

FAQs relating to same day appointments Leicester city

About the changes and rationale

Which appointments are being changed?

Appointments that take place during evenings, weekends and bank holidays for urgent health issues that you would usually contact your GP practice about. These are currently called healthcare hub appointments and have been offered at Belgrave, Saffron, and Westcotes Health Centres.

What changes are you making?

- **Locations**
 - We're increasing the number of locations that provide these urgent evening, weekend and bank holiday appointments.
 - If your GP practice or NHS 111 decides this type of appointment is right for you, they will let you know which nearby locations are available.
 - You don't need to remember which locations are open on which days. You will only be booked into a location that you've agreed you can get to.
 - They won't be provided from Belgrave, Saffron, and Westcotes Health Centres every day; although, these locations might still provide appointments on some days.
- **Appointment times**
 - The times that appointments are available will change.
 - Appointments were available on weeknights between 6pm and 10pm, on Saturdays between 8am and 8pm, and on Sundays and bank holidays between 8am and 8pm (hours vary by site).
 - From 1 October 2025, they will be available on weeknights between 6.30pm and 8pm, on Saturdays between 9am and 5pm, and on Sundays and bank holidays between 10am and 2pm (no variation between sites).
- **Length of appointment**
 - The length of appointments will increase by 5 minutes.
- **Who the appointment is with**
 - Appointments were booked with different professionals but, from 1 October 2025, all appointments will be with a GP.
- **Type of appointment**
 - The appointments will all be held in person and face to face.

Why can't you tell us *where* the appointments will take place?

We are still finalising the locations with the Primary Care Networks (groups of GP practices). It is important that they are evenly spread out through the city so we are looking at the availability each day.

Why are you making improvements?

We want to better manage demand for same-day GP appointments and ensure people get the right care in the right place, reducing unnecessary visits to services like emergency departments.

Currently, these same day appointments are not equitable; residents across Leicester do not have fair access to them.

We have also found these appointments are not always used appropriately:

- They are often used for routine care instead of urgent needs.
- Appointment slots are sometimes left unfilled.
- There are higher than expected “did not attend” rates.
- Many users would be better served by more suitable services.

With the introduction of new services like Pharmacy First, it is also time to update these appointments, so they work efficiently alongside other available options.

When will the new service start?

1 October 2025

How did you decide to make these changes?

The initial proposals were shaped by extensive public engagement from 2019 to the present, including:

- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Urgent and Emergency Care Insights (July 2024) – Understanding patients’ needs when accessing health services
- National GP Patient Survey (July 2024) including trends for 2021, 2022 and 2023
- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland System-wide Consolidation of Enhanced Access Engagement (January 2023)
- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland GP Patient Survey (May 2024) including trends for 2021, 2022 and 2023

How will you fund these proposals?

Through the annual budget given to the local NHS.

Access and using services

Will I be able to use my local healthcare hub services as I have in the past?

While the service has always technically been appointment-only, some people have previously walked in and received appointments. Moving forward, walk-ins will no longer be possible. All appointments must be booked through your GP practice or NHS 111. This will ensure everyone in Leicester has a fair opportunity to get an appointment and helps us better manage demand and make sure people are seen in the most suitable location. The locations will also change, and they will no longer be called healthcare hubs.

Will I have a choice of where I can go to?

Yes, you will have a choice of any of the open locations in Leicester.

Is the number of appointments being reduced?

We are re-commissioning a very different service offer to what we have currently. This means that we have reviewed the type of appointments being offered to support same day and reconfigured this with:

- Circa 20,000 GP- led same day appointments delivered by Primary Care Networks in Leicester from across a wide variety of sites 7-days a week.
- Circa 90,000 Pharmacy First appointments offered through all our City Community Pharmacy Sites except 2 pharmacies 6 days a week
- In addition, we continue to deliver Oadby and Merlyn Vaz Urgent Treatment Centres 7 days a week.

So overall with this combined offer we continue to maintain a similar level of capacity – just delivered in a different way than had been previously. The new service will offer fewer General Practice appointments in the evenings and at weekends, but introduces a broader variety of appointments across pharmacies, GP surgeries and health centres.

Will I still be able to use urgent treatment centres, minor injury units and A&E?

Yes, walk-in services like urgent treatment centres, minor injury units, and A&E will still be available. However, we recommend using NHS 111 (by phone or online) to find the most suitable service for your needs—this can also help reduce your waiting time.

It is important to note:

- **Urgent treatment centres** are different to urgent care centres. There are three urgent **treatment** centres in Leicester and Leicestershire: Merlyn Vaz, Oadby, and Loughborough. These will remain open.

If you think you have a life or limb-threatening emergency, go straight to the closest emergency department or call 999.

In a mental health crisis, call NHS 111 and select the mental health option, 24/7.

According to NHS 111, emergencies include:

- **signs of a heart attack**
chest pain, pressure, heaviness, tightness or squeezing across the chest
- **signs of a stroke**
face dropping on one side, cannot hold both arms up, difficulty speaking
- **sudden confusion (delirium)**
cannot be sure of own name or age
- **suicide attempt**
by taking something or self-harming
- **severe difficulty breathing**
not being able to get words out, choking or gasping
- **heavy bleeding**
spraying, pouring or enough to make a puddle
- **severe injuries**
after a serious accident
- **seizure (fit)**
shaking or jerking because of a fit, or unconscious (cannot be woken up)
- **sudden, rapid swelling**
of the lips, mouth, throat or tongue
- **labour or childbirth**
waters breaking, more frequent intense cramps (contractions), baby coming, or just born

Will I be seen by a GP?

