

Position statement: GP practices in the West End of Newcastle (paper 2)

This statement has been provided to the Board to give an overview of the changes to GP provision in the inner west of Newcastle.

The team would like the Board to consider Healthwatch Newcastle's future involvement in this work. The team has come up with some options to consider.

Option one: appoint a lead Board member

The Board member's role would be to remain aware of this issue as it progresses and report progress to the Board. The Board member could recommend actions for Healthwatch Newcastle to take forward as the work progresses.

Option two: set up a working group

The purpose of the group would be the same as detailed above.

The Board does not have to take forward either of these options and can recommend other ways forward.

Changes to GP provision in the inner west of Newcastle upon Tyne

The west of Newcastle has a population of approximately 132,000. Newcastle West Clinical Commissioning Group is responsible for providing GP services for this population via 18 member GP practices.

The west of Newcastle has a number of factors which are important considerations in the provision of primary care.

The west of Newcastle is more ethnically diverse than other parts of the North East. Elswick, Westgate and Wingrove wards, all in the inner west, are the most ethnically diverse in the city. The majority of the black and minority ethnic (BME) population in the west of Newcastle are registered with just two GP practices.

Newcastle also has higher than average levels of deprivation with some areas being among the 10% most deprived in the country. In the west of the city Benwell, Scotswood and Elswick wards have the highest levels of deprivation.

The patient population in the west of the city has high premature death rates from cardiovascular and respiratory disease. Newcastle West CCG falls in the 10% of CCGs in the country for the highest death rates from respiratory disease.

Recently there have been a number of changes, both actual and proposed, to the provision of GP services in the inner west of Newcastle. These are:

- 1) Scotswood GP practice – termination of the contract with the provider and procurement of new provider
- 2) Grainger GP practice – early exit of the provider from the contract and procurement of new provider
- 3) West One – proposals for a new primary care centre and relocation of two existing GP practices

Scotswood GP practice

Background

Scotswood GP practice in the inner west of Newcastle upon Tyne was opened in 2009. It was procured under the Equitable Access to Primary Medical Care Scheme in response to Lord Darzi's report 'High Quality Care for All' which aimed to improve the choice of GP services for local communities.

The practice delivers essential, additional and enhanced services to approximately 1,550 registered patients.

The Alternative Provider of Medical Services (APMS) contract is held by Primary Care North East (PCNE), a group made up of Northern Doctors Urgent Care, Falcon Medical Group and Walker Medical Centre. The contract ran from 1 April 2009 until 31 March 2014. PCNE employ all staff and is responsible for the delivery of services from the site.

Scotswood is undergoing significant regeneration with 1,800 new homes planned for the area over the next 10–15 years. The initial building phase of 188 homes at 'The Rise' began in October 2013. The development is being delivered by the New Tyne West Development Company LLP which is a public-private sector partnership between of Newcastle City Council

and BK LLP (a consortium between Barratt Homes and Keepmoat Homes). The development will provide:

- Construction of around 1,800 new homes of mixed type and tenure with the focus on family housing
- Development of a new neighbourhood centre with retail, commercial and community space
- Provision of new public areas
- Provision of a local energy solution
- Social and economic programmes to increase community cohesion, third party public and private sector involvement, social and education activity, jobs and training opportunities

The issue

Discussions began in October 2013 between PCNE and NHS England regarding extension of the contract beyond 31 March 2014 but no agreement was reached. Therefore, on 19 February 2014, PCNE informed patients by letter that the practice would be closing on 31 March 2014 and that they would need to register with an alternative GP practice. A press release from PCNE followed confirming the closure of the practice as NHS England was not appointing an alternative provider. A small patient list, falling demand and the delays to the Scotswood redevelopment were cited by NHS England in its decision to close the practice and disperse the patient list.

