

GMS Contract in Wales 2008-09
Enhanced Service for Extended Surgery Opening Hours
Specification

1. All practices are expected to provide essential services and those additional services they are contracted to provide to all their patients under the GMS contract. The specification of this service therefore outlines the general and more specialised service to be provided that is beyond the scope of essential services. No part of the specification by commission, omission or implication defines or redefines essential or additional services.
2. This paper provides a national framework for an extended surgery opening enhanced service as part of a “menu” of enhanced services LHBs may wish to commission in response to local need. LHBs and practices will be expected to work together to develop a more detailed understanding of their patients’ needs and to devise local arrangements to meet them.
3. Practices are resourced under the GMS Contract for the provision of General Medical Services during the core hours of 8 am – 6.30 pm. “Delivering Investment in General Practice” (January 2004) states that normal surgery hours must be “to the extent necessary to meet reasonable need.”
4. This proposal enables practices to provide a more flexible range of appointments to meet patients’ requirements, particularly for those patients who work outside the practice catchment area and who may have difficulty in accessing daytime appointments. To achieve this, practices should try to ensure that these appointments are available for patients who need them because of their working patterns.
5. LHBs should ensure that GMS contracts are regularly reviewed and that appropriate steps are taken to ensure that “daytime” access is appropriate to meet the reasonable needs of patients. Where a LHB is satisfied that a practice already meets the reasonable needs of its patients, and has sufficient capacity to offer surgery appointments outside core hours, and there is evidence* to support the need for such appointments then practices will be offered the opportunity to provide the enhanced service.

Extended Hours

6. Practices should submit plans for extended opening to be agreed by their LHB. Practices who deliver additional appointments under the terms of this enhanced service will provide:
 - ... an additional 20 minutes per 1000 patients per week for routine booked appointments
 - ... additional capacity with practices of over 6000 patients providing at least a one hour block and practices with less than 6000 patients providing at least a half hour block
 - ... at least nine appointments in a 2 hour period

- ... additional appointments normally in the evenings after 6.30 p.m. In some circumstances practices may wish to offer these appointments on Saturday morning or weekday mornings subject to the agreement of the LHB
 - ... GP or nurse led appointments as agreed with the LHB; at least half of the appointment time must be GP led.
 - ... A GP presence across all extended opening to provide clinical supervision.
7. LHBs will need to consider the ability of smaller or single handed practices to comply with these requirements. Wherever possible they should support practices to implement collaborative arrangements with other practices thus enabling them to participate in this enhanced service. The split of payments between practices working together will be a matter for the practices themselves in liaison with the LHB.
 8. In calculating the amount of additional consultation time LHBs and practices should round to the nearest ten minutes.
 9. All agreements to enter into these arrangements must be in writing. LHBs may commission this enhanced service at any time from the date the DES Directions have come into force. Until such time as the Directions are in place LHBs may, if they wish, commission this service as a local enhanced service.
 10. Payment for extended opening will be £1.90 per registered patient in each financial year. These sums will only be payable to practices that maintain their existing agreed contracted service when carrying out the enhanced service.
 11. Payment should be calculated on a quarterly basis in arrears; practice list size should be calculated at the time the arrangements are agreed to calculate additional consultation time (i.e. outside 8.00am – 6.30pm).
 12. LHBs, liaising with contractors, will need to determine the duration that the enhanced service is commissioned for and the timing for undertaking a review of the service.
 13. Any disputes arising will be dealt with in the prescribed way. LHBs and contractors should make every effort to resolve the dispute locally before formally submitting it through the NHS dispute resolution procedure.

** Part 2 of the Access directed enhanced service in 2007-08 required practices to undertake ongoing assessment of patients' requirement as regards access to appointments. This would constitute evidence to demonstrate the need for extended opening. In addition the practice may wish to consult its Patient Participation Group on the need for extended opening and present their views to the LHB.*