



Although a formal committee of the city council, the Health & Wellbeing Board has a remit which includes matters relating to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the Local Safeguarding Board for Children and Health Watch. Papers come from a variety of sources. The format for Health & Wellbeing Board papers is consequently different from papers submitted to the city council for exclusive city council business.

1. Response from NHS England to the letter from Councillor Morgan



Having been informed that the current surgery premises would no longer be available for NHS use after this date, we were unable to secure the use of an appropriate, alternative local building large enough to accommodate all the patients from Eaton Place Surgery.

Without the immediate, guaranteed use of an alternative building we could not run a procurement exercise to appoint a new provider in time to deliver GP services to the practice's patients from 1 March 2015.

NHS England therefore had no choice but to ask patients from Eaton Place Surgery to register at another local practice. There are 15 other practices within a two mile radius of Eaton Place that are ready to welcome new patients and which collectively have capacity to accommodate all the patients from Eaton Place Surgery.

The patients currently registered at Eaton Place Surgery live in different areas across Brighton and Hove and we believe that patients will have a choice of other good local surgeries.

We know the unavoidable action we have had to take in asking patients to register with an alternative practice is a disappointment to some people, but we hope they will understand that we have had to act promptly in order to protect the health and welfare of all Dr Mockett and Dr Stalker's patients and to ensure alternative arrangements for their care are in place by 28 February

NHS England is working with the surgery to identify any patients who may need additional support registering with a new practice, so that they can be provided with help to do this as necessary. This includes requesting help from community nursing teams to monitor and support any elderly and vulnerable patients who may need extra help registering with a new surgery.

Patient information drop in sessions are being held at the practice on Wednesday 26 and Friday 28 November, where patients will be able to find out more information and ask any questions they may have about registering with another local practice.

We will continue to monitor the provision of local GP services to ensure services are meeting the needs of local people and we are continuing to discuss with local practices how we can further increase capacity to treat patients.

NHS England will also be working alongside the Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to determine how we can transform the way local GP services are delivered, in order to address some of the growing challenges faced by general practice (including workforce issues) and to ensure care is provided in a sustainable way over the coming years, based around patient needs.

Eaton Place Surgery (located at 24 Eaton Place, Brighton BN2 1EX) is managed by two GP partners, Dr Mockett and Dr Stalker. Dr Mockett and Dr Stalker hold a General Medical Services (GMS) contract with NHS England for the provision of services to patients registered with Eaton Road Surgery and they are the sole signatories to the contract.

NHS England was informed by Dr Mockett and Dr Stalker of their intention to retire and the GPs subsequently gave notice on their contract to provide services at Eaton Place Surgery, in line with the required notice period.

In accordance with parliamentary regulations, their contract must come to an end at the point of their retirement from the surgery and therefore the current contract to provide services at the practice has to legally end on 28 February 2015.

Since receiving notice of Dr Mockett and Dr Stalker's planned retirement, NHS England's priority has been to ensure that alternative arrangements are in place for the treatment of their patients after this date.

Surgery premises

In September 2014, NHS England was first informed that the current surgery premises (which are privately owned) would not be available for NHS use after 28 February 2015 and that the site was being put up for sale.

A rapid options appraisal was therefore undertaken by NHS England during September and October 2014 in order to determine how we could guarantee ongoing care for the surgery's patients after the retirement of Dr Stalker and Dr Mockett and to ensure that all potential solutions were considered. We wrote to patients registered at Eaton Place Surgery as soon as possible to inform them of this development and the actions we were taking to guarantee their future care.

This included determining whether there were appropriate, alternative premises available within the local area that were large enough to accommodate services to care for all the patients from Eaton Road Surgery and which were both readily available for use as a GP surgery and within NHS England's gift to secure for use.

As a commissioner of GP services (rather than a provider), NHS England does not own any GP surgery buildings, rather it is responsible for funding costs associated with their use (such as rental costs which are reimbursed to GP practices).

NHS Property Services was established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and was the organisation given responsibility for owning and managing most of the NHS premises which were owned previously by the former primary care trusts (PCTs), including some local GP surgeries. Other GP surgeries are owned privately and this often includes ownership by GPs themselves.

