

## Frequently Asked Questions – Changes to Practice Opening Hours

### What is happening

#### **Q: What is changing at the practice?**

We have agreed with our commissioners, NHS Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board (the ICB), to move to the same opening hours that are set out in the standard NHS contract called GMS (General Medical Services) hours: 8am to 6:30pm Mondays to Fridays.

The care we provide will stay the same, but we will no longer be directly providing evening and weekend services. However, patients will still be able to access care during weekday evenings and on Saturdays through our Chelmer Primary Care Network (see more information below).

#### **Q: What will the new opening hours be?**

Our new opening hours will be Monday to Friday, 8am to 6.30pm.

These are the core business hours under the General Medical Services (GMS) contract which most GP practices across the country are based on.

#### **Q: When will the new opening hours start?**

The new opening hours will begin from 2 January 2026.

### How will I be affected?

#### **Q: Will this change in opening hours affect the staff at my practice?**

Patients can still access the usual types of patient services from the same familiar healthcare team you know during our new core opening times: **Monday – Friday, 8am – 6.30pm.**

Staff at the practice have been consulted about the change and the consultation period is now complete.

#### **Q: Will the change affect the type of appointments at the practice?**

The types of services you can access will stay the same, but the availability of evening and weekend appointments will change once we move to the new contract.

#### **Q: Can I still get care in the evenings or weekends?**

Yes, through Extended Access Services provided by the Chelmer Primary Care Network, which is a group of local practices working together to deliver a range of patient services across our area.

Extended Access services are provided **weekdays 6.30pm to 8pm, and Saturdays 9am to 5pm**, from the following locations:

- Mondays – Rivermead Gate Medical Centre, 123 Rectory Lane, Chelmsford CM1 1TR
- Tuesdays – Sutherland Lodge Surgery, 115 Baddow Road, Chelmsford CM2 7PY
- Wednesdays - North Chelmsford Healthcare Centre, Sainsbury's, 2 White Hart Lane, Chelmsford CM2 5EF
- Thursdays – Chelmer Village Surgery, Ashton Place, Chelmsford CM2 6ST
- Fridays – location rotates between the above four surgeries
- Saturdays – location rotates between the above four surgeries

This means you may be offered an appointment during these times at our GP practice, or at another local healthcare setting in our Primary Care Network. Booking is via our triage system only

<https://accurx.nhs.uk/patient-initiated/Y02611>

**Q: How do I get evening and weekend appointments?**

If you prefer to receive care in the evenings or at weekends, you can ask for an appointment during those times when you contact the practice to request an appointment in the usual way. Please note this appointment might be at a different local practice.

Please be advised, you may need to see a specific clinician who is overseeing your care or may need an appointment on a more urgent basis. This may mean you need to be seen during core hours (Monday to Friday 8am to 6.30pm).

**Q: What if I need urgent care outside of these hours?**

You can continue to use services like Pharmacy, NHS 111 or other healthcare services if you need help urgently.

**Q: Do I need to re-register with the practice?**

No. Your registration remains valid. You do not need to take any action.

**Next steps and further information**

**Q: Why is there a change to opening hours?**

The local NHS is looking at how GP services are organised in mid and south Essex to avoid unnecessary duplication and make sure everyone can access the same high-quality care.

Currently, we deliver services during evenings and weekends. These extra opening hours duplicate services that are already available to our registered patients through the Chelmer Primary Care Network.

Most GP practices in mid and south Essex operate weekdays 8am-6.30pm on a GMS contract already.

This change will bring our opening hours in line with other practices in the area and help free up funding for the NHS to invest in wider primary care services.

**Q: Will this lead to more people going to A&E or out-of-hours services?**

No. Local data shows that longer GP opening hours haven't reduced visits to A&E or out-of-hours services, so the ICB doesn't expect this change to increase demand for these other types of services.

**Q: How can I provide feedback on this change?**

The ICB values patient feedback to inform how services are planned and delivered.

Patients are invited to provide feedback on the planned changes and how it may impact them through a survey.

The survey will be live from Monday 17 November – Tuesday 16 December

You can complete the survey:

[North Chelmsford Healthcare Centre Patient Survey – Fill in form](#)

Email: download a copy of the survey from our website, and email it to [mseics.getinvolved@nhs.net](mailto:mseics.getinvolved@nhs.net)

Paper: complete a paper copy of the survey (available at the surgery reception) and return it to:

NHS Mid and South Essex ICB,

PO Box 6483,

Basildon,

SS14 0UG

**Q: Can I move to a different GP practice?**

Yes, you have the option to register with another practice if:

- You live in their catchment area
- They are accepting new patients

You can search for a GP at: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp/> However, please note that all GP practices in mid and south Essex will eventually be moving to the same core hours of operation (8am to 6:30pm Monday to Friday), with evening and weekend services provided by their Primary Care Network.

**Q: Who can I contact if I have questions or concerns?**

If you have any questions about the changes which this FAQ hasn't answered, then please email [mseich-me.nhc@nhs.net](mailto:mseich-me.nhc@nhs.net)