

Briefing for Derby City Council Adults and Health Scrutiny Review Board

Horizon Healthcare – branch surgery closure

Overview

The Committee is requested to provide their feedback on plans to deliver a programme of engagement regarding a proposal to close permanently a branch surgery operated by Horizon Healthcare. The reasons for the proposal and request for permission to close from NHS England comprise patient security and information governance issues which have proven to be insoluble and the anticipated sale of the premises which Horizon Healthcare currently rent from the property owner.

The practice has already been highly proactive by temporarily closing the branch when first notified of the security issues and relocating services to an alternative branch less than one mile away. They have made strenuous efforts to address the security and property sale issues but have been unable to progress either of these.

To date there have been no issues reported by patients with regard to the relocation, however the advice of the CCG is that a formal process must be implemented to confirm this to be the case. Under the circumstances and background reasons it is proposed that a robust programme of engagement be delivered over a 30 day period as this is more appropriate than a public consultation. The practice fully accepts and supports the advice and it is important to note that they continue to look for future potential options with regard to locations in the immediate vicinity. The full detail behind the proposal is provided below.

Background

Horizon Healthcare is a GP practice situated in Mackworth and operates from three bases. The main practice is situated on Burton Road, with branch surgeries housed at Tufnell Gardens and Humbleton Drive, less than a mile apart. Currently there are 20,604 registered patients and three partners; Dr Swindell, Dr Habeeb and Dr Khalid.

Whilst Burton Road operates full cover throughout the week, the two branch surgeries open for either a morning or afternoon surgery and appointments are booked accordingly. Specimen collection takes place only from the Humbleton Drive base and there is a pharmacy which was used by patients accessing both branch surgeries.

Current Issue

Horizon Healthcare has submitted an application for a permanent branch closure in relation to the Tufnell Garden site which was temporarily closed on 6th September 2019. This followed a complaint from the adjacent neighbour that following building work they were able to hear the consultations which took place in the adjoining rooms. The adjoining wall was compromised as the building work had created a hole in the neighbouring side of the wall. There was a further issue in that the garden owned by the adjacent property runs up to the windows of the branch surgery which had to be kept closed during the summer months as consultations could potentially have been overheard. The practice took immediate action and moved consultations to an alternative room and within a week all services were moved to the Humbleton Drive site on the basis of patient safety and confidentiality. A decision was taken to suspend services from this site on a temporary basis.

Despite repeated requests from the practice the neighbours have not responded to any requests to discuss further and the landlords have not rectified the issue. The building is not owned by the current practice partners and the building owners are actively marketing the building for sale.

Proposal

The practice has now made a formal request to the CCG to allow them to make the temporary closure of the Tufnell Gardens building permanent. The CCG believes that as the current service provision - operating from the main surgery site with one branch - is meeting the needs of patients with no complaints or issues, that the practices request be approved. The practice would be advised to engage with their patients to establish any unknown issues that might require mitigation, but that a full public consultation would not be undertaken.

The PPG are in full support of the rationale for the proposal including the outcome resulting in branch site in the area. The local community pharmacy has also offered their support for one surgery operating from 8.00am-6.00pm and they have said that no complaints have been received since services at Tufnell Gardens were suspended. The practice is also clear that to date no complaints have been made following the temporary closure.

The Humbleton Drive site is on a direct bus route and is one mile away. The majority of patients will already be familiar with and have used Humbleton Drive as services alternated between the two sites. Patients are still able to book appointments at the remaining branch site which now offers full coverage of opening hours as follows:

Monday	08:00-12:00,15:00-17:30
Tuesday	08:00-12:00,15:00-17:30
Wednesday	08:00-12:00,15:00-17:30
Thursday	08:00-12:00,15:00-17:30
Friday	08:00-12:00,15:00-17:30

The Practice will now look at providing a full service to include midwifery, phlebotomy, medication review appointments and more practice nurse time. This will mirror the services at the main site on Burton Road. The Practice is also involved in discussion with the CCG around provision of future healthcare in the Mackworth area and would like to have involvement in the possible new build in that area as they are committed to providing an excellent service to their patients.

Communications and Engagement with Patients

The proposal is to undertake a period of engagement for thirty days and ensure that those patients who in the past have used the Tufnell Garden site will have an opportunity to share

their thoughts. Opportunities to comment and provide feedback will be offered via a range of channels and the intention is to utilise the following as a minimum:

- a press release will be circulated to local media to raise awareness of the engagement programme
- an electronic survey link will be sent to all available patient email addresses with appropriate permissions and hard copy versions will be available in practice waiting areas.
- SMS text messages will be circulated to supplement the above email process
- comments boxes will be provided in both Burton Street and Humbleton Drive practice waiting areas and reception staff will support awareness raising and collection of comments
- the potential to use plasma screens in patient waiting areas is being explored
- information will be uploaded to practice, CCG and partner organisation websites
- social media messages will be circulated via Twitter and Facebook
- the practice PPG are willing to help with face to face contact and a plan for this will be devised
- partner organisations will be asked for their support in raising awareness
- engagement with staff has already taken place and this will be a continuing process

Following the programme of engagement a full report will be prepared to ensure that all known and previously unknown issues are collated, considered and built into the implementation plan which will be developed if permission is granted by NHS England.

Next steps

If the proposal is approved the draft communications and engagement plan will be finalised to include actions, named leads and timelines. All feedback provided on the proposal will be fed into the final planning process and progress updates will be provided in a format and timescale to be agreed.