purpose of Report

This report sets out the findings from engaging the public on a proposed move of GP Out of Hours Service from Herschel Medical Centre to Wexham Park Hospital. A briefing document was previously circulated and is provided at Appendix A setting out the case for change. The key areas of support and concerns raised are highlighted below and recommendations made for addressing these. A timeline is proposed for next steps.

2. Recommendation

The Panel is requested to recommend progressing with the proposed move of GP Out of Hours services from Herschel Medical Centre to Wexham Park Hospital.

3. Introduction

Bracknell and Ascot CCG, Slough CCG and Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead CCG commission East Berkshire Primary Care, to provide urgent out-of-hours medical care when GP surgeries are closed. The service operates between 6.30pm and 8am weekdays and from 6.30pm on Friday until 8am on Monday. It also operates during Bank Holidays, and occasionally at other times so surgeries can take part in educational study days.

The service has previously operated from three Primary Care Centre locations:

- Heatherwood Hospital
- Herschel Medical Centre
- St Mark's Hospital

Plans have been in place for some time to move the service from Heatherwood to Brants Bride in Bracknell and this move took place in early September 2014. Further proposals have been developed that would affect the service based at Herschel Medical Centre in Slough. No changes have been proposed that would affect the service based at St Mark's Hospital in Maidenhead. These can be summarized below:

Heatherwood Hospital	Moved to Brants Bridge in Bracknell to be co-located with the Urgent Care Centre
Herschel Medical Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed to move to Wexham Park Hospital to co-locate with A&E Proposed to open a new Primary Care Centre for GP Out of Hours at King Edward VII Hospital in Windsor
St Mark's Hospital	No changes proposed

The Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead CCG were keen to establish a Primary Care Centre in Windsor without delay and the new service opened in September 2014.

4 How does the service work?

With the introduction of NHS 111, the majority of patients who use the service, do so when they are directed there after calling NHS 111. In addition, all GP practices direct patients to call NHS 111 when they are closed (via posters and answer-phone messages). When a patient calls NHS 111 they are triaged over the telephone for the most appropriate care.

When a patient is directed to the GP Out of Hours service they will be assessed and

- provided with medical advice over the phone;
- invited to attend one of the primary care centres to see a GP; or
- a home visit is arranged.

5. Current Activity

The number of patients being supported by the GP Out of Hours service has reduced since the introduction of NHS 111 and it is anticipated that with the introduction of the new Urgent Care Centre in Bracknell and extended availability of primary care across all CCGs, this will continue to be the trend.

During the past four years, contacts to GP out of hours are illustrated below:

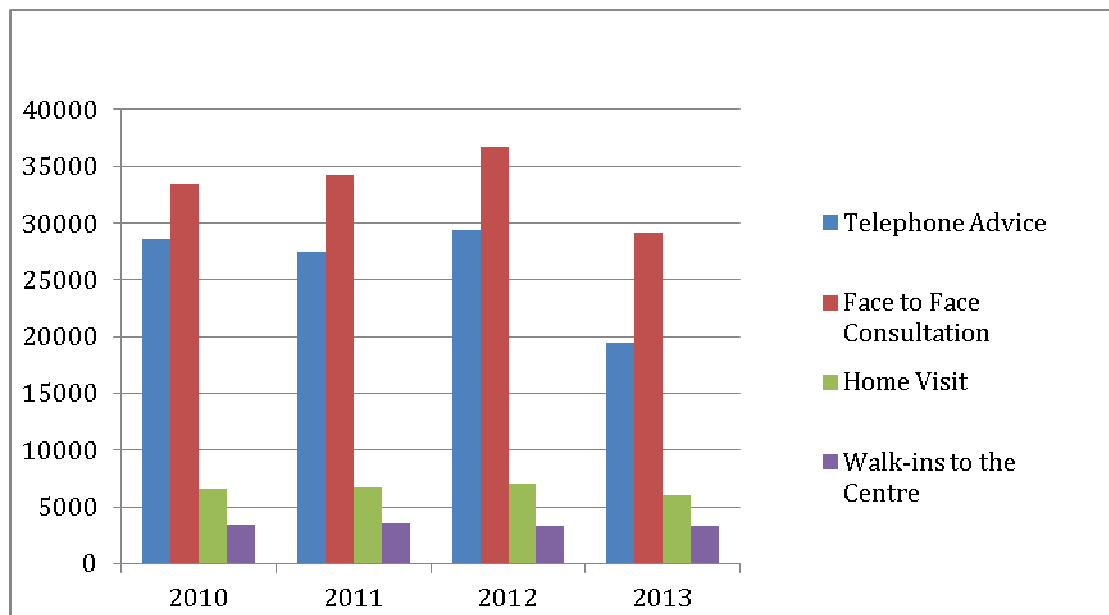


Figure 1 – Patient contact with GP Out of Hours Services for Bracknell, Maidenhead and Slough

Of those contacting the service, on average:

30% will receive advice over the phone only

41% will be asked to attend their nearest Primary Care Centre to see a GP

8% will have a home visit arranged

21% are appropriately redirected to another service

6. Primary Care Centre at Herschel Medical Centre

Currently the service runs from the same building as the GP Medical Centre. However, in recognition of the evidence that demonstrates patient benefit of co-location of out of hours services with emergency departments, Slough CCG is undertaking a feasibility study of moving the Primary Care Centre from Herschel Medical Centre to Wexham Park Hospital.

Potential benefits being explored are:

- Improved patient experience for patients who need to see a GP out of hours.
- Improved patient experience for patients attending A&E during the out of hours times with fewer people waiting to be seen as more people can be seen through the GP Primary Care Centre.
- A&E patients will see the most appropriate clinician for their condition.
- Allows for more integrated working.

It was recognized that if the above move were to be undertaken in isolation, there would be a cohort of patients (in Windsor and south Slough) who would have to travel further than previously to attend a primary care centre. This deterioration in access has been addressed by opening an additional primary care centre for out of hours at King Edward VII Hospital in Windsor. This has ensured improved access to a primary care centre for all east Berkshire patients prior to any of the moves.

There is also the option to leave the Primary Care Centre at Herschel Medical Centre, meaning no change for patients.

Local GPs are supporting the changes outlined above and believe they offer real benefits for patients and potential for increased efficiency at Wexham Hospital site.

There are no plans to move the Out of Hours service or Urgent Care Centre at St Mark's Hospital.

7. Asking the public

The public were asked to respond to a survey about the proposed changes. This was available on-line via the CCG websites and via paper copies of the questionnaire which was circulated widely.

Slough CCG and Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead CCG had stands at their AGM with information about the changes displayed and copies of the questionnaire for people to take away.

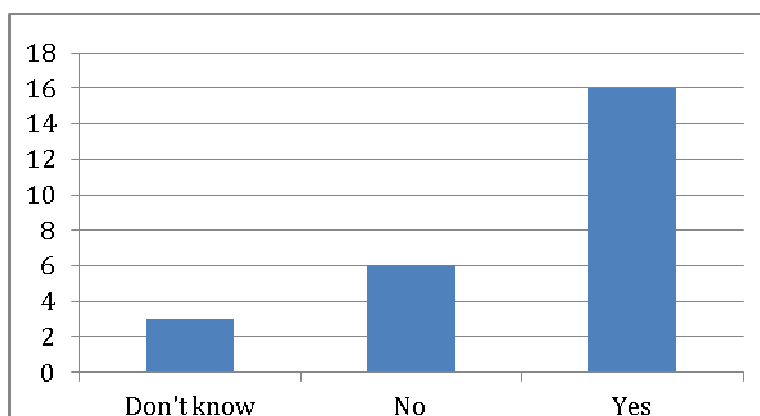
Each GP practice has a Patient Participation/Reference Group and these were sent information about the proposals. The same was done for each Healthwatch and every GP practice.

