

North Herts Extended Access Feedback Analysis

Date	Monday 23 October 2017
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1. Introduction

As part of the introduction of extended access to GP practices in North Hertfordshire (excluding the Royston area), East and North Herts CCG worked with the local GP practices in the area on an engagement to gather patient opinion and identify their needs on the issue.

The approach to the engagement was discussed with Hertfordshire Healthwatch and officers of the county's Health Scrutiny Committee.

The questionnaire was developed and promoted by the CCG, and surgeries were asked to promote and distribute surveys to their patient population by text and email.

2. Summary of findings

The questionnaire received a mixed response rate amongst the surgeries, and it would be beneficial for Birchwood, Nevells Road and Knebworth & Marymead surgeries to share their means of promoting the engagement with the rest of the locality for future engagement to ensure a more equal split.

Responses suggest broad support for the introduction of an extended hours service in North Hertfordshire, particularly in the evenings and at weekends. There are also clear preferences shown for both the earlier part of the week (Monday to Wednesday) for evening appointments, and for morning appointments at the weekend.

Within the comments section of the survey, the biggest response was to suggest prioritising extended hours for those who work full-time – and similarly to Welwyn Hatfield these comments also came from respondents who were retired, but felt that this would be fairer.

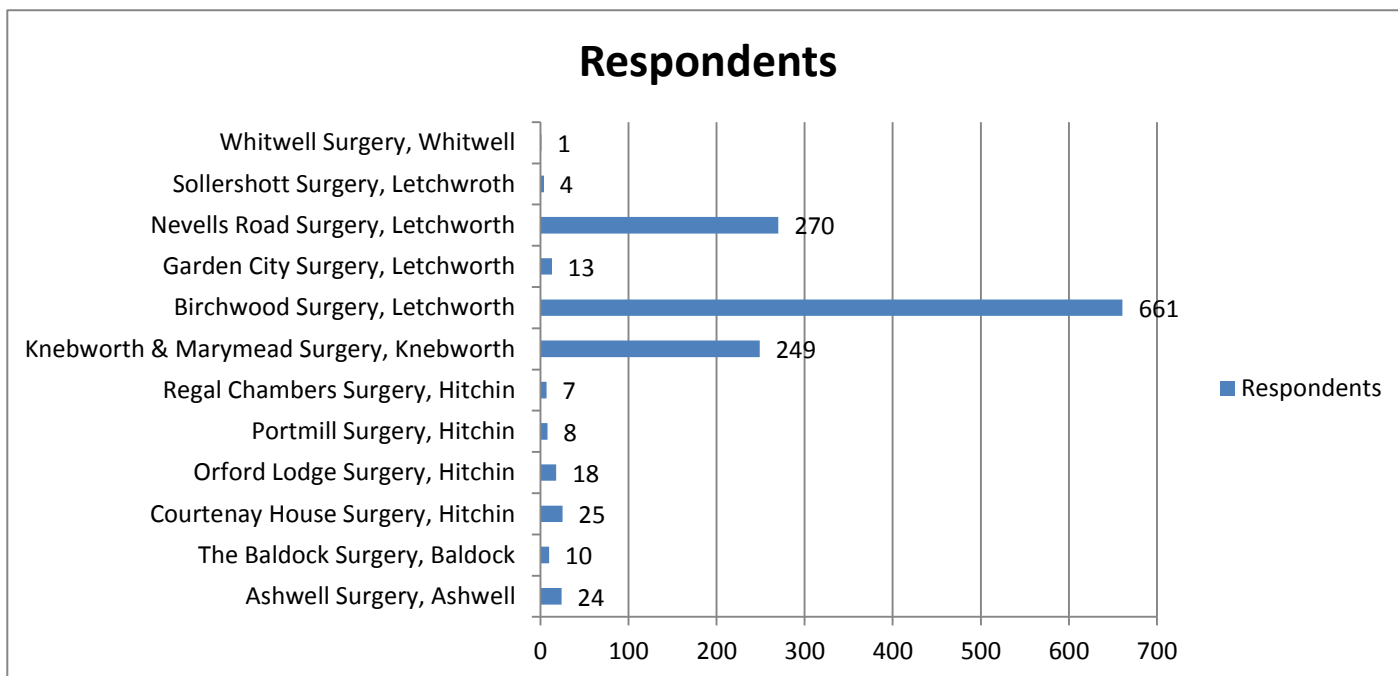
There was a clear preference to see a GP as part of the extended hours service, particularly in relation to advanced bookings. Two thirds of respondents were willing to attend an alternative GP surgery as part of the service.

Surprisingly the preference to see a pharmacist was very low suggesting that work needs to be undertaken to improve the reputation of pharmacists and understanding of the skills and qualifications of trained pharmacists to the general public.

