



Suffolk GP+

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Please note that Suffolk GP+ appointments can only be booked through your own local GP practice.

Suffolk GP+ is for people who urgently need a doctor's appointment, or can't see their GP on a weekday. This is a nine month NHS pilot which is part of the Prime Minister's Challenge Fund which aims to find innovative ways of improving convenience and access to GP services for patients.

Suffolk GP+ is being run by Suffolk GP Federation and is staffed by a rota of Suffolk GPs and Nurse Practitioners. The service runs at Riverside Clinic in Ipswich (from September) and in Bury St Edmunds from November.

The service is primarily for residents in Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds and appointments are made available for residents living further afield if they wish to travel. There are no self-referrals and appointments can only be made via a patient's own local GP practice.

Over fifty local Suffolk GPs have signed up to the Suffolk GP+ bank of doctors. They are continuing to work for their own GP practices in the county while also working two or three additional shifts per month for Suffolk GP+. There are four or five doctors and a nurse practitioner on each Suffolk GP+ shift.

Approximately 20,000 additional GP appointments are being offered over the course of the NHS pilot, with 24 appointments on week-day evenings and 150 on weekends and Bank Holidays.

Suffolk GP+ has electronic access to patients' notes with patient consent so the GP or Nurse Practitioner can quickly understand the patient's medical background, which helps with assessment and treatment. The notes are updated by Suffolk GP+ so the patient's own GP knows about the appointment.

Collaboration with wider health services to ease pressure

In addition to the appointments being offered via local GP practices, Suffolk GP+ is collaborating with local hospitals and the ambulance service, to help ease pressure on Emergency Departments. Some patients at Ipswich Hospital (and West Suffolk Hospital from November) who are waiting at A&E and who are assessed as having minor ailments are being offered an appointment with Suffolk GP+.

Paramedics attending 999 calls also have the option to contact Suffolk GP+ where the patient is assessed as needing to see a GP rather than go to A&E. The paramedic will call Suffolk GP+ first, before bringing them directly for an appointment.

The NHS 111 medical helpline and GP Out-of-Hours services are also collaborating with Suffolk GP+ to enable booking of some patients for appointments within the Suffolk GP+ opening times if appropriate.

Funding for Suffolk GP+

Suffolk GP Federation submitted a bid endorsed by Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG to run the NHS pilot as part of Wave 2 of the Prime Minister's Challenge Fund. There have already been 20 Wave 1 pilots and there are 37 Wave 2 pilots nationally.

The NHS pilots aim to find innovative ways of improving convenience and access to GP services for patients. Additional benefits include relieving pressure on GP Practices, hospital emergency departments, GP Out-of-Hours services and NHS 111.