The survey opened on the CCG websites on 21 August 2014 and closed on 21 September 2014.

During that time 25 individuals responded. There were 23 questionnaires completed on-line, one completed via the post and another commented via email.

The results are summarized below.

Would using GP out of hours be better for you under these new arrangements?



64% of respondents reported that the changes would be better for them, 24% reported that they would not be better and 12% reported that they did not know whether they would be better.

What benefits do you see of these changes?

This question was free text and some respondents identified more than one benefit from the changes:

Number	Benefit
7	Closer to home
5	Reduces travel time and easier parking
4	Reduce inappropriate use of and pressure in A&E
3	Closer to work
3	More convenient if need to be directed to another service such as X ray
2	Less confusing because people know the hospital sites
1	Easier to see a doctor at short notice
1	Less pressure on GPs

A small number of comments were made in relation to Maidenhead, either seeing no benefits for Maidenhead patients or no changes for St Mark's being seen as a benefit.

What difficulties do you see of these changes?

This question was free text and some respondents identified more than one difficulty from the changes:

Number	Difficulty
6	Increased travel distance and congested roads
4	Parking – charges and difficulty in finding a space
3	Inappropriate use of services
2	More resources needed to provide extra Primary Care Centre
2	Good publicity needed to inform patients of changes
1	Lack of public transport
1	Different doctors providing care
1	Overcrowding and long waits
1	Access to patient records
1	Difficult in an emergency

One additional comment was made that travel from Maidenhead would be increased. No changes to the Maidenhead service is proposed so patients living in this area will not be affected.

Are there any other issues we need to be aware of?

This question was free text and some respondents identified more than one issue:

Number	Issue
2	Sympathetic pharmacy opening hours are important to support out of hours, as prescriptions may be made/required. Herschel Medical Centre has a pharmacy next door, will there be one at Wexham?
2	Poor experience of using services at Wexham Park which could lead to more people using the primary care centre.
1	Transport and travel will be more difficult
2	Concerned that NHS 111 is not helping and adds extra stress for anxious patients who should be trusted to know when to call GP Out of Hours
1	Access to patient records could be a problem if several doctors are involved in seeing patients.
1	Car parking charges should be consistent across all hospital sites
1	The changes need to be flexible
1	People want a GP practice next to their home
1	For people living in Windsor, the changes will be beneficial

From the responses above it is important to note that the way GP Out of Hours services work is not proposed to change. NHS 111 will continue to be the route for being directed to the service and the doctors and other staff working in the service will continue to be provided by East Berkshire primary Care. Comments relating to quality of other services at Wexham Park Hospital are also not directly relevant to the move of the primary care centre.

All comments relating to these areas will be logged by the CCGs but are not being used in relation to the decision about these proposed moves.

The most commonly cited issues relate to:

- Travel distance and ease of access
- Parking availability and charges
- Proximity to other services that could be needed including hospital services such as X-ray if the patient needs to be referred for tests and pharmacy services if the patient leaves with a prescription.

- Impact on other services leading to improving appropriate use of services or not.
- Avoiding confusion for patients through good communications about changes and co-location

Travel

The records of patients who have visited the GP out of Hours over the past year have been analysed to understand the impact of the moves on the travelling distance for patients. It is accepted that some patients who live close to Herschel Medical Centre will need to travel more but the evidence shows that, on average, the travel distance will be reduced.

The issue of how busy the roads are around the Wexham Park site is important to consider. Travelling times could still be increased even if the average distance is reduced.

However, the opening hours for the service means that there is very little overlap with the busiest times on the roads. Evenings and weekends tend to be less busy and it is not anticipated that travel times will be increased as a result of these moves.

Parking

The issues relating to parking fall into two groups. One relates to the cost of parking and the other relates to availability of parking.

Currently there are no parking charges at Herschel Medical Centre but there are charges at both Wexham Park Hospital and at King Edward VII Hospital. Typically parking on each of these sites would cost £1 for 2 hours.

