

15th September 2017

1st Floor
Billingham Health Centre
Queensway
Billingham
TS23 2LA

Tel: 01642 745982

Dear Patient

Important information about your GP Practice

You may recall that we wrote to you in July 2016 to advise you that the contract for services provided by your doctor at Stockton NHS Health Care Centre [Tithebarn] was due to end on 31 March 2017.

At that time we proposed that the practice would run as a full-time branch surgery from 1 April 2017 (a branch surgery is a surgery that is run and staffed by a GP practice that has its main surgery in a different location to the branch surgery).

During December 2016 and January 2017 we invited local practices to apply to provide the branch surgery, with opening hours of 8.00am and 6.30pm, Monday-Friday. Unfortunately no applications were received.

We wrote to you again in March 2017 advising you that we had been unsuccessful and that recognising the need to continue providing services in the area, we would look for a local GP practice to run the service as a part-time branch surgery. In order for you to be able to continue accessing GP services at Stockton NHS Health Care Centre during this time, and to enable us to engage with you further to gain your views on the times and days that a part-time branch surgery would best meet your needs, we arranged for Elm Tree Surgery to provide this service from 1 April until 30 June 2017.

In June and July we invited local practices to provide the branch surgery for 18 hours each week; again resulting in no successful bids.

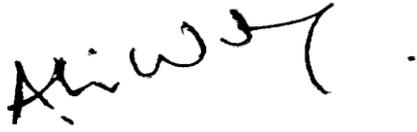
Following four unsuccessful attempts to secure a GP surgery at Tithebarn House, it is with disappointment that we have to advise you that the practice will close on 31 October 2017, which means you will need to register with another GP practice. The current GP practice will continue to provide services until 31 October 2017.

I understand that this news may be concerning to you, but I would like to assure you that our main priority is to ensure you have access to high-quality GP services, and that there are other GP practices in Stockton with whom you can register. A list of practices is included with this letter, and more detailed information about local practices is available on the NHS Choices web site (www.nhs.uk). To commence the registration process you simply need to contact the GP practice you wish to register with directly.

It is possible you will have some questions about the practice closure and I have therefore included an information sheet, which I hope will answer many of these. You can also contact Healthwatch Stockton on 01642 688312 for further advice and support or alternatively email healthwatchstockton@pcp.uk.net.

This information can be made available in different languages and formats on request.
Please contact the communications and engagement team on 01642 745401.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ali Wilson', followed by a period.

Ali Wilson
Chief Officer

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Where else can I register?

A: A list of GP practices in the area which are currently accepting patients is attached to this letter. If you have any difficulty or need assistance, please contact Healthwatch Stockton on 01642 688312 or alternatively email healthwatchstockton@pcp.uk.net. You can register with any GP practice whose boundary includes your home address. Details of practice boundaries are on most practice websites and in each individual practice leaflet.

Q: What if I approach a GP practice and they won't register me?

A: As a patient, you have a right to register with any GP practice as long as you live within their practice boundary. The practice may, in some circumstances, decline to register you. The reason cannot be based on your medical condition, age, sex, gender or race. The practice will normally accept you as soon as you approach them; you may be asked for identification, and you will be required to complete some forms. You may also be asked to make an appointment to see the practice nurse for a health check. Making all these arrangements may take a week or two, but the practice will be able to deal with any health needs as soon as they receive your application.

Q: I am ill now and need to see a doctor, can I still go to Stockton NHS Health Care Centre?

A: Yes. You can continue to be seen by the GPs and nursing staffing at Stockton NHS Health Care Centre until 31 October 2017. However, we would encourage you to register with another GP practice as soon as possible; please don't leave registering until you need to see a doctor. If you do take longer to decide which practice to register with, all practices are obliged to provide immediately necessary care to patients that live within their boundary, but they won't have access to your previous records.

Q: I have ordered my prescription, where do I get this from?

