

# People & Health Scrutiny Committee

## 11 May 2023

### NHS Dorset Report – Closure of Winton Health Centre

Choose an item.

**Portfolio Holder:** Choose an item.

**Local Councillor(s):** Cllr

**Executive Director:** Choose an item.

Report Author:

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**Report Status:** Public

#### Brief Summary:

NHS Dorset has received notification of termination of contract from the partners of Winton Health Centre. The practice will close on 31 July 2023. A managed dispersal of the c10,300 patients to their nearest practice will take place in the last two weeks of July 2023.

#### Recommendation:

The People & Health Scrutiny Committee are requested to scrutinise the contents of this report and raise any queries at a subsequent committee meeting with the commissioners.

#### Reason for Recommendation:

As members of NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board, we have a joint duty to work together on matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in Dorset.

## **1. Report**

### **1.1 Background**

- a) Winton Health Centre serves a population of c10,300.
- b) NHSD received notification on 20 November 2022 of the partnership's intention to terminate their contract, giving the required 6 months notice.
- c) Options to find an alternative provider were unsuccessful therefore the remaining option was to close the practice and disperse the patients.
- d) NHSD have negotiated an extension to the closure date with the partnership of 31 July 2023 and have provided funding to support the additional staff costs associated with the extension.

### **1.2 Stakeholder Engagement**

- a) NHSD has a duty to engage patients about changes to services they receive. A programme of communication with stakeholders has now commenced following the pre-election period when we were unable to communicate with stakeholders on the advice from NHS England.
- b) Patients have received a letter advising them of the practice closure on 31 July 2023, advising them which practice they are being transferred to. The letter included an invitation to a number of patient engagement events where patients were able to ask questions, find out more about their new practice and meet practice and ICB staff. Posters were displayed in the surgery and messages be posted on the surgery website. A press release was also been issued.

### **1.3 Service Provision**

- a) Due to the significant numbers of patients registered with Winton Health Centre, our preferred process for ensuring smooth and seamless continuity of service is a managed dispersal of the patients to adjacent practices.
- b) NHSD worked with neighbouring practices to explore options for continuity of services for patients by matching their capacity and the number of patients who reside within their practice boundary. Patients were allocated to their nearest practice. .

These include:

- Denmark Road Surgery
- Banks and Bearwood Medical Practice
- Shelley Manor & Holdenhurst Road

- The Village Surgery
- c) A managed dispersal will ensure that every patient is registered with a nearby GP practice, to facilitate continuity of care and patient safety. The the transfer of electronic records is automatic and avoids the need for patients to go through the registration process. Paper records will follow within 5 working days. Patients have a right to choose where they wish to be registered, however we are asking patients not to exercise this right until the transfer period is complete and their new GP has received all their records, to reduce complexity and avoid confusion whilst the change filters through the wider healthcare system (hospitals, community services etc). They may then apply to register with any GP practice within whose boundary they reside.
  - d) There are around 89 patients who do not fall within the boundaries of nearby Winton practices, possibly because they are registered as an Out of Area patient. Each of these patients has received a letter advising them of the closure and asking them to seek registration with a practice nearer to their home address.
  - e) We understand that transport is an important factor, even in urban areas. Information on public transport formed part of a package of information available for patients.

#### **1.4 Governance and Due Process**

- a) The termination notification and options appraisal were presented to the Primary Care Operational Group on 15 December 2023. It was agreed to seek Expressions of Interest from local practices to take on the contract and premises as the preferred option. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to identify a provider within the resources available.
- b) NHS Dorset have informed Public Health England regarding screening cycles. At present there are no particular concerns as early indications are that patients across the different practices are in the same cohorts.

#### **2. Environmental Implications**

No environmental change implications identified.

#### **3. Well-being and Health Implications**

The merger aims to sustain access to general practice for patients in this largely urban area.

#### **4. Other Implications**

#### 4.1 Estates:

There have been no expressions of interest from neighbouring practices to take on the Winton Health Centre site. However, there is a possibility that one practice will retain the Winton branch site at Leybourne Road (currently used by Winton for non-clinical purposes).

### 5. Risk Assessment

Theme	Issues	Mitigation
Continuity of Care for patients	Many patients are going through treatment and are concerned about continuity of care with a new GP practice	The reason for a 'managed' dispersal is to ensure every patient is registered with an alternative GP practice before 31 July. Their health records will be automatically transferred. We advise patients to ensure they have prescriptions to cover 2 months prior to transfer. The letter to patients includes FAQs to reassure them that their hospital or community care will continue as it does now. Winton will identify 'vulnerable or complex' patients before they are transferred to ensure they understand what is happening and their new practice is alerted to their needs.
Reducing patient choice	Patients have a right to choose their GP practice. Practices may not refuse registration if the patient resides within the practice boundary and their list is open.	We are asking patients to remain with their new GP practice for a minimum of 1 month following transfer to allow the wider health care system to update on the change from Winton to the new practice (hospitals,

		community healthcare etc). We believe this is the safest approach for patients and will avoid test results and hospital letters being sent to the wrong practice. Some patients have contacted us to request registration with a different practice to the one they have been allocated. We are aiming to facilitate these requests.
Destabilising nearby GP practices	Large numbers of patients will proactively choose to register elsewhere outside of the dispersal process. This may destabilise some of the nearby practices who do not have a great deal of capacity resulting in instability for the practice and its registered population.	We know that some patients have already made the decision to register elsewhere. We are keeping a record of patient movements and liaising with the practices to identify any capacity issues at an early stage.

## 6. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed:

- No perceived impact on race/ethnicity or nationality; religion or beliefs; gender or sexual orientation.

## 7. **Appendices**

No appendices attached

## 8. **Background Papers**

No background papers attached