Free disabled parking is available at both sites.

At King Edward VII Hospital, daily charges apply between 7am – 6pm Monday to Friday with free parking during the evening, overnight and at weekends.

Both hospitals have a dropping off area close to the main doors of the hospital.

The CCGs accept that moving the service will impact on patients and carers in this way.

The issue of availability of parking relates to the busy car parks at both hospitals and the difficulty in finding a space. This is particularly acute at times when clinics are operating and more patients and staff are on site. The opening hours of the primary care centre are predominantly in the evening, overnight and weekend when the car parks are less busy. It is not anticipated that this will be a significant issue for patients.

Proximity to other services

An anticipated benefit of making these moves is the potential for improving the appropriate use of services by their co-location. Patients who are unsure

which service to use will often attend A&E at Wexham Park because they will be seen and then directed elsewhere as necessary. By co-locating the primary care centre on the same site, patients can be more easily redirected which will reduce the pressure on A&E and reduce the waiting time for those patients that do need to be seen by an A&E doctor.

It is also sometimes necessary to redirect patients from the GP Out of Hours service to A&E. In these cases, it will be easier for patients who visit the Wexham Park service. It will also be easier for patients who need to have further tests including X-ray.

The issue of close proximity of a pharmacy is important. A significant number of patients visiting the GP Out of Hours will leave with a prescription for medication. There is no pharmacy on site at Herschel Medical Centre and patients currently take their prescription to a pharmacy near to where they live depending on opening hours during out of hours. This will continue to be the case following the move.

Impact on other services

It is anticipated that these moves will have a positive impact on other services. As previously described, it will allow patients to be redirected appropriately with less inconvenience and will then reduce the pressure on A&E.

Other suggestions were made by respondents including concern about impact on GPs and potential for missed appointments to increase.

There should be no negative impact on GPs in general practice. These changes will only see a current service move and should lead to improved accessibility and better use of urgent care services. Local GP practices have been involved in the discussions about these changes and are in support.

It is not anticipated that there would be an impact on missed appointments.

Avoiding confusion for patients

Comments about this issue fell into two groups. The first related to the changes helping to reduce confusion for patients and the other relating to the need for clear publicity about the move to ensure patients are not confused.

These two points are well made. One of the benefits expected from the change is that patients who are unsure about what service they need, often resort to A&E because they are familiar with it. Currently, patients are often treated at A&E rather than referred to the GP Out of Hours service because this is more convenient for the patient at a time when they may well be anxious. However, this can lead to individual patients repeatedly using the A&E service inappropriately.

Having the GP Out of Hours service co-located will mean patients can be more easily redirected with all the benefits previously described.

Plans are in place to communicate the changes for patients should the decision be made to move the service from Herschel Medical Centre. This will include posters in GP practices, press release to local media, information to other local services, Healthwatch and Patient Groups. The advice to call NHS 111 will remain.

8. Recommendations

The majority of people who took part in this survey reported that the changes would be beneficial to them. The numbers taking part were low but the issues raised were broad and the CCGs are confident that they have been made aware of what impact the changes will have on patients and what their areas of concern would be.

Many of the issues raised were ones not directly related to the move being proposed. Of those that are directly related only proximity to a pharmacy and the need to good publicity require recommendations for the CCGs:

- To display posters with details of nearest out of hours pharmacy and opening hours at all Primary Care Centres.
- To implement a communications plan to publicise the changes.

9. Conclusions and next steps

The majority of people who responded reported that these proposed changes would improve their access to GP Out of Hours Services. This was anticipated from the research conducted in advance and from discussions with GP practices across the two CCGs.

The CCGs propose to now move ahead with plans to move the service from Herschel Medical Centre to Wexham Park Hospital.

The recommendations above will be implemented.