Yes, under the new service, all appointments will be with a GP. We found that GPs are best placed to deliver these types of appointments and can reduce the need to refer patients elsewhere.

Will these new services have access to my medical records?

Yes. Even if you see a GP at a different practice, they can view your medical records and will add a note about your appointment to your record.

How is the GP Out of Hours service different?

Same Day Access generally refers to appointments between 08:00 and 20:00.

Every ICB has a commissioning responsibility to deliver a GP Out of Hours Service between 20:00-08:00 Monday to Sunday. The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland service may be accessed via a referral from a number of sites such as GP practices, NHS 111 and the Emergency Department.

This service supports overnight needs that are not appropriate for the Emergency Department.

Navigating the system and support

People cannot always get through to NHS 111 or GPs, what do I do if I cannot get through?

You may need to wait on the line until someone becomes available – please try to stay on if you can. It is always best to contact your GP practice or NHS 111, as they can direct you to the right care. If you are unable to get through, you can visit the NHS 111 website (111.nhs.uk) for advice, and in some cases, book appointments online. Some walk-in services will still be available across Leicester and Leicestershire if you need urgent care.

I am already confused where to go; how will the new services help me?

Whilst seeking views on the new service, we are also working with communities to help people understand how to use local health services.

Since these appointments are by appointment only, you do not need to worry about remembering which sites are open or their hours. Your GP practice or NHS 111 will tell you what's available and book you in as needed.

What if all of the appointments have gone and I can't be seen on the same day?

If there are no appointments available, you may be asked to go to an urgent treatment centre or you will be sent to the emergency department. Please don't go there unless you are advised to.

How does the GP practice and NHS 111 know who is qualified to deliver Pharmacy First appointments and prescribe medication for certain conditions?

Whilst GP reception staff and NHS 111 should understand that pharmacies can now offer treatment for seven common conditions without patients needing to see a GP, they would not have access to what pharmacists are on site and what qualifications they have. However, all pharmacists offering the Pharmacy First scheme are fully qualified to offer this service.

What if the Pharmacy I go to is closed (such as over lunch time)?

If the pharmacy is closed due to lunch or during opening times, and the patient has an urgent need, they would be required to contact NHS 111 for the appropriate assistance. NHS 111 can book them an appointment time with the Pharmacy, at a suitable time.

What if I decide that I want to see a GP instead of going to the Pharmacy?

Patient choice is an important aspect of person-centred care, and if there are significant reasons as to why the patient may wish to see the GP instead of a pharmacist (for instance if the patient has a long-term condition, complex needs or complex medical history) this should be communicated by the patient for their request to be considered.

However, whilst patient choice remains important, the pathway of care is required to consider what treatment and care is best for the patient's needs, rather than what the patient wants. This is an essential consideration to help ensure that the right services are available for patients who have more high risk needs and need to see the appropriate practitioner quickly. Therefore, there may be times where the patient is directed to their pharmacy rather than their GP if their needs are more appropriate for the pharmacy at that time, to help free up time for the GP to see more high-risk patients and to manage their workload more effectively. This would also apply to patients who may want to attend A&E rather than attend a GP or pharmacy appointment. They may be referred to a different service on arrival.

GP practices are already very busy. How will they manage to deliver these extra appointments?

We believe that this engagement will help people to understand and use services more effectively, by following the 2 steps we are promoting, thus freeing up GP time. Also, the delivery of new same day service appointments in the city will be shared across Primary Care Networks, and more appointments will take place in Pharmacies where appropriate. We still see many people using GP appointments for health needs that can be treated better elsewhere.

Involvement and engagement

If you have decided on the changes, why do you need our views?

While the changes to the service have already been decided, your feedback is still important. We want to understand how these changes might affect you. When the new service goes live in October, we will continue collecting and reviewing feedback to see how it is working. Feedback gathered now and after launch will help us decide if any further changes are needed, and additional updates may be made from April 2026 based on this review.

How can I find out the outcome of this engagement and keep updated?

Updates will be posted on our website:

<https://leicesterleicestershireandrutland.icb.nhs.uk/be-involved/need-help-fast-engagement/>

How do you know you are reaching all communities?

To maximise our reach and involve as many people as possible, we use a multi-channel approach, including:

- Offering questionnaires online and in print (with freepost), as well as easy read and large print versions
- Providing a telephone translation service
- Sharing an email address and phone number for those who prefer not to complete a questionnaire
- Creating an accessible video to share information
- Supplying materials such as leaflets, posters, and online content
- Engaging with key partners and stakeholders—including local authorities, councillors, the voluntary and community sector, healthcare providers, schools, universities, and Healthwatch Leicester and Leicestershire
- Using social media channels
- Attending some community events
- Using press and radio, and working with local publications to promote the engagement
- Partnering with Leicestershire & Rutland Community Foundation to help us connect with voluntary and community groups, especially those supporting people with protected characteristics

We will also hold a ‘mid-way’ review to see if we are getting the reach across all communities.

How can I have my say?

- Complete the questionnaire online:
<https://leicesterleicestershireandrutland.icb.nhs.uk/be-involved/need-help-fast-engagement/>
- Email your views to: llricb-llr.beinvolved@nhs.net
- Call us on: 0116 295 7532
- Write to us at: Freepost Plus RUEE-ZAUY-BXEG, Same Day Questionnaire, NHS LLR ICB, Room G30, Pen Lloyd Building, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester, LE3 8TB
- You can also use any of these methods to request printed information.

Further information is available on our website:

<https://leicesterleicestershireandrutland.icb.nhs.uk/be-involved/need-help-fast-engagement/> or bit.ly/need-help-fast-engagement