

Weymouth and Portland Update 5th December 2018

Earlier this year the local health community (GP practices, providers and NHS Dorset CCG) organised a number of events in Weymouth and Portland following the announcement that Abbotsbury Road Surgery was to close. The events were designed to inform local people including those registered at the practice about a range of subjects and get their views about how they would like to be kept informed about future developments.

It was felt that a regular written update would be useful and we are pleased to be able to send out the first of these with subsequent updates being sent out every few weeks.

We hope you find this information useful. If you would like to be emailed this regular update or if you have any comments or questions regarding any below points, please contact communications@dorsetccg.nhs.uk.

We'd also like to take the opportunity to apologise to those who could not make the engagement events. It was acknowledged beforehand that both events were in the day but unfortunately, these times were restricted by getting a number of key members of the team available in such a short space of time. We are arranging two follow on patient engagement events to be held the first week in January (one of these will be in an evening).

TRANSFER OF CARE FOR ABBOTSBURY ROAD PATIENTS

With Abbotsbury Road Surgery closing we need to ensure registered patients can continue to access GP services.

Currently we are mapping where all patients registered with Abbotsbury Road Surgery live in relation to the other local GP Practices. The aim is to seamlessly transfer patients to either their closest practice or the next closest practice – bearing in mind that there are a number of town practices in a small geographical area. Every patient will be written to in January giving them information on their new practice, a date their care will be transferred and an invitation to open days to enable patients to meet their new practice team including tours of the facilities.

We will try to take into account transport links. Each practice has confirmed they are able to provide safe care to the number of patients suggested from the interim findings of the mapping.

It is important to know that patients registered with Abbotsbury Road Surgery will remain so until the date stated in this letter. Until this date you do not need to do anything in order to continue to see a GP so please contact Abbotsbury Road for any current health needs.

Due to the volume of patient movement, we will be staggering the dates when patients will be transferred. This will help ensure all practices providing care can do this safely and in a planned way whilst at the same time enabling the team providing care at Abbotsbury Road to continue doing so until March.

This plan will also allow locality practices to advertise and recruit their newly required workforce and the Abbotsbury Road staff will be invited to apply for these roles and it is hoped that all colleagues will remain in the local healthcare system. Additional investment will allow for extra appointments to be available at Weymouth Community Hospital during the planned transfer period to assist with the demand.

All vacancies will be advertised on <http://twoharbourshealthcare.co.uk/>.

ESTATES

An architect has visited several local sites to ascertain what improvements could be made in current premises to allow for the increase in patients being newly registered from Abbotsbury Road and the required investment.

This review includes our community provider, Dorset HealthCare who could move some functions centrally, freeing up clinical rooms at local practices.

A local practice is applying to the Care Quality Commission (and the leaseholder) to provide care for patients at the Chickerell branch surgery, so that all patients currently living in the Chickerell area, who attend that branch site, can continue to do so without disruption.

Work has been underway for some time regarding a new Health Centre in the Chickerell area. As you can imagine, this is unfortunately a slow process but please be assured this is high on the agenda of local needs and will be progressed.

CLINICANS AVAILABILITY

It is well documented that there are areas of the health service which face shortages of staff.

General practice will need prolonged investment and will have to find innovative ways of working to enable staff to provide person-centred, holistic, pro-active care within a better working environment. Enabling staff to provide appropriate care in a less stressful environment could also make general practice a more attractive career and may increase recruitment and retention.

We are looking to develop practice teams to support the GPs, nurse practitioners and nurses and some practices have already begun to recruit staff with skills in physiotherapy, contraception, paramedics, mental health, health coaches, care navigators etc. We see this continuing and being important for patient care and creating resilience within the primary care setting.

We are confident that the current planning for local services and investment to improve local services will enable higher recruitment and retention. This may take time, and we urge all patients to choose wisely when they access services. There are good pharmacies locally who may be able to help with self-limiting conditions and information is available through NHS choices on line.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND TRANSFORMATION

eConsult launch date to be announced shortly. This is a huge Dorset-wide investment allowing you to contact your practice online to get advice for your problem or query any time of day or night. It will allow your initial contact with your practice to be easier and more convenient. You can see a demonstration at <http://demo.webgp.com/>. Once "live" locally, eConsult will help you understand if you can complete an online request to save phoning or calling in to the practice. It will alert you if you need to be seen at the practice directly but equally the information provided upfront could enable the clinician receiving your eConsult to fulfil your needs over the telephone or via email, if preferred. This will assist working people, carers, patients who are less mobile and those with difficulty getting to their practice. This is an alternate way of contacting your practice; patients will still be able to call the practices directly if preferred.

The local Weymouth Elderly Care Service (WECS) – a scheme currently operated by the local practices – is receiving investment to increase their home visiting service and to pro-actively support patients.

We hope that this update has reassured you that we are managing and constantly reviewing the health and care requirements of the community.

Please bear with us over the next few months – we are trying really hard to get these changes right for patients. Occasionally we may not meet the high expectations we have for our services but let us know where things are not working and we will endeavour to rectify things as soon as we can if these are in our control.

As mentioned any and all comments can be addressed to communications@dorsetccg.nhs.uk

Until next time

Dr Karen Kirkham, Sent on Behalf of Healthcare Providers in Weymouth and Portland.