

31st March 2017

EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Siobhain McDonagh
MP

Dear Ms McDonagh,

Primary Care Services across Merton from 1 April 2017

We wrote to you in February regarding the decision not to continue to offer a GP practice and walk-in service at the Wilson Hospital. We are now writing to provide you with an update on the arrangements we have put in place for improved provision of primary care services for Merton from 1 April 2017 and also a short progress report on the redevelopment of the Wilson Hospital site.

Primary Care

Merton GP practices already offer more than 1 million consultations per year. Despite this the need to further improve access to primary care has been requested by patients and also identified as a priority by our member practices. Therefore we are pleased to announce that in 2017/18 we will be able to provide 50,000 new appointments in practices and across the two hubs per year for Merton patients.

Our access initiatives are being resourced via NHS GP Forward View funding, bringing £1 million of extra funding into Merton for the provision of this service over the next two years. This is in addition to Merton's own increased investment in primary care. As you will be aware the CCG is fully reinvesting the money from the closure of the Wilson walk-in service back into primary care. This is part of our long-term commitment to support local GP practices to deliver good quality care and access to appointments at the times people need them.

Our plan has three components:

- i. An Extended Access Scheme - to be delivered from 1st April 2017 by Merton practices from 1/4/17.

This will boost capacity both during core surgery hours from 8am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday and also during extended hours which is before 8am Monday to Friday, 6.30pm to 8pm Monday to Friday, and on Saturday mornings in some practices.

In response to requests from patients, practices will be offering some same day slots dedicated for use by children. Some of the funding will deliver an improved skill mix thus providing greater choice of healthcare professionals for patients. The children's appointments will also include advice during these consultations about appropriate use of services for urgent care, and self-care for parents on behalf of their children.

ii. Two GP Access Hubs – one in East Merton , one in West Merton

As you know our GP practices currently work in two well established localities (east and west). The plan is that these will be complemented by two primary care hubs during 2017 which will provide seven day access to primary care across Merton. The Primary Care Access Hubs will be the Nelson site in the west, and as an interim measure pending the redevelopment of the Wilson site, the east Merton access hub will be provided at Cricket Green Medical practice which hosts our current Out of Hour's service provider.

The service will begin from 1st April 2017 from the eastern hub and this will be followed by the hub in the west shortly after.

The two hubs will offer extended access Monday to Friday from 5pm - 9pm and so will be open later than the Walk-in Centre which closed at 8pm in the week. The hubs will open on Saturdays 8am-8pm, with the one in the east also open on a Sunday 8am -8pm and bank holidays. Initially the hubs will offer same day access only with plans to move towards a 'full practice service' of same day and routine care from October 2017. The move to provision of same day and routine care requires clinicians to have access to the full medical record with patient consent. Work towards this is already underway.

The hubs will provide access to nursing at the weekends from April 1st, for those who need wound care.

If there is a clinical need and a patient is unable to attend their own practice before surgery closing time, the practice receptionist will be able to book them to see a GP at one of these two new hubs. The hubs will also be providing extra appointments in the evenings, at weekends and bank holidays.

The hubs are not walk-in facilities; appointments will need to be booked via a patient's usual practice, by calling 111 out of hours and by redirection from our local emergency departments. Through our work to develop the care pathways into the hubs we are achieving improved integration between practices, NHS 111, the GP out of hour's service and our local emergency departments.

iii. A Quality Improvement Scheme - to be developed in 2017/18 with our GP practices.

This work follows on from the practice visits made by the primary care team to all Merton practices during 2016/17. The scheme will be launched in the summer and topics identified for focus so far include the needs of carers, telephony improvements, training receptionists to better meet the needs of the homeless, including identifying the hidden homeless, and addressing the primary care needs of frequent attendees to our local emergency departments. This piece of work was recently discussed at the Merton CCG Patient Engagement Group and was identified by patients present as an important initiative for improved patient experience.

This investment recognises the need for improvement in GP access across Merton and reflects the strength of our long term plans for primary care. Good patient experience is not just about capacity which is why our plan also includes a focus on telephony, registration procedures and the needs of carers. Working with local practices, the CCG has looked at how it can best use its resources to create a sustainable and affordable model that responds to local feedback and also supports local GP practices to deliver good quality care and access to appointments at the times people need them.

The CCG is also investing in other resources to support patients. This includes the award winning website and App "NHS Health Help Now" and increasing the availability and uptake of GP online services. NHS help is not just about easy access to a GP. We are also keen to ensure that people with long-term conditions are better able to look after themselves and able to make informed choices about their own care. As such we are continuing to offer the Expert Patient Programme across Merton.

Additionally the CCG is also supporting a social prescribing pilot in two GP practices in East Merton. Depending on outcomes there are plans to extend this to other East Merton practices too. A data base of local community resources is being built as part of the project. The Social Prescribing scheme is expected to feature strongly within the East Merton Model of Health and Wellbeing which will harness the local community resources on the community campus part of the Wilson site.

East Merton Model of Health and Wellbeing

I am aware that there is also continuing local interest in the on-going work to redevelop the Wilson hospital site following the decision not to re-commission the provision of GP and walk-in services there.

The CCG is fully committed to developing the Wilson site jointly with Merton Council into a state of the art health and well-being facility. The Health and Wellbeing Board had a lengthy discussion on progress on 28 March 2017 and our joint commitment to the project as a priority for both organisations remains strong.

The paper that was presented at the board is available on the Council's website and includes an outline timetable and milestones for the project which includes on-going community input and anticipates building beginning at the start of 2018 and the new facility being open for business by mid-2020. The necessary planning requests for the health facility will be submitted by NHS Property Services on our behalf in due course.

The Wilson Programme Board has been convened and has met twice now, on 12th January and then on 28th February. Initial discussions have taken place to plan and start the fundraising for the community facility including consideration of the nature of the vehicle for social investment to determine exact requirements and specification. A senior officer level "Health Services Design Workshop" was organised by Merton CCG on 8 March 2017, bringing together key providers with commissioners and decision makers from the CCG as well as Merton Council, facilitated by Dr Doug Hing, the co-chair of the Wilson Programme Board and East Merton Health and Wellbeing CCG Clinical Director. The main objectives for the workshop were to agree the healthcare services to be provided on the site, particularly regarding children's and young people's services, planned and unplanned care services including mental health and primary care services and to discuss opportunities for service integration.

We would be happy to provide further details if that would be helpful on the above.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Andrew Murray
Clinical Chair, Merton CCG



Dr Karen Worthington
Clinical Director for Transforming Primary Care, Merton CCG



Andrew McMyllor
Director of Primary Care Transformation, Merton and Wandsworth LDU and SRO for the Wilson Project