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SAXONBROOK MEDICAL Proposed Relocation of Northgate Surgery

December 14

The partners of Saxonbrook Medical invited Healthwatch West Sussex to their Maidenbower surgery to:

- A. present the physical challenges with the existing premises for the Northgate Surgery,
- B. a solution, which would enable the practice to meet the increasing demands placed on primary care and the increasing number of people within the area, and
- C. examine the engagement plans.

Introduction

The practice currently serves 15,000 patients across the two surgeries: Maidenbower and Northgate. **Northgate Surgery** is a 200 sq.m footprint and is located at 9 Woolborough Road (RH10 8EZ) behind BBQ and close to the centre of Crawley Town.



The partners have stated the current building:

- falls (80%) below the recommended allocation of 1,000 sq.m per 6,000 patients
- is inadequate to accommodate the additional influx of patients from proposed small and large scale housing development within the area (e.g. Forge Wood)
- does not allow clinicians to carry out minor surgery or for contraceptive implant, resulting in patients having to go to Maidenbower practice or another provider
- causes problems with carrying out routine patient support, such as smear tests, due to space restrictions within consulting rooms and poor lighting
- gives rise to safety concerns, as the practice is within a poorly lit residential area, and is a factor in not extending opening hours

This is a time sensitive issue as the existing lease expires in April 2015.

The unsuitability of the current location has been understood for a number of years' and a relocation proposal was stopped through scrutiny two years' ago.

The partners are now working through a business case, informed by the patient engagement from two years' ago and as such, understand how their patient list is made up and are looking at the concerns previously expressed. The practice has identified that only half the populous of Northgate are registered as patients at the Northgate surgery and only half of the surgery's patient list comes from the within the Northgate ward.

The partners have stated they have pursued extension options with the landlords at the current location of Northgate surgery and have worked closely with NHS England to look at possible rebuilding. The partners are clear that extending would not provide an adequate solution and would take away space from the parking, which is currently only for 10 vehicles and could create a significant access issue, particularly for Ambulances. They also state there is no budget for rebuilding.

Relocation Proposal

From February 2015 the space at Cross Keys (Crawley Town Centre), which is temporarily occupied by Leacroft Practice (whilst urgent repairs were carried out to their premise) becomes vacant. The partners have stated the vacated space would provide for adequate consulting rooms, additional conference space for multi-agency working and training, for both currently registered patients and future patients.

The partners understand Cross Keys was originally identified as a suitable health facility area due to its proximity to the bus station and local people only have to use one bus in order to get to the area.

Since the previous proposal to relocate to this building was stopped the partners have undertaken the following:

- spoken to the district council about disabled parking within the immediate area. The council has made it clear it does not intend to allocate any additional dedicated bays, beyond the current 20, it is aware of the misuse of these spaces and will be policing this. The practice will formally write to the district council to enforce the need for this to happen
- to commit to making available appointments in a local day centre, provided through the district council, if this is deemed necessary
- to discuss with NHS England the commissioning of 30 underground parking spaces, which the partners believe will be adequate for patients appointments provided these are not misused. They understand it is their responsibility to police the use of such spaces
- explored the issue of easy access for putting in repeat prescriptions and hope to achieve this through the installation of a box on the external wall to the side of the premises, where people would be able to park without restriction for the short duration it would take to mail the prescription. This is subject to discussions with the Fire Service
- to provide (at no cost) postal, or email (subject to software) sick certificates, to offer patients a choice to having to come to the surgery
- liaised with Leacroft Practice to learn from their experience of using the premises

- investigated the issues with the platform lift, including exploring alternatives and discussing the maintenance contract for the lift, which has resulted in an enhance level of support
- to guarantee that patients who can only access the practice via the lift, will be provided with prompt access to an appointment at Maidenbower, if the lift becomes unavailable to them

The partners acknowledge that there is no drop off facility immediately outside the entrance at Cross Keys and have written to the district council and county council about this issue.

Engagement Plan

Having sort guidance from NHS England's local area team, the partners are intending to carry out a survey of patients visiting the practice over a three week period in December 2014. They will make available a dedicated member of staff who will be there to encourage and support patients to complete the survey. This method has the potential to reach 2,250 patients (assuming patients only have one appointment each during this period, and based on the average of 150 patients seen per day). This would represent 15% of the patients registered.

Healthwatch has been invited to review the survey and have provided the following recommendations to the partners. The survey is:

- as simple as possible
- inclusive of all patients who access the surgery over the three week period, including those that normally visit Maidenbower, as this would offer a border representation
- accessible to patients whose English is not their first language
- accessible to patients who may find it difficult to read or understand but should be produced in Arial (or Trebuchet) size 14pt
- appropriate and inclusive of people who are living with dementia
- available in A4, yellow and large font for people with a visual impairment

In addition:

- there is a clear statement that treatment and future care will not be affected in any way because of completing, or not completing the survey
- patients are offered the opportunity to share their views with Healthwatch, who guarantee anonymity and may be a preferable option as it is independent of the practice
- all engagement feedback is made public.

The practice has been discussing both the relocation proposals and engagement with their Patient Participation Group.

The importance of involving patients beyond those that visit the surgery over the three week engagement period was made clear to the partners. Healthwatch would expect to see the practice looking to promote the proposal to patients and to give them the chance to input into the relocation consideration.

The partners are aware of the *Northgate Matters* meetings and are keen to present the proposal to local people through this forum. Healthwatch is keen for the partners to maximise on all possible opportunities for local people to have their voice heard and for this to inform the business case. This would also include putting information about the proposal and how people can make comment, on the practice website; in local pharmacies; and through the voluntary sector and local community centres.

Healthwatch would be happy to advert any public events on their website to raise awareness.

Recommendations relating to relocation

- Healthwatch West Sussex would seek from the partners' assurance that adequate free patient parking spaces are provided, and options for extra spaces is available should patient demand increase. And that the practice will provide adequate policing of the use of these spaces to ensure patients are not be affected by others' abusing of this offer.
- Ensure the provision of an external mailbox is both secure and robust enough to withstand any attempts to break into this, which would obviously compromise confidentiality
- Gain agreement from Leacroft Practice so that learning can be made public to inform the business case and patient engagement.

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