

1 August 2016

Dear patient

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Harbottle GP Services

As a former patient of Harbottle Surgery, I write today to update you on future primary care (GP services) in your area following the closure of Harbottle surgery in August 2015.

In January this year, NHS England contacted patients who were registered with Harbottle surgery in September 2015. Since then, NHS Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group (the CCG) has taken on additional responsibilities for GP services, which is why we are providing this update.

We entered a period of engagement in January that was designed to give former patients the opportunity to have their say. If you were registered as a patient with Harbottle surgery on 1 September 2015, we asked you to participate in a short survey on future GP services. The survey ran for six weeks, closing at the end of February and was completed by 117 former patients.

May I apologise for the time it has taken to provide you with the results of the survey. I can assure you a lot of work has taken place in the background to explore future opportunities during this period. This took slightly longer than expected but, to ensure the continuation of services in Harbottle, the current temporary arrangement has been extended from 18 October to 30 November 2016, until the way ahead is decided.

A summary of the responses we received is enclosed and I hope you will find this useful. In brief, the feedback indicated that people are most concerned about GP access and getting appointments quickly. A smaller number of people commented about a continuation of local GP services in the village and there is also some frustration with the interim pharmacy arrangements.

Working with NHS England, local councillors and Healthwatch Northumberland, we have carefully considered all of the responses and used these to develop the following options to take forward:

1. An existing general practice surgery in Northumberland providing a branch surgery in Harbottle.
2. A variety of existing general practice surgeries providing outreach clinics on a sessional basis in Harbottle.
3. Cease current services.

We now seek your views on the options listed above and are asking all former patients to complete a second survey, (available at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/FPHQJKC>) as we enter the next phase of our engagement process. Further information on the options is included on the survey, please take the time to read this. The survey is now open and you have until 8 September to complete it.

We also want to ensure that as many former patients as possible have had the opportunity to have their say, so have included a question in this second survey that relates to the responses to the survey in January. If you were not registered with Harbottle surgery in September 2015, you would not have received the previous survey, and this will give you the opportunity to add your comments and feedback to what other former patients have already said. However, if you were registered at the surgery in September 2015, this will give you another opportunity to add any further comments or feedback.

Even if you have little to say about the options for the future of Harbottle surgery, we would be grateful if you could complete the survey which includes a question asking for your views on the current GP service you receive. One reason which may explain the low response rate to the original survey is that patients are content with the service they are receiving elsewhere. We have included this additional question as we would like to establish if this is the case or not.

If you wish to gain further information on the options or to raise any issues in person, a number of drop-in meetings have been arranged. These sessions will be attended by the CCG and NHS England alongside representatives from Healthwatch Northumberland and are taking place at the following times:

Date	Time	Venue
Monday 15 August	2.00 – 4.00pm	The Star Inn, Harbottle, Morpeth, NE65 7DG
Wednesday 17 August	6.00 – 8.00pm	The Star Inn, Harbottle, Morpeth, NE65 7DG
Wednesday 31 August	2.00 – 7.30pm	The Star Inn, Harbottle, Morpeth, NE65 7DG
Thursday 8 September	2.00 - 7.30pm	The Star Inn, Harbottle, Morpeth, NE65 7DG

If you will have difficulty attending one of the meetings or would like help completing the survey please telephone Healthwatch Northumberland on 03332 408 468 or email info@healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk.

We will let you know the results of this second phase of engagement in the autumn. Your views continue to be important to us as we seek to ensure the delivery of sustainable primary care services in the area. Please take this further opportunity to have your say.

Yours sincerely



Siobhan Brown
Transformation Director

Enclosure:
Summary of responses
Phase 2 Patient Survey