

PRESS RELEASE

01 May 2009

Assura opens fourth 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week GP-led health centre

Hartlepool NHS Healthcare Centre, Assura's fourth Equitable Access GP-led health centre, today welcomed its first patients in Victoria Road, Hartlepool for its new 8am to 8pm, 365 days a year walk-in service.

Operated Assura Hartlepool LLP, one of Assura's local GP Provider Companies (GPCos), the Centre is the fourth of 10 schemes to open as a result of contracts awarded in the national Equitable Access to Primary Medical Care (EAPMC) services programme.

Bath NHS Healthcare Centre (Assura Minerva LLP), Coventry NHS Healthcare and Walk-in Centre (Assura Coventry LLP) and Stockton NHS Healthcare Centre (Assura Stockton LLP) each opened their doors to patients in April and the remaining six schemes will open over the course of 2009.

The schemes are part of the Government's £250 million nationwide funding package to improve access to GP services for patients across the country. This funding will provide an extra 2.5 million appointments across the country per year.

Hartlepool NHS Healthcare Centre is provided on behalf of NHS Hartlepool as part of its multi-million pound investment in primary care services which aims to offer patients increased, easy and convenient access to family medical services and offers unregistered patients the opportunity to see a doctor or nurse with or without an appointment.

As well as increasing access to GP services, the Hartlepool NHS Healthcare Centre will provide patients with greater choice to receive advice and treatment for a wide range of minor injuries and illnesses, and will help to alleviate pressure on the University Hospital's A&E department.

Patients can use the Centre while remaining registered with their current doctor. It is in addition to and will complement the existing four GP surgeries currently running at the same Victoria Road location. These practices will continue to operate as normal.

Steve Wallace, Chair of NHS Hartlepool, said: "I'm delighted that leading healthcare specialist Assura will be providing the service at the Hartlepool NHS Healthcare Centre.

"Patients will be able to receive additional services and improved access including a 'walk-in' service and opening times from 8am to 8pm, seven days a week. The new health centre will have a strong focus on promoting better health and reducing health inequalities."

Chris Willis, Chief Executive of NHS Hartlepool added: "GPs across the town continue to deliver an excellent service. It's important that this is recognised and it's also important to recognise that the new GP-led health centre will complement and work alongside those GPs and not replace their service."

Dr Boleslaw Posmyk, a local GP and Chairman of Assura Hartlepool LLP, said: "We will be providing patients in Hartlepool with high quality, easy and convenient access to a GP or nurse, when they need it, with or without an appointment."

ENDS

Press enquiries regarding Assura Group to:

Andrew McKeon, AJM Public Relations. Tel: 01423 734 560; Mobile: 07802 484 155

Louise Bathersby, Assura Group. Tel: 020 7107 3830

www.assuragroup.co.uk

Notes to editors:

Hartlepool NHS Healthcare Centre

Victoria Road Health Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool TS26 8DB

Tel: 01429 890 947 Opening times: 8am to 8pm, Monday to Sunday

www.hartlepoolnhshealthcarecentre.nhs.uk