

Patient and stakeholder engagement report: proposal to merge Blackthorn Health Centre and Bursledon Surgery

About this document

The purpose of this paper is to accurately report on the engagement exercise around this proposal, to help inform the committee's decision. It does not seek to conclude whether the proposal should be approved or declined, or pre-empt the committee's decision.

We would like to thank everyone who took part in the engagement exercise and for taking the time to share their feedback. We would also like to thank local people who helped with promoting the engagement process.

Engagement activity

The period of engagement lasted for over four weeks, commencing on 30th July 2021 and concluded on Tuesday 1st September 2021.

The methods used to gain feedback on the proposal include:

- Survey – paper copies were made available at Blackthorn Health Centre, Lowford Centre and Pilands Wood Community Centre. An online version was also available and promoted. 1,299 people responded to the survey.
- Direct outreach to registered patients – the practice contacted its patient list via SMS text and letter, in accordance to the preference identified by the patient. This took place at the start of the engagement exercise. A number of people contacted the CCG directly and their feedback has been summarised in the key themes section below.
- Contact with local stakeholders – email letters were sent to local stakeholders on 30 July 2021. Senior leads from the practice team and the CCG met with councillors from Eastleigh Borough Council and Hampshire County Council. A meeting also took place with the local Member of Parliament, Paul Holmes MP. Formal feedback received in writing is attached.
- Media publicity – the local newspaper, Southern Daily Echo, reported on the proposal and promoted the survey on 30th July 2021 and 17 August 2021.
- Online publicity – information about the proposal was posted on the websites of both practices and on the CCG's website. The survey was widely promoted on the practices' and CCG's social media channels, and shared on local Facebook pages.

Survey responses

Who responded

1,299 took part in the survey. 65% of respondents were female and 34% male. The age range of those who took part was wide, with the biggest group of respondents being aged 65-74 years. The survey received a very small number of responses from those ages over the age of 85 years. Over 89% of those who took part said they were White British, which is largely in line with the demographic make-up of the area. Virtually all of the survey respondents lived in postcodes covered by the practices' boundaries, as would be expected. Those who replied from outside the boundary may be stakeholders from local organisations physically located elsewhere in the area.

Approximately 7% of patients registered at the two practices combined took part in the survey, with around 10% of those registered at Bursledon Surgery taking part in the engagement exercise.

Survey results

Full survey results can be found below. Free text comment was available for a number of questions to allow patients to expand or explain on their answers. These comments have been summarised in the 'Key themes' section below.




Question 12 invited patients to share their thoughts overall on the proposal. These answers have been analysed and the following results/trends identified:






- 211 out of 440 Bursledon patients who answered expressed broad support for the proposal, with most noting personal support but noting there may be issues to consider for older people, people with less mobility, pregnant women or parents of young children who may find it difficult to travel to Blackthorn Health Centre. 185 directly opposed the proposal. Others remaining indicated neither support nor opposition but provided general feedback as part of the survey. A summary on reasons why are summarised in the Key themes section of this report.
- Out of those aged 65 and over who are registered with Bursledon Surgery, 63 patients indicated they were against the proposal and 61 indicated they were in support.
- 107 patients who can only walk/use public transport/require a lift to attend a face-to-face appointment and are registered with Bursledon Surgery indicated opposition to the proposal. 47 patients with those circumstances indicated support.
- Out of those who indicated they had caring responsibilities and were registered with Bursledon Surgery, 26 indicated opposition to the proposal and 21 indicated support.
- 153 patients registered at Bursledon Surgery responded that they find it either difficult or very difficult to travel to Blackthorn Health Centre for a face-to-face appointment. 207 patients registered at Bursledon Surgery responded that they find

it either easy or very easy to travel to Blackthorn Health Centre for a face-to-face appointment.







- 471 out of 758 Blackthorn patients who took part in the survey support the proposal. 119 expressed opposition to the proposal. A summary on reasons why are summarised in the Key themes section of this report. Overall comments in support of the proposal noted there was not a proposed change in location or arrangements for patients registered with Blackthorn Health Centre.
- Most patients of both practices responded saying they would typically wait either within 24 hours or within two days for an urgent appointment, and the majority responded saying a routine appointment would take either within one, two or three weeks, or over three weeks.
- 47% of patients indicated they had heard of the Appointments+ service but had not used it. 18% indicated they had used the service. 35% had not heard of the service.

