

Primary Healthcare Darlington

Darlington

Number of patients covered: **approx. 107,000**

Number of practices participating: **11**

Names of CCGs covered: **Darlington CCG**



Darlington CCG



Darlington is one of the smallest CCGs in the country

Service change we are testing

All 11 GP Practices are working collaboratively across Darlington, with the aim to:

- ❖ Give patients of Darlington greater flexibility and access to healthcare
- ❖ Explore the appropriateness and need for seven day primary care access
- ❖ Focus upon proactive management of our frail and elderly population

Four pilot projects have commenced during October 2014

- ❖ Overflow clinic two days per week for three practices
- ❖ Evening telephone advice service 6:00pm – 10:00pm via NHS111
- ❖ Weekend clinics 8:00am – 2:00pm
- ❖ Inter-practice clinical advice

What's going well?

October 2014, saw the launch of the company Primary Healthcare Darlington with all 11 practices as shareholders.



"A unique collaboration of Darlington GP practices working together to provide the best care for patients"

Further development/engagement work with NHSIQ, with representation from all Darlington practices.

What is better for patients?

The pilot projects have been advertised in the local newspapers; information leaflets and posters are currently being distributed across Darlington to inform patients of the extended services available to them.

Early patient feedback from patients attending the overflow clinics and weekend clinics is proving positive, a selection of comments are shown below:

- ❖ "Very useful service"
- ❖ "Very helpful and informative. Good to have service on a weekend"
- ❖ "Great doctor and great service"
- ❖ "I think this trial should be common practice, as it's too hard to get an appointment to fit in with my shifts. Or make it easier for people to do self-referrals thus bypassing a GP so they can get on and see the people who really need them"

What are your lessons learned?

Challenges to overcome:

- ❖ No dedicated project team to take forward the project initiatives, the small project team have absorbed the project into existing workloads
- ❖ Short timescales to have project initiatives in place
- ❖ Barriers with estates and IT system requirements to enable project initiatives
- ❖ Recruitment of local clinicians to cover extended access clinics
- ❖ Delays to the release of allocated funding

An early review of the pilot initiatives is required to consider an alternative scope as:

- ❖ Activity during evening telephone advice service much lower than anticipated
- ❖ Weekend clinics are not fully utilised, to consider introducing nurse appointments for dressing change, phlebotomy service and chronic disease monitoring