Timescale:

- Presentation and discussion of this report, the feedback received, the recommendations and the conclusions at the Slough Borough Council Health Scrutiny Panel of 19 November 2014.
- Move the service from Herschel Medical Centre to Wexham Park Hospital in late January 2015

Appendix A: August 2014 Briefing for Scrutiny Committees of:

- **Bracknell Forest Borough Council**
- **Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead**
- **Slough Borough Council**

GP Out of Hours

Current arrangements

Bracknell and Ascot CCG, Slough CCG and Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead CCG commission East Berkshire Primary Care, to provide urgent out-of-hours medical care when GP surgeries are closed. The service operates between 6.30pm and 8am weekdays and from 6.30pm on Friday until 8am on Monday. It also operates during Bank Holidays, and occasionally at other times so surgeries can take part in educational study days.

The service operates from three Primary Care Centre locations:

- Heatherwood Hospital
- St Mark's Hospital
- Herschel Medical Centre

With the introduction of NHS 111, the majority of patients who use the service, do so when they are directed there after calling NHS 111. All GP practices will direct patients to call NHS 111 when they are closed and patients are triaged over the telephone for the most appropriate care.

When a patient is directed to the GP Out of Hours service they will be assessed and either provided with medical advice over the phone, asked to attend one of the primary care centres to see a GP or a home visit is arranged.

Current Activity

The number of patients contacting the GP Out of Hours service has reduced since the introduction of NHS 111 and it is anticipated that with the introduction of extended availability of primary care across all CCGs, this will continue to be the trend. During the past four years, contacts to GP out of hours are illustrated below:

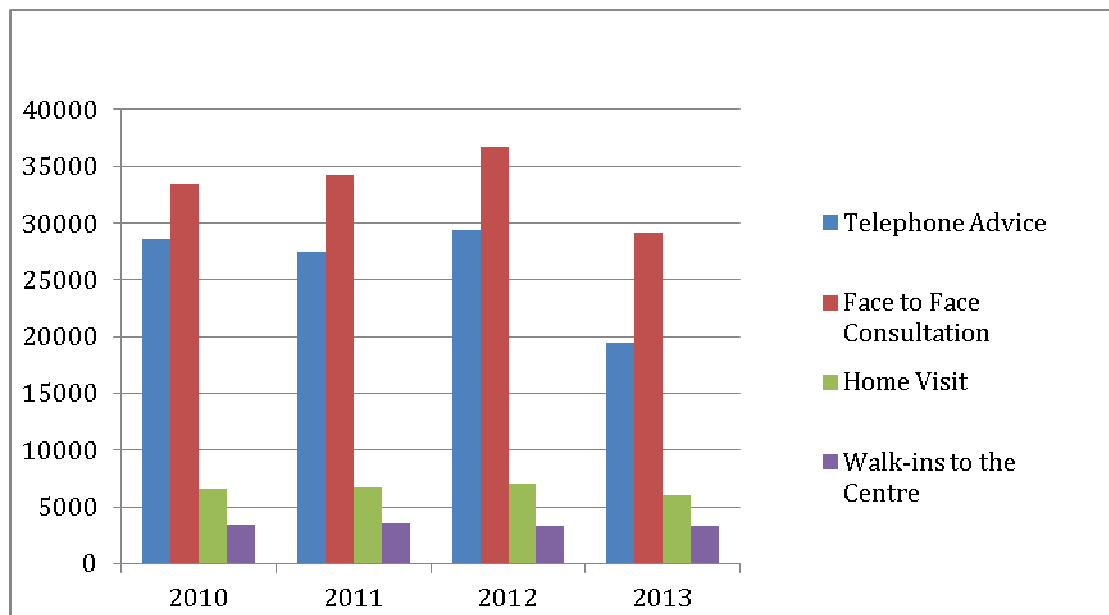


Figure 2 - Attendances at GP Out of Hours Services for Bracknell, Maidenhead and Slough

Of those contacting the service, on average:
 30% will receive advice over the phone only
 41% will be asked to attend their nearest Primary Care Centre to see a GP
 8% will have a home visit arranged
 21% are appropriately directed

Primary Care Centre at Heatherwood Hospital

The changes proposed to Heatherwood Hospital under the Shaping the Future consultation included the integration of the GP Out of Hours service at Brants Bridge in Bracknell as a co-located service with the Urgent Care Centre.

