



Leicester City
Clinical Commissioning Group



You and your GP practice

GP practices are improving
how they care for you



Better care together
Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland health and social care

The population of the UK is ageing and growing. With age and because of the lifestyles we lead, there are more people needing the care of their GP practice.

Practices are increasingly working in new ways to make sure everyone gets the care they need from a suitably qualified healthcare professional, as quickly as possible.

Since 1st July 2019, your GP practice has begun to work as part of a group of practices called a primary care network.

This leaflet explains more about primary care networks and what they mean for your care. It provides information about our healthcare hubs in the city, which patients can already access for appointments with GPs and nurses in the evenings and at weekends.

You can also read about the different types of healthcare staff you might come into contact with within your own practice, and how you can help practices to give everyone the care they need.

Each GP practice operates in a slightly different way to meet the needs of their patients as effectively as possible. This means that your GP practice might not work in exactly the same way as described.



What is a primary care network?

From 1st July 2019, GP practices began working in groups with other practices in their local area. These groups are known as primary care networks (PCNs), each serving between 30,000 and 50,000 patients.

GP practices will remain independent but will work together with the other practices to provide the care that their patients need, in better ways. By working together they will be able to make resources go further and provide care more creatively.

Through primary care networks, you will benefit from:

- Joined up services with every health professional knowing about the previous interactions you have had with the NHS.
- A wider range of professionals and services to help diagnose your medical problem in the community - in a single appointment.
- Different ways of getting advice and treatment, including digital, telephone based and physical services, matched to your individual needs
- Shorter waiting times and convenient appointments

- Greater patient involvement in decisions about your care
- Increased focus on prevention and personalised care

GP practices have begun to work with other health, social care and voluntary sector organisations to plan the care patients need. These wider teams will include pharmacists, district nurses, physiotherapists and specialists who care for certain types of conditions or groups of patients with particular needs.

You can read more about these roles as well as many others that practices are introducing in this leaflet.

Sometimes a health professional may work for a particular practice or will support patients in all practices in the PCN. There may also be times when you receive your appointment at one of the other practices in your network – particularly if a different practice in your network specialises in an area of care you need.

You can find out more about your primary care network and the other practices in it by visiting our website, or you can contact your own practice.

[www.leicestercityccg.nhs.uk/
find-a-service/you-and-your-gp-
practice/primary-care-networks/](http://www.leicestercityccg.nhs.uk/find-a-service/you-and-your-gp-practice/primary-care-networks/)

Your appointment

If you need an appointment it will be booked for you with the most appropriate member of the practice team. Appointments are often available at convenient times, including during the evenings, weekends and bank holidays.

Your appointment could be on the telephone, at your own practice or it could be provided at another location on your practice's behalf. This could include another practice in your network, or at one of the city's healthcare hubs.

Healthcare hubs

Appointments at the healthcare hubs can only be booked by your GP practice, or NHS111 when your practice is closed.

An appointment at a hub is not suitable in all cases. It is important that you tell the receptionist why you need an appointment so that it is booked in the right location and so you don't have a wasted journey. For example, the hubs will not be able to issue an extension to a fit note.

Opening Times

At your practice

8am to 6.30pm
(some are open earlier/later)

Monday to Friday

At a Healthcare Hub

8am to 10pm

Monday to Friday

Weekends and bank holidays:

8am to 8pm

Opening times vary between sites.

For more information about the healthcare hubs please visit www.leicestercityccg.nhs.uk/healthcare-hubs

Locations

Merlyn Vaz Health & Social

Care Centre: 1 Spinney Hill Road, Leicester, LE5 3GH

Westcotes Health Centre:

Fosse Road South, Leicester, LE3 0LP

Belgrave Health Centre:

52 Brandon Street, Leicester, LE4 6AW

Saffron Health:

612 Saffron Lane, Leicester, LE2 6TD

If your appointment is not at your own practice

Wherever your appointment is, your usual GP practice will continue to coordinate your care.

Everyone involved with your care will be able to see your patient record (unless you have told us that you don't want it to be shared), so you don't always need to see the same GP. This means that they will know your medical history and will be able to make an informed decision about what is best for you, and you won't have to repeat your story each time.

When your practice is closed

When your practice is closed, call NHS 111 for advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can call them for advice even if your practice is open.

You can also go online:

www.111.nhs.uk



Who will care for you?

You will meet a wide range of health professionals in your practice. They are all highly skilled in their own areas of expertise and you can trust them to provide the care you need. Your practice may have some or all of these health professionals, or something similar.

