

Shaping the future of primary care in Guildford

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What services does primary care offer?

Primary care is a NHS term that includes general practitioners (GPs), dentists, opticians and community pharmacies, all of which are independent businesses contracted by the NHS to provide services to the public. In this context, by 'primary care' we mean general practitioners i.e. the local GP surgery. This is often the first point of contact for people who are seeking medical advice or treatment. The service is provided by General Practitioners (GPs) working as part of a multi-disciplinary team which can also include nurses, pharmacists, paramedics, mental health practitioners and health care assistants.

Why do we need to carry out this programme of work to look at shaping the future of primary care in Guildford?

Primary care in Guildford has seen a significant increase in the pressures it faces over the past few years. We have been working with GP practices, particularly Guilddowns Group Practice and Woodbridge Hill Surgery to focus on how we address the pressing requirement for primary care expansion at a local level and ensure we have sustainability for the future. Challenges include:

- Growth in the number of registered patients due to population growth and people living longer with multiple long-term health conditions
- Insufficient space to develop services. The practices do not have capacity to provide additional services due to lack of space in their buildings.
- Easy access. Some of the buildings do not lend themselves to provide easy access for all our patients.
- Ways of working. Capacity within our premises limits our ability to develop our workforce and new ways of working to deliver our services.

How can we begin to make any changes to make primary care sustainable for the future?

We are working with Guilddowns Group Practice and Woodbridge Hill Surgery to consider what is really needed to improve the health and wellbeing of local communities, now and in the future. We need to ensure we have services that are sustainable to meet the projected population growth and the prospect that we will have a greater number of people living longer with complex health needs.

What are we doing?

NHS Guildford and Waverley CCG has been working with colleagues in Guildowns Group Practice and Woodbridge Hill Surgery to develop options for the future provision of primary care premises.

We have started to explore options for modernising and developing the primary care estate in North Guildford; by identifying existing gaps and issues. In January 2019 we shared a list of 12 options with our Primary Care Operations Group and Primary Care Commissioning Committee. These two groups include GP membership and they monitor and review primary care operations and commissioning.

Five options were shortlisted from the original 12 and a feasibility study has been carried out to examine each of the options. Between July and September 2019 we held some initial engagement sessions with patients, the public and wider stakeholders to find out what people thought was important about primary care provision and to look at the options for sites.

We are committed to meeting the health needs of our local population and we can support this through robust delivery of primary care in our local communities. However, to do this we know that we are going to have to adapt and make changes.

Our aspirations for the future delivery of primary care services are:

- to work at greater scale to improve access and quality of services for patients
- to provide premises that are fit for purpose and facilitate team working

to harness technology to improve quality.

How do you plan to engage the public and patients?

Each option has differing impacts on the community, workforce, the CCG and the delivery of care. We wanted to hear the views of the public on the future of primary care. Early discussions focused around the following themes:

- What GP services do the public value the most?
- What is important in terms of where a GP Practice is located?
- What should be considered when planning GP services for the future?

These early conversations took place from July to September 2019 with some members of the local community to gather initial views and feedback on the shortlisted options. These sessions were promoted via Guildowns Group Practice and Woodbridge Hill Surgery as well as established networks and forums.

Has a decision been made on sites/locations?

No, a final decision has not been made on this. If any significant changes are proposed we will carry out a formal public consultation.

Has there been consideration of transport and traffic issues?

The CCG fully understands the issues that transport and travel can pose to our communities and a robust travel analysis will be completed in the next stage of the process.

Are you working with Surrey County Council to consider bus routes?

Not at this stage – we are looking for people’s feedback on the options and really want to hear about the practicalities of travel and transport for local people. We will feed this into our decision making and then work on practical solutions once a likely option has been chosen.

What did the public tell you in the early engagement?

