

## **Update for HOSC stakeholders**

### **Windrush branch surgery – Bradley Arcade**

OCCG has recently considered an application by Windrush Surgery to close their branch surgery at Bradley Arcade. Concern had been previously raised that Bradley Arcade was located in Ruscote ward, parts of which are among the more deprived wards in the country, falling into the 20% most disadvantaged small areas nationally.

In order to consider the application, the CCG followed the decision tree developed by a small stakeholder group in September 2018. It considered the request from the practice; the impact on the Ruscote ward and the feedback from patient engagement.

GP practices in Banbury and elsewhere have struggled with recruiting sufficient GPs for some years. Windrush Surgery has taken successful and innovative approaches to making the best use of a wider range of clinical staff – for example pioneering use of paramedics to provide primary care; this includes assessing, triaging and advising patients.

The pressure on GP practices running branch surgeries has increased in recent years, with fewer GPs to work in them and fewer resources to pay for them. Operating on two sites is particularly challenging with limited GP staffing; it also stretches other staff resources and tends to be more costly due to the commitment of maintaining an additional building.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and following national guidance, Windrush Surgery has changed the way it cares for patients. This has included a telephone triage-first approach and maximising use of telephone, video and online consultations. This is in line with the way other GP practices are operating across Oxfordshire and the rest of the country.

In recent years, Bradley Arcade branch surgery has only offered appointments four mornings per week, while the main surgery offers a full Monday to Friday service. Some services were not possible at the branch such as ECGs and spirometry. A recent survey by the practice showed that there was no pattern to those attending the branch surgery when compared to the main surgery and did not show that those living nearer Bradley Arcade were more inclined to attend the local site. Indeed when looking at the population of Ruscote Ward, only 21% of patients are registered at Windrush Surgery, the remainder at the other 3 Banbury practices.

The practice requested feedback from its patients on the possible closure of the branch site through a text message to the majority of their registered list. No direct responses were received from patients but there was some interest in the local media and amongst District Councillors. Recognising the unprecedented times and the inability to hold public meetings to debate the issues, an advert was placed in the

Banbury Guardian for two weeks requesting feedback from patients registered at the practice. Two responses were received with concerns about disability access at the main surgery. These concerns have been followed up. The practice has confirmed that there are two disability bays directly in front of the surgery, an automatic front door and also the option of a home visit if deemed appropriate.

The CCG considered all of the above and debated the health inequalities in Banbury and the Ruscote ward. There was clear recognition that more support is needed for health and wellbeing in Ruscote ward. The requested branch closure fulfilled the requirements and process placed on practices and does not represent significant service change. The main Windrush Surgery is a reasonable alternative, is accessible and the requested branch closure supports the sustainability of the practice overall. OCCG approved the closure of the Bradley Arcade branch as requested by Windrush Surgery.