



**Weekend GP
appointments
now available**

Article for parish council newsletters and web sites

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A new Weekend GP Service is being trialled in Epping Forest and has, since October received positive feedback from patients. Over 1,000 patients have visited the service with the majority being people of working age who may not be able to access appointments during the week.

The NHS service is based out of Loughton Health Centre and Waltham Abbey Health Centre. Appointments are accessed through a patient's own GP surgery for a booked appointment only; it is not a 'walk-in service'.

Most GP practices in Epping Forest are taking bookings for the service which allows patients to see a GP, healthcare assistant or nurse for routine appointments, health checks and treatments. People with long term health conditions such as asthma and diabetes can also access these appointments.

Debbie Bodhanya, Chief Executive of Stellar Healthcare, one of the organisations which run the service said: "We are incredibly proud to have launched this service which will allow people greater access to GP appointments. Our GP practices can book these appointments as part of their normal processes, which will provide greater choice to fit in with busy lifestyles.

"GP practices are under extreme pressure nationally and the demand for GP appointments is increasing, and this service will help relieve that demand."

The service is funded through a grant from the Prime Minister's Access Fund and is a pilot managed by two local GP companies; Stellar Healthcare and Uttlesford Health. These two companies have been set up by the GP practices in the area.

Ends

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