

Important notice regarding planned changes to the i-HEART telephone service

The i-HEART service was initially developed in 2015 to provide extended access to Primary Care services to patients registered with a Barnsley-based GP. The aim of the services was to deliver improved access medical advice, resulting in improved health outcomes.

As part of the service, i-HEART routinely monitors patient feedback received. Working in conjunction with Barnsley CCG, we also analyse local health needs, which are used to shape and influence the way in which our services are delivered.

Following a recent clinical and CQC review of the service it has become clear i-HEART is delivering a genuine difference to the way in which patients access medical assistance and many areas of the services are popular with patients.

However, we also recognise some areas of the service no longer address the needs of our patients. Our priority continues to be the delivery of safe and effective care however based on our review findings we do not feel the current telephone triage service being delivered by i-HEART meets all of these fundamental requirements.

So please note i-HEART is changing. We have introduced a number of new measures which will change the way in which the service is delivered. The following changes will come into effect from **Monday 1st October 2018**.

- Patients registered with a Barnsley GP will continue to access the i-HEART service by calling the existing telephone number 01226 242419.
- Our new hours will be **4.00pm – 6.00pm Monday to Friday and 8.00am – 9.30am during weekends and on Bank Holidays**. This will now be staffed by admin personnel who will only be booking patients into the i-HEART clinics, just like it happens at most GP surgeries, and will NOT be providing a clinical triage service over the phone.
- Patients requiring non-emergency medical attention should call their GP in the first instance or NHS 111 outside of the i-HEART opening hours.
- The i-HEART “request a call back service” will no longer be available. If you require a clinical telephone consultation then please ring NHS 111 or your GP surgery.
- The i-HEART evening clinic times will be changing during week days to **6.30pm - 10.30pm** however will remain the same time over a weekend and bank holiday where we will be offering clinics between **10.00am - 1.00pm** at the same clinic locations. These changes to the telephone triage will allow us to have additional staff and thereby increase the number of face-to-face appointments we are able to offer which we are aware has been a popular patient request in the past.

We trust that the improvements to the service we have proposed above will be to your benefit but apologise if any inconvenience is caused.