We are now in a position to realize the advantages of colocation as described in the consultation document for Shaping the Future¹ building upon the integration of GP led services and the potential for a better patient experience.

Now that the Urgent Care Centre is fully operational, it is beneficial to patients to collocate the out of hours service as quickly as possible. This will reduce confusion (raised through the Community Partnership Forum) for patients about where to attend, provide greater integration of service provision, offer accessible parking and greater system resilience in terms of flexing treatment capacity at times of high demand i.e. reduce waiting times.

In light of the CCGs' commitment to maintaining or improving accessibility to services, the impact on patient travel distances has been assessed. Modelling of patient travelling distance has demonstrated that the proposed move would

¹ Consultation on proposals for healthcare services in Bracknell and Ascot 15 October 2012 – 31 January 2013

reduced average miles travelled per patient from 4.2 miles to 2.9 miles as illustrated in the table below.

Location	Average Miles Travelled	Number of Contacts	New Average Distance Travelled	Number of Contacts
Ascot	4.2	8199	0	0
Bracknell	0	0	2.9	8020

Primary Care Centre at Herschel Medical Centre

Currently the service runs from the same building as the Medical Centre. However, in recognition of service model evidence that demonstrates patient benefit of co-location of out of hours services with emergency departments, Slough CCG is undertaking a feasibility study of moving the primary care Centre from Herschel Medical Centre to Wexham Park Hospital.

Potential benefits to be explored are:

- Improved patient experience for patients who need to see a GP out of hours.
- Improved patient experience for patients attending A&E during the out of hours times with fewer people waiting to be seen as more people can be seen through the GP Primary Care Centre.
- A&E patients will see the most appropriate clinician for their condition.
- Allows for more integrated working.

It is recognized that if the above move were to be undertaken in isolation, there would be a cohort of patients who would have to travel further than previously to attend a primary care centre. This deterioration in access must be addressed. Therefore, at the same time, it would be necessary to create an additional primary care centre for out of hours at King Edward VII Hospital. This would create improved access to a primary care centre for all east Berkshire patients prior to any of the moves.

The table below shows the average travelling distances following the move of the Out of Hours Primary Care Centre from Heatherwood to Bracknell only:

Location	Average Miles Travelled	Number of Contacts
Bracknell	2.9	8199
Herschel	4.2	9570
Maidenhead	1.8	6251

The table below shows an improvement of all average travelling distances following the move of Herschel to Wexham and the introduction of a new Primary Care Centre at Windsor:

Location	Average Miles Travelled	Number of Contacts
Bracknell	2.5	7263
Wexham	3.9	9188
Maidenhead	1.2	5817
Windsor	3.9	1752

There is also the option to leave the Primary Care Centre at Herschel Medical Centre, meaning no change for patients.

Local GPs would support the changes outlined above and believe this offers real benefits for patients and offers opportunities for increased efficiency at Wexham Hospital site.

There are no plans to move the Out of Hours service or Urgent Care Centre at St Mark's Hospital.

Next steps

Slough CCG and Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead CCG will coordinate gathering views from patients about the proposals for the service currently based at Herschel Medical Centre. This would involve:

- Seeking views of patients using the service via a survey
- Seeking views of patients registered with practices in Slough and Windsor via the patient participation groups.
- Seeking views from the public via an on-line questionnaire on the Slough CCG website and the WAM CCG website.

The integration of GP Out of Hours Service at Brants Bridge in Bracknell will proceed as planned.

*Bracknell and Ascot Clinical Commissioning Group
Slough Clinical Commissioning Group
Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead Clinical Commissioning Group*