So that everyone is seen as quickly as possible, it is important that patients are matched with the most appropriate health professional for their particular medical problem. We want practice staff to make use of the full extent of their training and experience, rather than spending time doing something that could be done by someone else.

GPs will always care for the most seriously ill patients in the practice or those with more complicated illnesses. It is not the best use of their time and expertise if they see patients that other members of the practice team are qualified and experienced to be able to deal with.

If you are seen by one professional, such as a nurse, but then need to be seen by someone else, such as a doctor for a second opinion, this will happen safely and seamlessly.

GP

A GP is responsible for the care of their patients.

They treat all common illnesses and conditions, as well as making referrals to hospital for patients who may need urgent or special treatment for more serious or complicated health problems.

Increasingly GPs are spending more of their time caring for the most seriously ill patients in the practice, particularly those who are older or who have complex long term conditions that need to be managed so as to keep them well and out of hospital. They also support and oversee the rest of the practice team, ensuring that appropriate care is being provided for patients with less serious medical problems.

A GP is best qualified and experienced to deal with the following:

- All common illnesses
- An ongoing health condition e.g. diabetes, heart disease, which needs monitoring very closely and regularly (every week or month)
- A mental health condition requiring a referral to special support

- Lumps or moles that appear on your body which were not there previously and may need a referral to check whether this is cancer
- Family planning such as insertion and removal of contraceptive methods.

GP with special interest

Some GPs have had extra training or experience and are skilled like a specialist.

They can diagnose and treat problems with various parts of the body such as skin, bones, muscles, ears, nose and throat.

Some GPs are specialist in more specific areas such as bladder, bowel, menstrual problems, contraception and dementia.

Practice Nurse

The nurse practitioner is a skilled member of the team.

They are able to see and treat patients who have:

- Ear ache
- Coughs and colds that last for more than a couple of weeks or keep coming back



- Sore throats
- Period pain
- Contraceptive pill checks
- General health checks e.g. height, weight, blood pressure
- Asthma review
- Diabetes check
- Cervical screening (smear test)
- Childhood and adult vaccination
- Travel advice.

They can also perform blood tests, urine (wee sample) tests and some nurses can prescribe you medication if they think it would help your illness.

Healthcare Assistant

Healthcare assistants (HCAs) work under the guidance of a qualified healthcare professional.

This is usually a more senior nurse. Their role is to:

- Carry out health checks
- Take blood samples
- Health promotion or health education work within the GP practice and the local community
- Flu vaccines

- Helping other clinicians e.g. during minor surgery
- Re-stock consulting rooms with items such as bandages, needles, soap etc.

Clinical Pharmacist

The clinical pharmacist is a specialist in the area of medication and health prevention.

They can work directly with you as part of the GP practice team to make sure your medicines help you to get better and stay well. This means that you won't always see your GP for your medicine reviews as these can be carried out with the clinical pharmacist, saving you having to wait for a GP appointment.

The clinical pharmacist can also advise of any changes that are needed to your prescriptions or any changes that you may need to make to your lifestyle to keep you well. They can also monitor some diabetes and heart medications.



Physician Associate

Physician associates support doctors in the diagnosis and management of patients.

They are trained to perform a number of day-to-day tasks including:

- Taking details from you about your medical history
- Performing physical examinations
- Diagnosing illnesses under the guidance of a nurse or GP
- Seeing patients with long-term chronic conditions
- Providing you with advice on tailored exercise to improve a muscle, joint or bone condition
- Analysing test results under the guidance of a nurse or GP
- Developing management plans to help you better manage your health condition with professional support
- Provide health promotion and prevention advice for patients.

Extended scope physiotherapist

Extended scope physiotherapists are specialists with extra qualifications to undertake duties such as:

- Ordering X-rays or blood tests

- Examining you to find out where your pain or discomfort is coming from
- Providing you with exercises to do at home
- Referring you to other specialist health care professionals
- Providing joint injections.

They work mainly with patients who have problems with their back, spine, muscles, joints and bones. These are called musculoskeletal problems.

Acute Care Practitioner (Community Paramedic)

Acute care practitioners are highly trained to carry out assessments of critically ill patients.

They can:

- Perform and order tests to diagnose what is wrong with you
- Prescribe medication
- Treat patients with serious illnesses or injuries which cannot be cured
- Educate you and your family or carer about medical options
- Work with you and your family to create a care plan or end of life plan if it is required.