3. Questionnaire Feedback

a. Respondents

In total 1,417 responses were received. This equates to 1.25 per cent of the total of 113,000 covered by the 12 practices in North Herts



The graph above shows the respondent breakdown by GP Practice. As you can see, responses were dominated by three practices out of the 12, and this should therefore be given consideration when reading this analysis.

In relation to the local area's demographic profile there were more female respondents, and similarly more from the age bracket (26-40 than in the local population. There were fewer respondents from the Black/Black British, than local demographics suggested, but other than that, respondents matched the area's demographics in terms of ethnicity and religion¹.

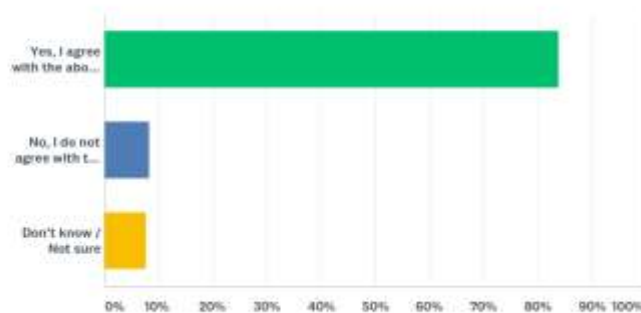
- 69.7% identified as female; 29% as male; 1% preferred not to say
- 4% were between 16-25; 27.3% were between 26-40; 50.3% were between 41-65; 12.5% were 66-74, and 4.4% were 75 or over; 1.1% preferred not to say
- 17.2% considered themselves to have unpaid caring responsibilities
- 24% of respondents considered themselves to have a disability or live with a long term condition
- 89% described themselves as heterosexual; 1.9% as gay/lesbian and 1.3% as bisexual; the remainder preferred not to say

¹ North Hertfordshire Demographic Profile, based on 2011 census data at Herts Insight: <http://atlas.hertsliis.org/profiles/profile?profileId=987&geoTypeld=16&geolds=26>

- 3.7% were Asian/Asian British; 1% were Black/Black British; 89% were white British; 1.9% were dual heritage; and 0.1% were Roma/Traveller with 4.1% preferring not to say
- 0.5% were Buddhist; 48% were Christian; 0.7% were Hindu; 0.1% were Jewish; 0.5% were Muslim; 38% had no religion or belief; and 1.5% were Sikh; 10% preferred not to say
- 4% of respondents were either pregnant, had given birth recently or were on maternity leave

b. Views on Extended Access

Q2 Please consider the following statement: 'Extended opening hours for GP services should be available to all patients registered with a GP Practice in north Hertfordshire.'



84% of patients felt that extended hours should be available to all patients in North Hertfordshire, with 8.3% disagreeing with the statement, this is 2% higher than in previous research undertaken in Welwyn Hatfield. The remaining 7.7% did not know.

The vast majority of respondents would want a face to face appointment with a clinician or member of staff (80%) compared to 9.2% looking for a telephone appointment and 6% with an online appointment.

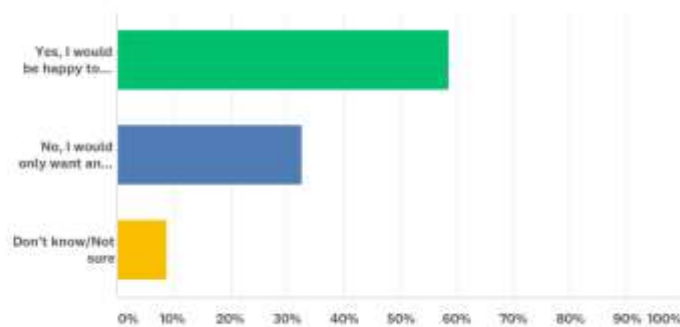
Q8 What services would you like to be able to access during the extended hours period? Please rank your choices in order of preference with 1 being your most preferred.



There was a preference for appointments arranged in advance with either a particular GP or nurse (34.5%), or any GP/nurse (28.3%); compared to 18% of respondents who were looking for same-day appointments either as an emergency or routine.

87% of patients showed a first preference for an appointment with a GP as part of the extended hours service. 9.1% first preferences were for a practice nurse and 5.8% first preferences were for a health care assistant. Just 0.8% showed a first preference for an appointment with a pharmacist, which were similar findings to Welwyn Hatfield.