Healthwatch Newcastle action

On 19 February the Chair of Healthwatch Newcastle (Bev Bookless) and the Leader of Newcastle City Council (Nick Forbes) sent a joint letter to NHS England expressing a 'strong and shared dismay' at the proposal to close the practice and concern that arrangements were already in place for emergency dispersal of the patient list. Healthwatch Newcastle and Newcastle City Council highlighted:

- 1) The legal obligation on NHS England to consult with the public, patients and the local overview and scrutiny committee on all significant changes to local services at an early stage
- 2) The high levels of ill health experienced by residents in the surrounding area and a high prevalence of adult long-term conditions, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and diabetes
- 3) Well established and agreed plans for significant housing regeneration in the area; the initial building phase of 188 homes has begun with 1,800 homes planned
- 4) That the proposal does not respect patient choice taking into account the challenge of local topography and strong community affiliation
- 5) The achievements made by the practice including some of the highest screening rates for cervical cancer in the city and a 100% uptake in childhood immunisation
- 6) The impact of the proposal on wider provision of primary care in the area, in particular the pharmacy located next to the practice
- 7) The good and easily accessible provision of GP surgeries is vital to the management of secondary and tertiary care

The letter requested a response within five working days.

Outcome

Following this letter, NHS England appointed Holmside Medical Group, an established local GP practice also on Armstrong Road, to manage Scotswood GP practice from 1 April 2014 until 31

January 2015 while an alternative provider was secured. This meant that the practice remained open and patients did not need to register elsewhere. Patients and stakeholders were advised of this in March 2014 by letter.

NHS England developed a stakeholder engagement plan and consulted with patients and the public in June 2014 about the services at Scotswood GP practice. This included a questionnaire available online or in paper form and two drop-in sessions during the consultation period. Healthwatch Newcastle assisted in the development of the consultation questions but raised concerns about the short timescale of the consultation period.

At the same time Care UK, the provider of services at Grainger Medical Group, also in the inner west of Newcastle upon Tyne, requested an early exit from its contract. An exit date of 31 January 2015 was agreed and a similar consultation also occurred with patients and the public in May 2014.

Grainger GP practice

Background

Grainger GP practice in the inner west of Newcastle upon Tyne delivers essential, additional and enhanced services to approximately 7,000 registered patients under an Alternative Provider Medical Services (APMS) contract. These services were originally delivered from two sites at Elswick Health Centre and Adelaide Terrace. However all services have been delivered from Elswick Health Centre since February 2014.

The five year APMS contract was awarded to Care UK running from 1 September 2012 to 31 August 2017.

The issue

After 18 months of operation Care UK requested an early exit from its contract and an exit date of 31 January 2015 was agreed.

At the June 2014 Health Scrutiny meeting, NHS England advised that no specific reasons were given by Care UK when requesting to terminate the contract. Health Scrutiny requested that the reasons be identified and provided to the committee and asked that the Chair invite Care UK to a future meeting to discuss its reasons for terminating the contract.

Patients and stakeholders were advised in early May 2014 and patients were reassured that there would be no change to the service they received and would not need to register with another practice.

NHS England developed a stakeholder engagement plan and consulted with patients and the public in May 2014 about the services at Grainger GP practice. This included a questionnaire available online or in paper form and two drop-in sessions during the consultation period. Healthwatch Newcastle assisted in the development of the consultation questions.

Current situation

Following the consultations and wider review of both existing practices, NHS England has decided to merge Grainger GP and Scotswood GP practices into one. Elswick Health Centre (currently Grainger GP practice) will be the main site with Armstrong Road (currently Scotswood GP practice) operating as a branch site. Patients will be able to access services at either site.

A procurement exercise began on 14 July 2014 to secure a provider to deliver this contract from 1 February 2015 with the same provision as already exists. There is a clause in the contract prohibiting the new provider from changing any of the services at the Scotswood site without the permission of NHS England.

NHS England informed patients and stakeholders of this decision in July 2014. The outcome of the procurement exercise is expected in October 2014.

Healthwatch Newcastle is awaiting the outcome of procurement exercise and will work with NHS England to ensure it provides effective and appropriate communication to patients and the public about both practices throughout the process.

West One Background

In 2010 the commissioning body NHS North of Tyne began work on the second stage of planning for a new health centre to be developed on the corner of Maria Street and Caroline Street in Benwell in the inner west of Newcastle upon Tyne.