They are highly qualified members of the practice team and provide a link between your GP practice and the hospital you are treated at.

They have completed a graduate degree such as Master's degree relevant to their role.

Mental Health Practitioner/ Facilitator

The mental health practitioner is highly skilled to provide support to children and adults who are experiencing mental ill health.

They can:

- Provide you support with mental ill health e.g. anxiety, stress, depression, body image, confidence, addiction
- Provide older people with support e.g. isolation, loneliness, independence
- Provide talking therapy sessions based in the community
- Provide advice and support to children and parents e.g. development, speech
- Look at how your lifestyle has an effect on your mental health and suggest small changes and improvement if they are needed
- Refer you to other mental health services.

Social Prescribing Link Worker

Often patients visit their GP practice for non-medical problems.

Social prescribing is where patients are referred to non-medical services that can help them with their social, emotional or practical needs. A social prescribing link worker will meet with the patient to identify and discuss their individual needs and put them in touch with the right activities or services that can help. Examples might include community groups, volunteering and services to help people manage better at home.

Receptionist

The receptionist is often the first person you speak to in the practice.

They have an important role to play in helping you get the care you need from the right person, depending on the medical problem you have. They may need to ask you about what is wrong with you to help them decide what's best. Please don't be offended. They have been trained to do this.

If you need to be seen or have a telephone consultation, a receptionist will book your appointment for you and they can answer any of your queries. They are a valued member of the practice team, helping to coordinate your care alongside all the other professionals in the practice.

Help us to help you

We understand that it is not always easy to get an appointment at your GP practice.

We are making lots of changes in practices to make it easier. You can also help us make sure everyone gets the care they need.

- **Trust your receptionist** to arrange an appointment with the most appropriate member of the practice team.
- When you contact your GP practice for an appointment, the receptionist might ask you to tell them a bit more about why you are calling. This is so they can make an appointment for you with the most appropriate person.
- If possible, **try ringing outside of the busier times** – avoid calling first thing in the morning. You can also **go online to book appointments**, you don't need to make a phone call. Ask your practice how to register for online services.
- **You will not usually need to see the same GP each time**, because your medical record can be seen by every professional in your GP practice.

If you really need to see a particular GP, it might take longer before you can get an appointment with them.

- All practices have a **Patient Participation Group (PPG)**, a small group of patients who are registered with the practice and who represent the patient voice. Practices meet regularly with their PPG to understand and address any concerns patients may have and hear patient feedback. If there is anything you would like to let your practice know about – good or bad – you can do this via your PPG. If you are interested in becoming a member of your practice's PPG, contact your practice.

If you no longer need your appointment, please cancel it. Approximately £3m is wasted in Leicester each year because people don't cancel appointments at their GP practice they no longer need. These appointments could be made available to other patients. If you no longer need your appointment, contact your practice. If you use online services at your practice, you can cancel appointments online.

Treating minor illnesses yourself

Many illnesses can be treated at home with no need for medical attention.

We have produced the Leicester Good Health Guide to give you some basic advice about how to look after yourself. Coughs, colds, tummy upsets and back pain are just some of the common conditions covered in the guide, together with advice on children's health. You can download it in English, Polish, Gujarati, Urdu and Hindi from our website www.leicestercityccg.nhs.uk/self-care. You can also view a series of animations about looking after minor illnesses. Save the link to your phone so you have it to hand when you need it.

Local pharmacists are very knowledgeable about which medicines are best to treat minor illnesses and whether they will conflict with any existing medication you are taking. They can also offer advice on how to treat common health conditions – and if they think you need to see a GP they will tell you.

Many of us live near a pharmacy and you don't need an appointment to see them. They are often open in the evenings and at weekends, so they offer fast, convenient support. Most of them also have a private consultation room, so you can have a conversation where other people can't hear you. If you need it, just ask.

Visit www.leicestercityccg.nhs.uk/find-a-service/your-local-pharmacy/



If you would like more information

If you would like to know more about how GP practices are improving their care, please visit www.leicestercityccg.nhs.uk/find-a-service/you-and-your-gp-practice/

Email

ccg@leicestercityccg.nhs.uk

Twitter

[@NHSLeicester](https://twitter.com/NHSLeicester)

Facebook

www.facebook.com/NHSLeicester



Better care together

Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland health and social care

Better Care Together is a partnership of the health and social care organisations in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland who are working together to transform care for patients.

www.bettercareleicester.nhs.uk

