

MILL BANK SURGERY

EXTENDED HOURS

The provision of Extended Hours Access appointments is a requirement of the new GP Contract each PCN (Primary Care Network) has with NHS England. All PCN member practices are expected to engage in the planning of this service and it is the decision of each PCN on how best to deliver this.

Mill Bank is now part of Stafford Central Primary Care Network, working closely with 3 other member practices namely, Weeping Cross Surgery, Castlefields Surgery and Gnosall Surgery. At a recent meeting of our PCN, each practice made a decision to deliver their own Extended Hours appointments to their own patients. The requirements clearly state this service needs to be delivered from 01 July 2019, by all Primary Care Networks (PCN).

The additional period of routine appointments required for Mill Bank Surgery, equates to a total of 5.5 hours of appointments each week.

As it is extremely difficult to recruit additional clinical staff, and our existing GP workforce are unable to undertake the Extended Hours Appointments themselves as they are working up to and beyond capacity, we propose to use members of our existing Healthcare Professional Team already working in the practice. In the recent past, we have found it difficult to recruit additional GPs and have therefore extended our workforce, with the addition of Advanced Nurse Practitioners (Specialist Practitioners). This new way of working is proving to be successful and popular with those patients, who would normally have to wait a much longer time to see a GP.

Our most recent patient survey results included various comments and requests from patients, reflecting the need for longer “in hours” and additional “out of hours” appointments, also a wish for more Practice Nurse appointments to be available. Hence we have approached our Specialist Practitioner and Practice Nurse teams, to discuss and plan how we can best offer these additional clinical sessions, to meet the needs of our practice population.

We plan to meet the new Contract requirement by listening to our patients and taking into account their preferences, and therefore are considering offering an additional 4 hours of Advanced Nurse Practitioner or Practice Nurse appointments, on 3 out of 4 Saturdays, these appointments being available between 8:30am and 12:30pm. Also as patients are constantly trying for later appointments on the week days, we are offering an additional 1.5 hours of Advanced Nurse Practitioner appointments each Thursday between 5:15pm and 6:45pm with the exception of the first Thursday in each month and these appointments will be offered between 6:15pm and 7:45pm. Additionally on two Thursdays per month we will offer early evening appointments with our Practice Nurse, between 6:30pm and 8:30pm.