

Smallbrook Surgery - Patient Participation Group

Information Notice - May 2017

(please take this home to read)

Dear Smallbrook Patients,

You may be aware that a meeting was held on the evening of Tuesday 25 April at the Civic Centre regarding Smallbrook Surgery and the plans for future patient care.

The meeting was run by Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Wiltshire and was attended by GPs, Practice and Operations Managers, and Patient Participation Group (PPG) members from the Westbury Group Practice (WGP), The Avenue surgery and Smallbrook surgery.

Jo Cullen from the CCG confirmed the national shortage of GPs that has been evident for some time across the UK and which had only relatively recently impacted Wiltshire. She confirmed that her priority was to safeguard the patients of Smallbrook surgery and to provide full information regarding surgeries to which patients could transfer, if their needs could not be met during the staffing difficulties being experienced at Smallbrook surgery.

Mark Dickson, the Practice Manager from WGP, confirmed that every effort was being made to recruit new GPs following the unexpected loss of 2 GPs and one on maternity leave from the Smallbrook team in February. However, WGP are not currently being successful in this search for new GPs. In parallel, he has been having discussions with The Avenue surgery to make sure that they were fully aware of the situation and prepared and able to register patients from Warminster, if necessary, during this difficult time.

The three-month "Crisis Plan" which was implemented at Smallbrook on 6th March, is due to end on 5th June. A decision about what happens at the end of this three months will be announced in early June. Whatever that decision, Smallbrook will remain open, as it is now, until at least the end of August.

Below are some Frequently Asked Questions and Answers.

If you have any specific queries regarding your healthcare during this period please contact The Westbury Group Practice on 01373 828330.

Or have any concerns generally about this:

Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS) 0300 123 2103 (live 9am – 5pm; answer phone outside of office hours) WCCG.complaintsandpals@nhs.net

Healthwatch on 01225 434218 or info@healthwatchwiltshire.co.uk

Julian Snell
Chairman Smallbrook PPG
julesnell@hotmail.com or 01985 215834

FAQs

Q1. When will I know the future of Smallbrook Surgery?

A1. If WGP is unable to recruit the GPs to maintain Smallbrook, it will formally write to the CCG, informing it of this situation, at the end of May. The CCG will consult with NHS England and make a decision about the future of Smallbrook by 10th June. There are many factors that will influence the CCG decision, but whatever happens, Smallbrook will stay open, on the hours it is now, until at least the end of August.

Q2. What are the options for Smallbrook surgery?

A2. There are three possible options:

- Smallbrook could revert to full-time opening hours, as we were before 6 March 2017
- Smallbrook could continue on part-time opening hours, as we are now, and formally become a Branch surgery of WGP.
- Smallbrook surgery could close.

Q3. What will happen if Smallbrook surgery closes – will I be left to find another GP Surgery myself?

A3. No. If the surgery is due to close, all Smallbrook patients will be given a choice. The CCG will write in early June to every Smallbrook patient over the age of 18, and households for those under 18, informing them of the options they will have. You will have ample time to decide what you want to do and ensure that there will be no gap in your GP cover.

Q4. What help will be available to guide me through the changes, if Smallbrook does not remain open.

A4. There will be plenty of help from the WGP, NHS Wiltshire CCG, PALS, Healthwatch Wiltshire and the PPG. Open meetings will be held so that questions can be asked and answered. Your options will be explained in plain English.

Q5a. Can I transfer to The Avenue now, as I am nervous about the future?

A5. Yes, The Avenue is taking Smallbrook patients now and all you need to do to register there is ask for Registration Forms at the Avenue surgery. The process is simple.

Q5b. Can I transfer to the White Horse Health Centre surgery now, for the same reason?

A5b. Yes, you can and WGP is also welcoming Smallbrook patients at this site.

Q5c. Can I move to a different surgery (such as Frome, Codford, Mere)?

A5c. This is more difficult, as outlying surgeries are not under any obligation to take you as a patient, unless you live within their surgery boundary. Surgery boundaries are agreed between the practice and NHS England and surgeries do not have to register patients from outside their boundaries. The majority of Smallbrook patients live within the Smallbrook and Avenue surgery boundaries (I have seen the map!). For this reason, it is understood that Frome and Codford are not taking Smallbrook patients but this is being followed up with those practices and NHSE.