The overall results of the survey are as follows:









1. Which GP practice are you registered with?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Bursledon Surgery		37.20%	481
2	Blackthorn Health Centre		62.57%	809
3	Other		0.23%	3
			answered	1293
			skipped	6

2. When did you last contact your GP surgery?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	In the last seven days		22.46%	290
2	In the last month		33.85%	437
3	In the last six months		28.58%	369
4	In the last twelve months		7.90%	102
5	Longer than twelve months ago		7.20%	93
			answered	1291
			skipped	8





3. How often do you attend your GP surgery for a face-to-face appointment?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Weekly		0.31%	4
2	At least once a month		3.27%	42
3	At least every six months		30.12%	387
4	At least once a year		29.96%	385
5	I last attended over 12 months ago		33.07%	425
6	Never		3.27%	42
			answered	1285
			skipped	14


4. How do you currently travel to face-to-face appointments?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Car / motorcycle on my own		67.62%	871
2	Car lift from another person		5.75%	74
3	Walk		20.50%	264
4	Bicycle		2.02%	26
5	Public transport		1.55%	20
6	Taxi		0.62%	8
7	Community-run transport		0.16%	2
8	Other		1.79%	23
			answered	1288
			skipped	11

5. From your home, how would you find travelling to Blackthorn Health Centre for a face-to-face appointment?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very easy		42.78%	551
2	Easy		28.49%	367
3	Neither easy nor difficult		15.22%	196
4	Difficult		8.15%	105





5. From your home, how would you find travelling to Blackthorn Health Centre for a face-to-face appointment?

5	Very difficult		5.36%	69
			answered	1288
			skipped	11

6. What issues may make it difficult for you to attend Blackthorn Health Centre for a face-to-face appointment?

Answer Choices – free text. Summary information below		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	879
		answered	879
		skipped	420

7. On a scale of 1 to 4 (with 1 being very poor and 4 being very good), what is your experience of travelling to Blackthorn Health Centre for a face-to-face appointment?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	1 	11.44%	143
2	2 	11.60%	145
3	3 	26.40%	330
4	4 	50.56%	632
		answered	1250
		skipped	49

8. How long does it typically take to wait for an appointment with a healthcare professional from the moment of contacting the practice for the following two types of appointment?

Answer Choices	Urgent appointment	Routine appointment	Response Total
Within 24 hours	88.17% 574	11.83% 77	651
Within two days	63.68% 284	36.32% 162	446
Within one week	28.71% 149	71.29% 370	519
Within two weeks	13.43% 58	86.57% 374	432
Within three weeks	10.00% 32	90.00% 288	320

8. How long does it typically take to wait for an appointment with a healthcare professional from the moment of contacting the practice for the following two types of appointment?

Over three weeks	7.14% 22	92.86% 286	308
		answered	1190
		skipped	109

9. On a scale of 1 to 4 (with 1 being unimportant and 4 being very important), how important are the following when it comes to accessing GP services?

Answer Choices	1	2	3	4	Response Total
Distance/time needed to travel by car	16.00% 201	16.16% 203	23.17% 291	44.67% 561	1256
Distance/time needed to travel by public transport	39.90% 466	8.05% 94	12.16% 142	39.90% 466	1168
Being able to see the same GP or health clinician on each face-to-face or telephone visit	10.45% 133	13.67% 174	21.68% 276	54.20% 690	1273
Being able to see the right person for your need at the right time	4.89% 62	2.92% 37	10.48% 133	81.72% 1037	1269
Being given an increased choice of when you can make a routine GP/nurse appointment	5.45% 69	9.08% 115	21.94% 278	63.54% 805	1267
The service being located as close to where you live as possible	8.89% 113	16.37% 208	23.45% 298	51.30% 652	1271
The service being located where it covers a larger area to ensure it can be staffed by the right people and has consistent opening times	11.71% 147	19.60% 246	28.37% 356	40.32% 506	1255
Healthcare professionals being able to access your medical record	4.86% 61	4.22% 53	15.05% 189	75.88% 953	1256
				answered	1283
				skipped	16



