

**STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING****Improving access to general practice**

- The most consistent message we hear from talking to residents and patients is that access to primary care is difficult: they are struggling to get through to their GPs or to get a timely appointment, especially when they need one the same day.
- There are more GP appointments than ever before in NW London – 1.4 million a month. But it is clear that many patients' needs are not being met.
- We have been working with GPs and primary care networks\* for over a year to improve access to general practice.
- An approach to improving access which was co-designed by NHS North West London and ten primary care networks (PCNs) has been adopted in some areas. This involves the creation of 'same day access hubs' made up of GPs, pharmacists, nurses, other clinicians and non-medical staff to increase the numbers of patients being seen the same day.
- While feedback from the early adopters and patients has been positive, we are not yet in a position to evaluate this work, as it only started late in 2023. Local and national funding is available for PCNs who wish to adopt this approach after discussion with their patients, though we are also open to alternative proposals to increase access.
- NHS North West London is not imposing a top-down solution or a 'one size fits all' approach. We will be working with practices, primary care networks and patients to develop proposals to improve access to general practice in their area.
- We have heard from patients and GPs who were worried that everything was going to change in April. That is not the case: we will be working with patients and GPs over the next year and we are keen to hear their ideas for improving access to primary care. Our aim is to develop plans to gradually improve access in each area.
- Whatever proposals are developed, all clinical decisions will continue to be made by clinicians. Patients who need to see their GP will continue to do so.
- We have been working with GPs and patients for over a year and will now accelerate this work to develop positive solutions in each area of North West London.

## **Frequently asked questions**

### **Are same day access hubs being introduced across North West London from April?**

No. We are asking each primary care network (PCN) to work with their patients to develop plans to improve access to primary care.

Same day access hubs are one suggested way of doing this, but we are not imposing a top down, one size fits all approach.

### **Is there any feedback from the early adopters of the same day access hubs?**

Yes, we have received positive feedback in terms of both outcomes and patient experience. It is too early to carry out a full evaluation as the hubs only launched late in 2023, but there will be an evaluation in the near future.

### **Will non-clinical staff such as Care Navigators and Care Coordinators be making decisions about patient care?**

No. All clinical referrals and clinical decisions will be made by clinicians. Those in supporting roles will continue to signpost patients to the right care for them.

### **Are GPs being mandated to introduce same day access hubs?**

No. We have listened to GPs and residents and agreed that same day access hubs will not be a compulsory part of GP contracts for 2024/25. Instead, we are asking PCNs to work with their patients to develop local solutions to improve access. Same day access hubs may be one way of doing this but we are open to different solutions as well.