

News Release

Friday December 11, 2009

Minister to open flagship youth health service

PUBLIC health minister Gillian Merron will officially open The Weekender – a new health service aimed at 13-25 year olds in the centre of Leicester.

Young people had input in every stage of this new service from sharing what was important to them to approving the city centre location.

As the name suggests the nurse-led service will be open at weekends as well as late on Fridays and Mondays. It's a drop-in service so appointments are not needed. The Weekender operates from the second floor of the new Bowling Green Street GP surgery.

The aim of the service is to make it easier for 13-25 year olds to get access to confidential help and advice on a range of issues including general health and wellbeing, nutrition and weight management; mental health and wellbeing; drugs and alcohol; smoking; relationships and sexual health.

Research showed young people wanted to access this help over the weekend as this suited them best and that they wanted a service which was confidential and totally tailored to their needs.

All health professionals working in The Weekender are aware of the 'You are welcome' initiative – a national quality criteria for making health services young people friendly.

Kirsty Reid, NHS Leicester City's Teenage Pregnancy Coordinator, said: "I'm involved in the project as young people told us they wanted better access to sexual health services over the weekend.

"They also said they wanted these services to be part of a general youth health service so there isn't a stigma about being seen there and they'd have the chance to discuss other issues including weight management or quitting smoking.

"I'm delighted we've developed this unique service which is completely focused on the needs of under-25s."

The Weekender service will be provided by UnitedHealth Primary Care who also run the Bowling Green Street surgery.

Dr Peter Taylor, Chief Medical Officer of UnitedHealth Primary Care, said: "The team at Bowling Green are really excited to have been selected to run The Weekender service. The city centre location is perfect to ensure that it is available to as many

young people as possible and we are really looking forward to working with all the partners involved to ensure The Weekender supports the young people that helped to design it.

“At the suggestion of the young people themselves we will be offering advice on sexual health, smoking and drugs as well as self-esteem and weight management so I’m confident it will be an important source for support in the future.”

Opening hours for The Weekender are 3pm-8pm on Mondays and Fridays and 11am-4pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

This initiative is supported by the multi-agency Leicester City Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood Partnership.

For more information on The Weekender including opening hours and directions visit www.hey-babe.co.uk or call 0116 204 7249.

In other news: New surgery opens

The Weekender is within the new Bowling Green Street Surgery – the latest in a series of investments by NHS Leicester City to make health services more accessible.

The surgery at 29-31 Bowling Green Street also opens on Monday December 14 and will be staffed by GPs and a practice nurse.

Toby Sanders, Director of Primary and Community Care at NHS Leicester City, said: “The opening of this new surgery is the latest in a series of investments to improve access to primary medical care in Leicester. This includes working with GPs to offer more appointments in the evening and at weekends and two new surgeries at the Merlyn Vaz and Northern Heights health centres.

“Next year we will also be opening a dental practice at the Bowling Green Street site so people will be able to use it as a one-stop-shop for health.”

Healthcare provider UnitedHealth Primary Care won the contract to run the surgery following an open tender process. Their Chief Medical Officer Dr Peter Taylor, said: “People living anywhere in the city can register with the surgery and, with capacity for up to 6,000 patients to join, we will be able to ensure that, whether it’s easier for you to visit the doctor from work or home, you will be able to register with a GP.”

ENDS

PHOTOCALL/MEDIA OPP

When: Monday December 14, 12.10 (with opportunity for interviews until 12.20)

Where: Second floor, Bowling Green Street Surgery, 29-31 Bowling Green Street, Leicester, LE1 6AS

What: Public health minister Gillian Merron will be joining staff and young people to officially open The Weekender

Contact: For more information on the day contact Emma Race, NHS Leicester City’s media and PR manager, on 0782 685 8434.