NHS England is therefore not legally able to purchase the Eaton Place Surgery building itself and NHS Property Services is not in a position to purchase alternative premises on behalf of the NHS at the immediate

time. Any proposed significant investment by the NHS in healthcare facilities has to be subject to the proper processes of scrutiny and review given our duty to make the best possible use of finite NHS resources, for the ultimate benefit of patients in our local communities. Even if funding was available for the NHS to purchase another surgery building, which it is not at the current time, it would not be possible to complete such a purchase before 28 February 2015 – by which time we have to have alternative arrangements in place to care for the patients currently registered at Eaton Place Surgery.

Some local people have indicated that they understand there are some empty spaces in commercial units at Brighton Marina and have asked whether it would be possible to relocate Eaton Place Surgery there, or for alternative local premises to be rented for use as a surgery.

Any vacant local properties would need to meet appropriate standards and be a suitable environment to deliver patient care from before they could be designated for use as a GP surgery. NHS England also has a duty to make the best possible use of NHS resources and so would need to follow due process to make sure that the premises would be affordable to the NHS over the long term, as we would be responsible for reimbursing any GP practice that used the space for the cost of their rent.

Even were a local building to be identified that would be affordable and suitable for immediate use as a GP practice, we would still be required by law to run a procurement process to award a new contract to another provider to deliver services to the patients from Eaton Place Surgery. We are not legally permitted to transfer Dr Mockett and Dr Stalker's existing contract to another group of GPs.

At this point in the process, without guaranteed immediate use of affordable and appropriate alternative premises, there is no longer sufficient time to appoint a new provider of services through a procurement process before Dr Mockett and Dr Stalker's contract comes to an end on 28 February. We are also not aware of any potential providers of services who already have access to a suitable building and who would be interested in bidding for the contract or taking on the lease of a vacant property.

Nor could we directly employ GPs to deliver care to patients to allow further time for a procurement process to take place, because NHS England is a commissioner of services, rather than a provider. This means NHS England does not itself have the legal authority to directly employ GPs, only to contract GPs, or providers who employ GPs, to deliver care to patients.

On 20 November, the owners of the existing Eaton Place Surgery premises indicated that their position had changed and that they would now be able to make the premises available for continued use as a GP surgery after 28 February.

While this is a welcome suggestion that is now being made, unfortunately there is no longer sufficient time to enable NHS England to hold a procurement process to appoint a new provider to deliver services to patients from the existing premises from 1 March 2015, once the current contract with Dr Mockett and Dr Stalker ends.

We will however actively consider proposals from any other local practice if they wish to open a branch surgery within the current Eaton Place Surgery premises at a future date and this is agreeable to the owners of the site.

In summary, we could not secure the guaranteed use of an appropriate, alternative local building to house Eaton Place Surgery in time to run a procurement exercise to appoint a new provider to deliver GP services to the practice's patients.

I am afraid that it is not possible for us to consider this further because, as confirmed above, we can't guarantee securing alternative premises for the practice, procure a new provider to deliver care and have these services up and running within the 13 weeks we now have available to make sure all the practice's patients have access to GP services from 1 March 2015.

Support for patients to register at another local practice

NHS England therefore had no choice but to ask patients from Eaton Place Surgery to register at another local practice. Before confirming this to patients, NHS England spoke to other local practices to determine the extent to which they were able to welcome new patients and to ensure that all patients from Eaton Place Practice could be accommodated at alternative surgeries.

Following discussions with other local practices we determined that there are 15 other practices within a two mile radius of Eaton Place that are ready to welcome new patients (six of which are located less than a mile away). These practices collectively have capacity to register in excess of 5,600 new patients and we therefore believe that they have sufficient capacity to accommodate all the patients from Eaton Place Surgery (who live in different areas across Brighton and Hove) and that patients will have a choice of other good local surgeries.

NHS England is aware that 404 patients (7% of the total patient population registered at Eaton Place) have already registered with other local GP practices since we wrote to patients earlier this month to explain that they would need to do so before 28 February and how to go about this.

We do recognise however that some patients are anxious about the closure of Eaton Place Surgery and we are doing everything we can to support them at this time.

