

26 March 2018

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Update on Spring House Medical Centre, Ascots Lane, Welwyn Garden City

Dear stakeholder,

This letter provides an update on services at Spring House Medical Centre, Ascots Lane, Welwyn Garden City. A version of this letter is being posted to all households with patients registered at the practice.

In June last year, we wrote to ask for patient views:

- on the services which they wanted to see offered at Spring House Medical Centre in future, when the current contract comes to an end
- on a proposal to reduce the opening times at Spring House, from 8am to 8pm, seven days a week, to suggested 'core' opening hours of 8am to 6.30pm, Monday to Friday
- on a proposal to offer more evening and weekend GP services to other people across Welwyn and Hatfield, making services more fair. This follows new national guidance, which says that all patients should be able to book routine evening and weekend appointments at a GP surgery near them. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of doctors and nurses in our area, and we don't have the funds or the staff available in Hertfordshire to offer everyone the same access to GP services that Spring House patients currently benefit from.

We would like to thank everyone who responded to our questionnaire or attended a public meeting to discuss the proposals. **Respondents said:**

- Spring House Medical Centre provides a good service, with 92% of respondents describing the service provided as 'good' or 'very good'
- patients would prefer to keep the existing opening hours, with weekend and evening appointments
- patients agreed (74% of respondents) that we should offer fairer access to GP services to all patients living in Welwyn and Hatfield.

In response to those views:

- we have awarded a new contract to Ephedra Healthcare, the organisation which currently runs Spring House Medical Centre, following a process which involved members of the patient group. This means that Ephedra will continue to provide the GP services that are rated so highly at Spring House Medical Centre

- evening and weekend appointments will continue to be available – see the enclosed timetable for more information. We will reduce the current opening hours in three stages over the next eighteen months, so that patients can adjust to the changes. Appointments can be booked online, by phone or in person, the same way as now.
- Ephedra Healthcare will provide additional GP and nurse appointments at Spring House for patients registered with other Welwyn Hatfield GP practices, both in the evenings and at the weekend. This is part of a new service called ‘extended access’, which will improve the range of appointment times available for the majority of people in Welwyn and Hatfield. You can find out more about this here: www.enhertsccg.nhs.uk/extended-access.
- Spring House patients will be able to book ‘extended access’ appointments when these are available.

A schedule of practice opening hours from April 2018 until September 2018 is shown in the timetable enclosed with this letter. Patients will be contacted later in the year to confirm timetable details for September 2018 onwards.

Patients have been advised if they have any questions about this letter, to contact the NHS customer contact centre on england.contactus@nhs.net or telephone 0300 311 22 33, but as a stakeholder to the NHS and if you have any queries regarding this then please contact the Clinical Commissioning Group on: engagement@enhertsccg.nhs.uk or calling 01707 685 140.

Yours faithfully



Dominic Cox
Locality Director (South)
NHS England (Central Midlands)



Beverley Flowers
Chief Executive
NHS East and North Herts
Clinical Commissioning Group

Spring House Medical Centre – timetable of opening hours

From April 2018 to September 2018:

<p>Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays</p>	<p>8am to 8pm – normal GP services for Spring House patients</p> <p>6.30pm to 8pm – extended access service A number of appointments will be offered to patients from other GP practices across Welwyn Hatfield, through the extended access service.</p>
<p>Tuesdays and Thursdays</p>	<p>8am to 6.30pm – normal GP services for Spring House patients.</p> <p>6.30pm to 8pm – extended access service This means that a number of appointments will be offered to patients from other GP practices across Welwyn Hatfield, including Spring House patients, through the extended access service.</p> <p>During these hours Spring House patients will also be able to use reception services – such as booking an appointment or ordering a prescription.</p>
<p>Saturdays</p>	<p>8am to 4pm – normal GP services for Spring House patients</p> <p>A number of appointments will also be offered to patients from other GP practices across Welwyn Hatfield, through the extended access service.</p>
<p>Sundays</p>	<p>8am to 12pm – extended access service This means that a number of appointments will be offered to patients from GP practices across Welwyn Hatfield, including Spring House patients, through the extended access service.</p> <p>During these hours Spring House patients will also be able to use reception services – such as booking an appointment or ordering a prescription.</p>