A: You will need to make sure that you collect your prescription by 12:00 noon on 31 October 2017 from Stockton NHS Health Care Centre. Please understand that for your new practice to issue your medication they need to get you on to the system which requires time to process. Therefore we advise you to get through the registration process with your new practice before your next supply of medication is due.

Q: How will my records get transferred?

A: Your new practice will receive your records from Stockton NHS Health Care Centre via a central system if you register with a new practice by 31 October 2017. Your records will then be sent quickly and securely to your new practice to ensure continued care. If you have not registered with a new practice by 31 October 2017, your records will be held centrally in a secure location.

Q: Will my new practice provide the same services?

A: The main services you receive as a registered patient at a GP practice are also available from other GP practices in the area. However the opening times of other practices may be different. Please consult NHS Choices website or contact the practice direct for details of their opening times.

Q: I have been referred to hospital. Will I need to be re-referred?

A: No, if you have been referred to hospital recently by Stockton NHS Healthcare Centre you do not need to be re-referred. The hospital will communicate with

you directly regarding your appointment time. When you next attend the hospital you should inform them who your new GP practice is.

Q: I have been to see a specialist at the hospital who was writing to my GP, where will this letter go to now?

A: The hospital would write a letter to the GP who referred you. If this can't be delivered to Stockton NHS Health Care Centre because it has closed, this communication will be held safely and securely until you register with a new GP and it will be sent to the new practice. It is therefore important that you register with a new practice by the beginning of November 2017 so that your new GP will receive any correspondence about your care from the hospital.

Q: I have been undergoing treatment, how will the new practice know about this?

A: Your medical records contain details of your previous and ongoing treatment and this will automatically transfer with your patient record. You will also have the opportunity to discuss any ongoing treatment or other health issues with health care staff at your new practice.

Q: I am waiting for results of my blood tests/x-rays, how will I get them?

A: Any test results will be added to your patient record. If you are undergoing treatment or investigations of any nature it is advisable for you to register with another practice as soon as possible to ensure continuity of care.

Q: My baby is due his/her injections and is registered at Stockton NHS Health Care Centre, what do I need to do?

A: You need to ensure your child is registered with a new practice as soon as possible and the practice will be responsible for issuing a letter informing you of your child's injection schedule. Although you can remain registered at Stockton NHS Health Care Centre until the end of October 2017, it is advisable for you to register your family with another practice as soon as possible. If you think your child has missed any injections, please speak to either your Health Visitor, or the staff at your new GP practice. Please note you may have a new Health Visitor allocated to your family.

Q: I am pregnant; will I still have the same midwife?

A: You may not have the same midwife, however you could speak to your existing midwife about this letter and they will advise you.

Q: My sick note is due, where will I get this from?

A: As soon as you register with a new GP, any sick notes become the responsibility of your new GP; however, Stockton NHS Health Care Centre will continue to provide sick notes to registered patients, where appropriate, until 31 October 2017.

Actions patients will need to take

A list of practices in the local area accepting new patients is enclosed for you along with their addresses and telephone numbers. More detailed information about local practices is available on the NHS Choices website (www.nhs.uk).

You are likely to be asked to attend a new patient check appointment. This will be to find out basic facts about your health such as your weight and height and may also include a brief discussion about any regular medication you take or treatment you are undergoing.

Contact details for local practices

Practice name	Address	Telephone	Distance from Stockton NHS Health Care Centre (by car)
Arrival Practice	Endurance House, Clarence Street, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 2EP	01642 615415	2.2
Alma Medical Centre	Nolan Place, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 2BP	01642 607248	2.3
Norton Medical Centre	Billingham Road, Stockton-on-Tees, TS20 2UZ	01642 745350	2.5
Tennant Street Medical Centre	Tennant Street, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 2AT	01642 613331	2.5
Riverside Medical Practice	Alma Street, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 2AP	01642 604117	2.6
Queens Park Medical Centre	Farrer Street, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 2AW	01642 679681	2.6
Woodlands Family Medical Centre	106 Yarm Lane, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1YE	01642 607398	3.1