NHS England is working with the surgery to identify any patients who may need additional support registering with a new practice, so that they can be provided with help to do this as necessary. We have adapted the letter that was sent to patients explaining the action they need to take to register with a new practice in order to provide a bespoke version for any patients with learning disabilities. This further letter is due to be sent to affected patients this week. We will also be working with community nursing teams to request their help in monitoring and supporting any elderly and vulnerable patients who may need extra help registering with a new practice. Local pharmacies will also be asked to help identify any patients who have particular medication needs that they may need help with in registering with a new practice.

We are also working to ensure that if any patients have particular health needs they can be supported to register at other practices which will be able to provide them with the appropriate treatment. For example we have provided Eaton Place Surgery with information on other local GP surgeries that specialise in the treatment of patients with HIV so that they can make this available to their patients as appropriate.

Patient information drop in sessions are being held at the practice on Wednesday 26 and Friday 28 November, where patients will be able to find out more information and ask any questions they may have about registering with another local practice.

We will continue to monitor the situation to ensure that any vulnerable patients identified have been supported to register with an alternative practice before 28 February.

Work to improve longer term access to services in Brighton and Hove

While we know that there is the capacity within the 15 other local practices located closest to Eaton Place to accommodate all the surgery's patients, we are continuing to work with practices and NHS Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group to determine how we can improve access to GP services within the city and ensure care is provided in a sustainable way to patients in the area over the coming years. This includes determining how we can further

increase the capacity of local practices to treat patients and any proposals which would facilitate this will continue to be fully explored by NHS England.

Work is also taking place locally to explore new ways in which care can be delivered to patients in the most effective way. Across Brighton and Hove 16 GP practices have benefited from around £1.8 million of money from the Prime Minister's Challenge Fund in order to pilot a project aimed at improving patient access to care and support from local services. The project brings together local GP practices and pharmacies, to provide patients with a more flexible appointments service, including same day appointments, seven days a week. Specially trained care navigators have also been appointed to help provide health advice and guidance to patients, particularly those with complex needs or elderly patients who live on their own for example.

We will use the learning from this local scheme and the other pilot schemes that are taking place across the country to inform the development of GP services in Brighton and Hove.

Questions raised by Cllr Warren Morgan

NHS England has set out below answers to the questions raised by Councillor Warren Morgan about this issue:

- ***We want to know what capacity other surgeries have and whether GPs have been consulted on the potential increase in patients. We would like to know if anonymised postcode-based information is available as to where those patients are.***

NHS England met with each of the 15 local practices that are located within a 2 mile radius of Eaton Place Surgery in investigating how future care for the practice's patients could be secured. These local practices confirmed that between them, they had sufficient capacity to register around 8,700 patients (Eaton Place Surgery had around 5,600 patients as at the beginning of October, before patients began to register elsewhere).

The attached map shows that a number of the patients registered at Eaton Place Surgery live outside the immediate Kemptown area at other locations across Brighton and Hove.

We therefore believe that patients will have a choice of other good local surgeries, but as confirmed above we are continuing to explore ways in which we can support practices by further increasing capacity within the area to

treat patients.

- *We would also like to know about other GP retirements across the city, any other surgery closures, what is projected in the next four years in terms of meeting demand and whether the number of GPs is likely to meet the demands of a growing/ageing population.*

NHS England is not currently aware of any other impending retirements by local GPs.

Nationally, the ageing GP workforce is one of the challenges that the NHS is working to address in order to ensure the delivery of sustainable care to patients, as more members of the existing GP workforce approach retirement age and fewer medical students choose to enter general practice.

Feedback to NHS England from local practices indicates that at this point in time, this is having less of an impact on services within Brighton and Hove than it is in some other areas and local practices have continued to be able to recruit new GPs.

Nonetheless, when GPs retire and they are the sole holders of a contract to provide services to patients at their surgery (as in the case of Eaton Place Practice) then NHS England does have to work at pace to secure future services for a practice's patients. Under the standard national General Medical Services (GMS) contract that many GPs hold, they only have to give six months' notice of their intention to retire if the impact of their retirement will result in their contract to provide services having to end (because they are the sole holders of the contract). When a GP retires but they have other GP partners who jointly manage the contract to provide services at their surgery and who will continue to deliver care to patients after their departure, the retiring GP partner only has to give 28 days' notice of their intention to leave a practice.

