

November 2021

Dear Patient,

We are writing to you as a patient of Pathfinder Practice to ask for your views on future plans for the practice.

NHS Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are responsible for making sure that people in South Oxhey have access to high quality GP services, and the law requires that we consult patients when a GP practice contract is due to end. By doing this, we can ensure that we reflect the views of patients and other interested parties in any decision that is made.

The current contract for primary care (GP) services at Pathfinder is called an Alternative Provider of Medical Services Contract (APMS). This type of contract has allowed us to specify additional services to meet the needs of the local population including increased opening hours. However, a contract of this type is time-limited and cannot be extended beyond the contract term.

There are different options for what could happen next at Pathfinder and Herts Valleys CCG are inviting people in the area, especially current patients, to have a say in this decision. It is important to note that whatever the outcome the current site will be retained and your continued access to a GP practice is assured.

There are two options being considered for the future of Pathfinder and the patients that use it.

### **Option 1**

The APMS contract for Pathfinder terminates at the end of September 2022 and there will be a managed dispersal of patients to another local GP Provider under a General Medical Services (GMS) contract. GMS Contracts are contracts held in perpetuity (not time-limited) which provides long-term continuity of services for patients. The terms of GMS Contracts are nationally determined.

#### **Advantages**

- This would be a quicker process than undertaking a full procurement.
- The current practice site in S. Oxhey would be retained as a branch surgery.
- Patients would have a choice of where to access services; dependent on the GP practice the patients are dispersed to.
- As this would be under a GMS contract this would be a permanent arrangement. Patients will automatically transfer to the new practice and will not need to re-register (unless the patient chooses to register elsewhere)
- Current staff likely to be retained.

### Disadvantages

- Patients may need to become familiar with new ways of providing the care, for example different appointment systems

### Option 2

Herts Valleys CCG would undertake a competitive tender and contract another GP provider to provide the services at the current site. This would be through the open market or using the NHS England agreed list of providers.

### Advantages

- Current site would be retained
- Patients would remain registered with the new provider at Pathfinder
- Current staff are likely to be retained.

### Disadvantages

- There may be low market interest from other providers, and if this option was unsuccessful then Option 1 will be taken forward
- This arrangement would be under an APMS contract. That would be a time-limited contract so a further process would need to be undertaken at the end of that contract term (probably in five to seven years)

### How you can have your say

Before making any decision, we want to hear your views. We will also be talking to other interested parties and will need all responses by 26 January 2022.

To tell us what you think of these options and any alternatives you may want us to consider, we would like you to:

- Complete an online survey available at <https://bit.ly/pathfinderpractice>
- You can email your comments to: [hertsvalleysccg.pcontracting@nhs.net](mailto:hertsvalleysccg.pcontracting@nhs.net)
- You can write to us at **Pathfinder, Herts Valleys CCG, The Forum, The Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 1DN**
- Attend either a virtual or drop in session where representatives from Herts Valleys CCG will be on hand to answer any queries and gather further feedback.



**Virtual sessions** – to receive a link to the meeting please contact [heather.aylward@nhs.net](mailto:heather.aylward@nhs.net) .

1. Wednesday 1 December, 6 – 7pm
2. Friday 10 December, 2 – 3pm

### Drop in session

This will be held between 5 – 7pm on Wednesday 8 December. For more information on the local venue, to register for a place and to book a time slot please contact [heather.aylward@nhs.net](mailto:heather.aylward@nhs.net) or ring 01442 898888.

### What happens next?

Following this engagement, we will write to all the patients who are currently registered with Pathfinder advising them of the results of the engagement and the decision made by Herts



Valleys CCG. We aim to have the decision approved by our Primary Care Commissioning Committee by February 2022.

Yours sincerely,



**David Evans**  
Managing Director  
Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group

### Frequently asked questions

#### 1. Do I need to do anything now?

No, you do not need to do anything apart from letting us know your views. As a registered patient you will automatically remain on the practice registered list. The next letter sent from us will advise you if you need to take any further action and what that action should be.

This does not affect your right to transfer to another practice at any time if you so wish

#### 2. Why am I being asked about how I want to access GP services in the future?

We want to know what you think about the options because it will affect you and your views matter to us. By doing this, we can best reflect the views of patients and other interested parties in any decisions being made on the future of health services for patients.

#### 3. Will I be advised when a decision is made?

We will be writing to all patients registered at Pathfinder and will publish the outcome of the engagement and the decision made by the CCG at the earliest opportunity; this will confirm what – if anything – patients will need to do next.

#### 4. If I want to register at another practice now, do I need to do this myself?

Yes. If you wish to change GP practice you should contact the surgery with which you would like to register directly and ask them if you can register with their practice. You can find a surgery near you using [www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp](http://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp) or call NHS England's Customer Contact Centre on 03003 11 22 33. The website also gives further information about practices, like opening hours or patient satisfaction survey results. When considering whether a practice can register a patient, the practice will need to check that you live within their catchment area. They will ask you to complete a registration form giving details such as your name and address, date of birth, your NHS number (if you know it) and the name and address of your previous GP.

## 5. What is the difference between an APMS and GMS contract

Both GMS and APMS Contracts are nationally negotiated contracts. GMS contracts are in perpetuity with standard terms and cannot be amended by Herts Valleys CCG or the provider. GMS Contracts can only be held by registered GPs .

APMS Contracts are more flexible and allow the commissioner to include additional requirements to meet the needs of the local population e.g extended opening hours (usually 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday and Saturday mornings.) Eligibility to hold an APMS contract is more flexible and does not solely need to be GPs and can be with other providers of primary care services.

For more information on how primary care (GP services) are commissioned please visit the NHS England and Improvement website: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/primary-care/>