The facility would house three existing GP practices from the local area: Betts Avenue, Holmside and Grainger Medical Group. The following services, to be delivered by the provider Newcastle Primary Care Trust (PCT), were also planned:

- Pharmacy
- Counselling
- Phlebotomy – blood tests
- Ultrasound
- Physiotherapy
- Cardiovascular – heart and circulation
- Biomechanics – for example, prosthetic limbs and adapted footwear
- A room that can be booked by community groups
- A café
- Play areas

The main stakeholders were:

- Commissioner – NHS North of Tyne
- Provider – Newcastle Primary Care Trust
- Developer – Newcastle and North Tyneside Liftco Ltd (a Community Health Partnership)

The vision for the health centre was to modernise the provision of healthcare in Benwell and the surrounding area and, in doing so, reduce health inequalities such as access to services. The proposal for the centre was in line with national policy to modernise health care, provide more services closer to where people live and reduce unnecessary hospital admissions.

In 2009 local people had been invited to view outline plans and asked how the centre could be made more accessible and what sort of services they thought should be provided. There was further public consultation in 2010 about the internal and external spaces. Both consultations were facilitated by Involve North East on behalf of NHS North of Tyne.

The facility was originally scheduled for completion by summer 2012 and was planned to be open between 8am and 8pm seven days a week.

The issue

As of August 2014 the facility now called 'West One' remains at the planning stage.

During 2012 Betts Avenue advised NHS North of Tyne that it no longer wished to be involved in the scheme and no other expressions of interest were received from other practices.

Discussions continued throughout 2012. Near the end of the year planning approval was granted and the business case was sent to the Strategic Health Authority (SHA) for approval before building work could begin. At this point the expected completion date for the facility was early 2014. Approval from the SHA was granted in March 2013.

However, significant national restructuring of the primary care sector in 2013 meant that from 1 April 2013:

- The Project Board and Project Sponsor were no longer in post
- The SHA and PCT ceased to exist
- Two new commissioning organisations NHS England and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) were formed. They would need to take over sponsorship of the project for it to continue
- A Community Health Partnership (CHP) took over interest in the scheme previously held by PCT

Throughout 2013 discussions took place between ex-PCT estates staff, CHPs, NHS England and Newcastle West CCG to determine their respective roles. In October 2013, NHS England committed to conclude its commissioning review, revalidate stage one of the scheme and give confirmation to the CHP as to whether the scheme could progress to its second phase.

Assuming all subsequent stage approvals, work was now forecast to begin on site in April 2014 with a 15 month construction period meaning the facility would be completed by July 2015.

Current situation

At the February 2014 Health Scrutiny meeting, NHS England confirmed it had completed the stage one validation and was concerned about the cost implications and strategic need of the West One scheme. NHS England planned to undertake a more detailed appraisal of the stage one process. At this point, assuming all approvals, work would now begin in September 2014 with a completion date of December 2015.

At the June 2014 Health Scrutiny meeting, NHS England advised that all interested GP practices had been asked to confirm their position at a partners meeting scheduled for the end of the month. However, as detailed above, Grainger GP practice is earmarked to occupy the West One facility but is now being merged with Scotswood GP practice with procurement underway to secure a new provider to deliver the contract from 1 February 2015. At this point it is unclear if services will still be moved from Grainger GP practice (Elswick Health Centre) into West One.

Healthwatch Newcastle is monitoring the progression of the West One scheme and awaiting the outcome of the procurement exercise to secure a provider for both Grainger and Scotswood GP practices. Healthwatch Newcastle will work with NHS England to ensure effective and appropriate communication is provided to patients and the public about the changes outlined above.

Sources

- 1) Newcastle West CCG Commissioning Plan 2013/14 — 2015/16
- 2) Newcastle Wellbeing for Life: Know Your City, a profile of Newcastle's people, <http://www.wellbeingforlife.org.uk/know-your-city>, accessed 26 August 2014
- 3) Newcastle City Council Health Scrutiny Committee papers: June 2013 — July 2014
- 4) Newcastle City Council Wellbeing and Health Scrutiny Committee papers: July 2011 — March 2013