



## **Derbyshire County Adults Health Scrutiny & Improvement Committee** **15 July 2019**

### **Public Consultation on proposed closure of a branch surgery - Staffa Health GP Practice, Pilsley branch**

#### **Rationale for change**

Staffa Health submitted an application to NHS England and Derbyshire CCGs Primary Care Co-commissioning Committee in Common (20 March 2019), which has been agreed, to allow them to undertake a 60 day consultation regarding the **closure of their branch site at Pilsley, Derbyshire S45 8JA.**

Staffa Health is a GP Practice, employing 60 permanent clinical and non-clinical staff including 5 GP Partners, 5 salaried GPs, 6 Advanced Nurse Practitioners and 7 Practice Nurses. This is a training practice for 2-3 GP Registrars, 3 Foundation doctors, a medical student and nursing student at any one time. Staffa Health comprises the main site in Tibshelf and three branch surgeries in Holmewood, Pilsley and Stonebroom.

Staffa Health have outlined a challenging workforce position and in common with other GP practices is experiencing difficulties in retaining and recruiting to GP, nurse and pharmacist sessions. In the last three years the practice has lost a Salaried GP and two GP Partners partially due to undesirable multi-site working and workload pressures. Analysis of GP session time since 2016 shows that the practice will be down by 5 sessions of GP time per week (approx. 90 appointments) from the 1st April 2019 as compared to 3 years ago.

With a reduction in GP numbers staffing 4 sites with a GP has become increasingly difficult. The practice has resorted to using locums to cover at some branch sites and the spend on locums for the financial year 2018-19 is threefold that of previous years and has put the practice in a difficult financial position which if not addressed will, they state, make the practice unviable.

The practice has submitted an application to close Pilsley surgery to allow them to operate from fewer sites which they describe as being more manageable, safe and cost effective and sustainable with the number of GP sessions that are available to them. This would follow a 60 day consultation period with patients from all 4 localities and other local practices and stakeholders.

Staffa Health states that the overall sustainability of the practice is reliant on attracting new GPs and new Partners when current partners leave the business in the next few years. They believe that fewer sites will make the practice a more attractive career option for future incoming GPs.

Consolidation on fewer sites, they say, would have a positive impact on working conditions for all staff through a less disparate and more supportive environment. The consolidation of staff

over fewer sites will also help the practice develop and train staff and to provide supervision and debriefs.

## Quality & Equality Impact Assessments

In preparation for a Public Consultation, a Quality Impact Assessment and an Equality Impact Assessment have been presented to the CCG's Quality Panel. The Key issues and mitigations are in relation to patients without their own transport travelling to another surgery and are summarised as follows:

**Issue:** Patients who are frail, elderly, have disabilities and reduced mobility may find travelling to another surgery on public transport or in a car difficult.

**Mitigation:** Already in place - Patients who have reduced mobility, for example those who currently travel to surgery by mobility scooter will be offered a home visit by the practice. Additional capacity for home visits has been made available to make this possible.

**Issue:** Patients living in Pilsley will experience reduced access to local services.

**Mitigation:** Staffa Health will look to increase the range of consultation types available, particularly online consultations for those that may find this more convenient than travelling to other sites. Telephone consultations are already provided. This may mitigate some of the reduction in access created by the site closure. Work has started on this but could be accelerated and promoted more actively if this helped patients from the Pilsley area access appointments. This style of access is in line with the general direction of travel for the NHS.

Staffa Health will also be mindful that an increased number of patients may have had to use public transport to attend appointments. They will therefore be understanding of this and accommodate any needs arising.

## Communications and Engagement Plan

The Practice Manager, supported by the CCG, has developed a comprehensive Communications and Engagement Plan with a robust range of feedback approaches for a 60 day consultation period that commenced on 24 June 2019 and closes on 23 August 2019.

These approaches include:

- Meetings with affected staff prior to the consultation launch
- Involvement of Patient Reference Group prior to the consultation launch in the development of the Communications & Engagement Plan
- Letter to all Pilsley households with a registered patient outlining the reasoning behind the proposal and inviting them to provide their views during the consultation period
- Letter to registered patients elsewhere who have visited the Pilsley practice in the last 12 months
- Text messages to all other patients alerting them to the consultation and inviting them to comment
- Feedback invited through – online and paper questionnaire survey, written feedback, face-to-face drop in sessions, telephone
- Communication to key stakeholders, including MPs, local councillors, local Pharmacy Manager, neighbouring GP practices
- Website and social media publicity
- Posters campaign in all sites and community areas

## **Decision Making Process**

On completion of the public consultation, an analysis period will take place during which time the Practice Manager will collate the patient & stakeholder feedback into a Consultation Feedback Report. In addition the Quality and Equality Impact Assessments and mitigations will be updated and reviewed by the CCG's Quality Panel.

The Report with mitigations and recommendations will then be presented to the NHS Derby & Derbyshire CCG Primary Care Co-Commissioning Committee for a decision on whether or not to agree to the closure and the CCG's Engagement Committee will oversee the consultation closure to ensure that the views expressed during the consultation period have been addressed and transacted without bias.

**Amanda Brikmanis**  
**Public Involvement Manager**

**Ruth Cater**  
**Practice Manager**

**25 June 2019**