As confirmed above, NHS England will continue to work with the Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to determine how we can transform the way local GP services are delivered, in order to address some of the growing challenges faced by general practice (including workforce issues) and to ensure care is provided in a sustainable way over the coming years, based around individual patient needs.

We have an ageing population and an increasing number of patients with complex care needs and multiple long-term conditions, who are likely to

require more intensive support from their GP, coupled with the need to recruit and retain more doctors to meet the rising demand for services and patient expectations.

We need to consider how we will meet these challenges so that GP services are fit for purpose, both now and in the future. This includes exploring the potential for delivering care in a more integrated way and strengthening the services that are available to patients within the community outside of a hospital setting. We believe GPs have a vital role to play in supporting patients to remain well by linking in with other local health services and delivering care to patients in a personalised and joined up way, which can help avoid patients being admitted to hospital unnecessarily.

The Five Year Forward View that has just been published by NHS England and other national health partners sets out some of the potential future models of care that could be adopted by local communities in order to achieve this and to meet the health needs of their populations (<http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/futurenhs/>).

This might for example include supporting groups of GP practices to join forces and provide a broader range of services to patients (including those traditionally provided in hospital) or creating new organisations that provide both GP and hospital services together with mental health, community and social care.

We want all patients in Brighton and Hove to have good access to high quality, GP services and we will continue to work to support the development of local services to achieve this.

- ***Eaton Place surgery is in close proximity to the Royal Sussex County Hospital, so there are worries about the potential impact of former Eaton Place patients using hospital A&E rather than travelling to an alternative GP***

NHS England will continue to monitor the situation as patients register with alternative local practices. As confirmed above, 404 patients from Eaton Place Surgery have already re-registered with other practices. Due to the widespread local area that patients who are currently registered with Eat Place live across and the fact that not all patients live in the immediate area surrounding the practice we do not believe that patients will opt to use A&E rather than attending another surgery according to where they live.

- *There are a very large number of vulnerable older people close to Eaton Place surgery (particularly from council and RSL-owned sheltered housing schemes around Edward Street). Again worries that some of these patients will not register with an alternative GP and will therefore not receive the support they need to continue living good quality independent lives.*

We are committed to ensuring that all vulnerable patients currently registered with Eaton Place Surgery are supported to register with an alternative local practice.

We are working with Eaton Place Surgery to identify any vulnerable patients so that we can support them to re-register with another practice.

As confirmed above, we will be working with local community nursing teams to support elderly and vulnerable patients to re-register with other local surgeries. We are also providing an adapted version of the patient letter with information about how to register with another local practice for patients with learning disabilities.

We will continue to monitor the situation to ensure any vulnerable patients have been supported to re-register with another local practice before 28 February.

We would encourage any patient, or carers, who are worried about their individual circumstances and ability to access alternative care suitable for their needs to speak to their existing GP or reception staff at Eaton Place for initial advice, given that they know the needs of their current patients the best and can escalate any concerns to NHS England as appropriate.

Patients can visit the NHS Choices website at www.nhs.uk to find out more about other local practices in their area, or call the Primary Care Support Service on 01903 756800 to determine which surgeries are nearest to them.

- *East Brighton suffers significant health inequalities and has relatively poor access to primary care. Worries that the closure of Eaton Place will exacerbate access issues for the East Brighton patients on its list (i.e. issue is not that there are plenty of alternative surgeries within 2m of Eaton Place, but access from where patients actually live)*

NHS England is committed to ensuring that all patients, including those living in the east of Brighton, can access high quality, local GP services.

Brighton and Hove is a relatively compact city with good local transport links and we are confident that patients will have a choice of other good local surgeries to choose from.

Patients currently registered at Eaton Place Surgery live across different areas of Brighton and Hove. We will however continue to keep the needs of patients in the east Brighton area under review to ensure that local GP services are meeting their needs and we are continuing to discuss with local practices how we can further increase local capacity to treat patients.

Any proposals which would facilitate this, such as considering any applications from local practices to open new branch surgeries in the local area, will continue to be fully explored by NHS England.

