

Vale Medical Group

Stackyard & Woolsthorpe Surgery

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Dear Householder

You will probably be aware that Woolsthorpe Surgery building has been closed since March 2020. This is as a direct consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, because it was no longer possible to provide safe care from the building, due to the lack of space to accommodate social distancing and, therefore, the potential risk of coronavirus infection.

As a result of Woolsthorpe Surgery's closure in March, we have been providing all GP services from the Stackyard Surgery at Croxtan Kerrial, and we would like your thoughts about our proposal to make this a permanent arrangement.

In addition, we are also proposing to make an administrative change, moving Stackyard and Woolsthorpe Surgery from NHS Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group (LCCG), formerly South West Lincolnshire CCG, into NHS East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group (ELRCCG).

Details of our proposal/have been sent to NHS England, NHS Lincolnshire CCG, and NHS East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group, for their consideration and we would like to hear your thoughts on them too.

Below we have included a series of questions and answers to explain why we are hoping to make these changes and what they will mean for you:

Proposal to close Woolsthorpe Surgery

Why is it not possible to use Woolsthorpe Surgery?

The reception and waiting area at Woolsthorpe Surgery is very small, which means that it is not possible to ensure safe social distancing, and patients and staff attending the building would be subject to an unacceptable increased risk of infection. As the risk from Covid-19 is likely to be with us for many months - possibly years - this risk is not going to disappear soon. Covid-19 has heightened everyone's awareness about the risk of infection and many of us are working to adopt new ways of keeping people safe.

The car park at Woolsthorpe Surgery has recently been declared unsafe by the local council. Whilst patients and staff have previously been able to use it, from a health and safety perspective we do not feel now we can ask you to use the car park.

Will Stackyard Surgery be too small to accommodate all your patients when you resume normal services?

During the Covid-19 pandemic we have successfully introduced safer and more efficient ways of delivering primary care including internet, telephone and video consultations, all of which have been operating since March 2020. As a result of these changes we have been able to deal with about 80-90% of all patient contacts remotely without patients having to attend for a face-to-face assessment. This means that patient requests can be managed quickly and with less inconvenience as most practice visits can be avoided. If the GP decides that a face-to-face assessment is required this will still be provided as appropriate. As only a small number of patients will need to attend the practice, we will be able to ensure the lowest possible risk of infection from diseases such as Covid-19, Influenza etc.

Stackyard Surgery is a purpose-built surgery which is much larger than Woolsthorpe Surgery. It has multiple consulting rooms and has the capacity to grow and adapt to our patient population needs. It has designated disabled parking, as well as same level access, and has a segregated waiting area.

When Stackyard Surgery and Woolsthorpe Surgery merged in 2017 you said you would not close Woolsthorpe. Why the change now?

The proposal to close Woolsthorpe Surgery permanently has been considered at length by the partnership. There had been no intention of closing the building, however, the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented and unanticipated changes to the health service, particularly in how primary care services are provided. It is mainly as a result of this that we are considering the permanent closure of Woolsthorpe Surgery, also bearing in mind the issues we have highlighted concerning patient and staff safety.

Will many patients feel disadvantaged by the closure of Woolsthorpe Surgery?

As we are now providing the majority of our care remotely by phone or internet, most patients will not have to visit the surgery and so will not be disadvantaged. For those patients who have a genuine medical need, our home visiting service will remain unchanged.

What if I am unhappy with the proposal?

We understand that change can impact some patients differently than others. Please fill in the survey - available online www.valemedicalgroup.co.uk or by email at lcmp.admin@nhs.net or on request/via post from any of our GP practices - to tell us why you are unhappy with the proposal

We must also advise you that you have the right to re-register at another practice, which covers the area in which you live, should you wish to do so.

Proposal to move the administration to NHS East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group

How is it run now?

Stackyard Surgery is situated on the edge of the CCG boundary between Lincolnshire and Leicestershire, and historically was a single-handed practice. Several years ago, the practice became part of a wider group of practices called the Vale Medical Group, located in NHS East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group.

Stackyard Surgery has continued to work well across both Lincolnshire and East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Groups. More recently when Primary Care Networks (PCNs) were being formed, it was agreed by all parties that Stackyard and Woolsthorpe Surgeries should form part of the PCN that sits outside Lincolnshire, which is called Melton Syston Vale.

How does the move of Stackyard and Woolsthorpe Surgery into East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group (ELR CCG) affect me?

The purpose of this is to make it much easier to administer the practices and to provide more effective patient care. The move will mean that administrative responsibility for the practices will transfer from Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group to East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group. There will also be a change to the community services provider. This should have a beneficial effect for you, as it will mean that we will be able to access primary care services in Leicestershire that are currently not available to you - e.g. X-ray services.

We have continually considered the impacts of this proposal for our patients and have undertaken an equality impact assessment. Lincolnshire CCG and East Leicestershire and Rutland CCG have jointly agreed that there would be no known negative impacts for the patients of Stackyard and Woolsthorpe Surgeries, if the change was to go ahead.

How do I know you will not close Stackyard Surgery if we move into NHS East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group?

The two practice buildings at Long Clawson and Stackyard will both be necessary to provide sufficient space to continue to deliver primary care to all our patients.

How do I get involved and share my views

If I want to comment on these proposals what can I do?

You can provide feedback by completing the online survey on our website www.valemedicalgroup.co.uk or email us to request a copy of the survey at lcmp.admin@nhs.net or you can contact our receptionists who can send you a copy.

We will be holding online Zoom sessions, which will be advertised in advance, and details about how to access this will be available via our website and in our surgeries. There will also be a video clip on our website providing more detail.

We hope that patients will see the benefit of these proposed changes; we feel that they will allow us to continue to provide the best level of care to our patient population.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Wooding', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Dr Simon Wooding
GP Partner

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philip Rathbone', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Dr Philip Rathbone
GP Partner