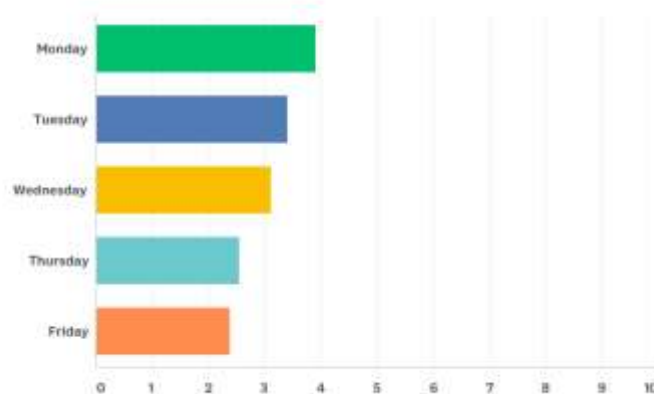
Q11 Would you be happy to have an appointment outside of core hours at a different GP Practice in your area and with a different clinician? With your consent the GP or Nurse will be able access your medical records in the same way as your own GP.



Almost 60% of respondents were happy to have an appointment with a clinician at a different GP practice for the extended hours service. 44.2% were willing to travel 0-2 miles for an appointment; 43.5% are willing to travel 3-5 miles; and 12.1% are willing to travel more than 5 miles.

There was overall preference for an extended access service to be held in the evenings (82.3% of respondents) and weekend (80.7% of respondents) compared to 59.5% of patients who would like to use the service between 7 and 8.30am in morning during weekdays.

Q4 If you answered 'Yes', please select the weekday evenings you are most likely to use the service. Please rank your choices in order of preference, with '1' being your most preferred.

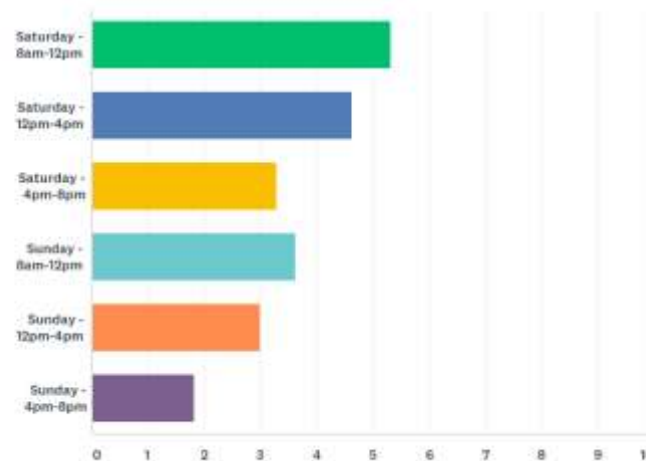


There were similar levels of preference for the beginning of the week for respondents in terms for both weekday evenings and weekday mornings. Weekday evenings first preference were as follows: Monday, 55%; Tuesday, 19.5%; Wednesday, 14.9%; Thursday, 6.4%; and Friday, 14.2%. Weekday morning preferences were similar, but showed a stronger first preference for Monday morning.

Similar patterns of preference for weekend opening times were shown as Welwyn Hatfield. The most popular being Saturday between 8am and noon (first choice for 75.6% of patients) followed by Saturday afternoon, noon -4pm, (21.2%) and Sunday morning(5.25%).

Least popular preferences were Sunday afternoon (2.7%) and Saturday and Sunday evenings (4.2% and 2.1% respectively).

Q8 If you answered 'Yes', which of the following days and times would you be willing to make an appointment? Please rank your choices in order of preference, with '1' being your most preferred.



The survey also asked for respondents general comments in relation to the introduction of extended access services to North Hertfordshire. There were three main areas of concern repeated by respondents, which were the same as the ones identified by residents of Welwyn Hatfield:

1. A feeling that the extended hours service should be prioritised for those that work full-time or commute, rather than those who were able to attend in the day. Similarly many of these comments felt that children should be prioritised as part of this service. This featured in 28% of the comments.
2. The second highest area for comments at 18% was a concern from respondents around primary care staff. These concerns centred around a worry that GPs and staff would be further overworked – or that there was not the number of GPs available in the area to offer this service. Within these comments there was also a concern around affordability of the service.

3. The third area of concern (17%) was the need for a better appointment making system within primary care, with comments regularly focussing on frustration of how to make an appointment.

A table of comments is shown below, with the number of occasions it featured in responses.

Factors important to North Herts patients in extending hours for GP practices

Comment	No of times
Extended hours should be prioritised for full-time workers/commuters/children	104
Don't overwork the staff/ Concern as to where staff/GPs will come from Affordability of service	67
Better appointment booking systems / online booking	64
Drop-in service/Walk in centre	23
Importance of Continuity of care	23
Extended hours broadly seen as a good thing	22
Accessibility Availability of public transport Car parking	18
Improved technology would be beneficial	17
Longer appointment times	7
Mental Health specialist	4
Don't think extended hours is needed – stick to what we have	4
Priority for carers	3
Pharmacy within the surgery/out of hours	3
Prioritise other services	2
Alternative staff mix	2
Charge time wasters/DNAs	2