Throughout our engagement activities, people shared numerous views regarding the issues affecting primary care delivery in Guildford and the potential options. Key themes were:

- **Access to their practice** – physically being able to get to the practice with good transport links and car parking facilities.
Services in the practice – the ability to have longer appointments than the standard 10 minutes allocated and having the opportunity to see other health professionals such as physiotherapists and mental health practitioners at their practice.
- **Access to appointments** – currently there can be a delay of up to three weeks to see a GP. Ensuring emergency appointments are readily available as well as extended access on weekends and evenings.
- **Workforce and planning** – having the chance to see their preferred GP as well as a range of other health care professionals. People also discussed what the impact of local housing developments may be on GP practices.
- **Technology** – a balance between traditional methods and the use of new technology for example continuing with telephone appointments but also offering online consultations.
- **Reconfiguration of the sites** – people hoped that two sites would be considered, rather than going from five sites to one and suggested other sites for the CCG to consider. These included the Queen Elizabeth Park site and the Slyfield housing development site.
- **The time** it would take for these proposals to come to fruition.

- **Traffic congestion**– there were significant concerns regarding the potential for additional and inconsiderate parking and traffic congestion that could be caused if the practices are relocated.

There were also comments from patients on how their GP practice is currently managing things and how they will cope with rising demand and pressures in the short term.

What other sites have been considered or will be considered in the Outline Business Case?

A number of sites have been explored and considered in identifying appropriate locations, and further sites were suggested by members of the public through the engagement during the summer. In general, most of the sites suggested were either unavailable or too small, as the development is likely to be sizeable with community services co-located on site. Members of the public have suggested the following sites, but these were either not considered or have been rejected for the following reasons.

Wodeland Avenue was considered as a redevelopment site and rejected – this is outlined in the detailed version of the feasibility study. It is too small, sloping and located in the middle of a residential area. Decant premises would need to be provided during any build period, adding to the cost of the development. It has limited parking that is already under pressure, so could not accommodate a lot more patients travelling to the site.

Farnham Road Hospital was not considered; it does not have parking on site for patients who need to travel across Guildford.

The Cathedral site was not considered but not excluded either. We will discuss this site with the planners at the next stage, however this development looks very small and potentially unsuitable for the size of the health care facility likely to be required.

The former Safeguard Coaches garage site off Madrid Road was suggested but this is neither available nor big enough.

The Slyfield development was suggested but this is on the outer edge of the patient population being served, and so likely to make issues of travel and access more difficult.

Has the Budgens store in Queen Elizabeth Park been considered? It was put forward as a possible site at one of the engagement sessions by a member of the public.

During this engagement process a number of participants put forward the option for the redevelopment of the former Budgens supermarket site on the Queen Elizabeth Park development.

The CCG has approached the agents acting on behalf of the landlord and have been advised that the property is the subject of a long term lease, with a leading supermarket chain, and the landlord at this stage has no interest in terminating this arrangement.

There have been a number of land searches over the years conducted by consultants working for Guildowns Group Practice. Guildford Borough Council has also been consulted. We have been willing to look at suggestions from members of the public, however the requirements of sites for building, access and parking are quite difficult to fulfil.

How would the new facility(ies) be funded (where would the money come to build them)?

Nationally, NHS capital is severely constrained and primary care competes with all other services for this including hospitals and mental health trusts. Therefore there is likely to be an element of borrowing which is repaid by the NHS over a number of years, much like a mortgage. There may be options to finance some of the capital through local or national routes, which would reduce the amount we need to borrow. This will all be looked at in the next phase.

How have you narrowed down the options?

In order to carry out a manageable feasibility study we needed to reduce the number of options.

The original 12 options included 3 involving all central Guildford practices but there was lack of appetite from the other practices, whose premises are largely fit for purpose. In addition, an option to develop new premises at the Blackwell Farm development was ruled out as it was deemed geographically unsuitable and not likely to be ready quickly enough.

An option to develop new premises for each practice individually was ruled out in line with the strategic direction for primary care and risks of patient transfers between practices. Finally, some of the options were combined.

What financial tests have you applied to get to four options?

The 12 options were high level strategic options that included some that were never viable or palatable – this is the purpose of a long list, to put the conceivable options on the table. Other options have been combined to produce a suitable number for the feasibility study to examine. The work on financial tests formed part of the feasibility study and is described within the published document.

How are you determining the design of a new facility(ies)?

Considerations will include the size and types of space as well as NHS regulations. The procurement route for the design and build phase will form part of the decision-making for the next phase.