10. Have you ever heard of or used the following services?

Answer Choices	Yes, I have heard of this service but not used it	Yes, I have used the service	No, I do not know what this service is	Response Total
Urgent GP appointments (same day appointments)	36.05% 465	47.21% 609	16.74% 216	1290
NHS 111	42.42% 537	54.82% 694	2.76% 35	1266

10. Have you ever heard of or used the following services?

Appointments+ and out of hours GP appointments (weekend, evening and bank holiday GP appointments)	47.31% 598	18.12% 229	34.57% 437	1264
Patient Access (a way of booking GP appointments and requesting repeat prescriptions online)	34.49% 438	52.76% 670	12.76% 162	1270
Care navigators	16.19% 206	2.67% 34	81.13% 1032	1272
Social prescribers	12.95% 164	1.11% 14	85.94% 1088	1266
NHS app	35.91% 456	52.44% 666	11.65% 148	1270
E-consult (an online form of contacting your GP practice)	37.41% 474	46.80% 593	15.79% 200	1267
Electronic Prescription Service (which allows your GP to send your prescription electronically from their computer to your chosen pharmacy)	23.92% 305	63.45% 809	12.63% 161	1275
			answered	1285
			skipped	14

11. In the last eighteen months there has been an increase in the use of online ways to contact and receive advice from a GP. Do you have access to a computer, tablet or smart phone to use this service?




Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		94.16%	1210
2	No		5.84%	75
			answered	1285
			skipped	14

12. It is proposed that all appointments with a GP, nurse or other healthcare professional, which are needed between 8.00am and 6.30pm Monday to Friday, take place at Blackthorn Health Centre. What do you think of this proposal?











Answer Choices – free text. Summary information below.			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00%	1196
			answered	1196
			skipped	103

2. About you





13. Are you

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Female		65.09%	839
2	Male		33.75%	435
3	Prefer not to say		1.16%	15
			answered	1289
			skipped	10











14. Your age group

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	17 or under		0.08%	1
2	18-24		2.40%	31
3	25-34		11.25%	145
4	35-44		14.90%	192
5	45-54		18.00%	232
6	55-64		19.86%	256
7	65-74		21.72%	280
8	75-84		9.39%	121
9	85+		1.47%	19
10	Prefer not to say		0.93%	12
			answered	1289
			skipped	10




15. Your ethnic background

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Indian		0.23%	3
2	Pakistani		0.08%	1
3	Bangladeshi		0.00%	0
4	Nepali		0.00%	0
5	Any other Asian background		0.08%	1
6	Black Caribbean		0.00%	0
7	Black African		0.08%	1








15. Your ethnic background

8	Any other Black background		0.08%	1
9	Chinese		0.47%	6
10	White and Black Caribbean		0.39%	5
11	White and Black African		0.23%	3
12	White and Asian		0.39%	5
13	White British		89.71%	1151
14	White Irish		1.17%	15
15	Any other white background		3.35%	43
16	Prefer not to say		3.35%	43
17	Any other ethnic background		0.39%	5
			answered	1283
			skipped	16


16. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		17.06%
2	No		79.98%
3	Prefer not to say		2.96%
			answered
			1284
			skipped
			15






17. Your religion or belief

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Atheism		19.19%
2	Buddhism		0.24%
3	Christianity		48.42%
4	Hinduism		0.32%
5	Islam		0.16%
6	Judaism		0.08%
7	Sikhism		0.00%
8	Other religion or belief		7.74%






17. Your religion or belief

9	Prefer not to say		23.85%	302
			answered	1266
			skipped	33

18. You would describe your sexuality as

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Bisexual		2.43%	31
2	Gay man		0.63%	8
3	Heterosexual/ Straight		88.49%	1130
4	Lesbian/ Gay woman		0.78%	10
5	Prefer not to say		7.67%	98
			answered	1277
			skipped	22

19. Are you a carer?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	No		76.95%	988
2	Yes, for child/children under 18 years living at home		11.21%	144
3	Yes, for a relative or person living with you		4.60%	59
4	Yes, for a relative or person living elsewhere		4.36%	56
5	Prefer not to say		2.88%	37
			answered	1284
			skipped	15

20. Your postcode

Answer Choices – summary in map below.			Response Percent	Response Total
			answered	1228

20. Your postcode

	skipped	71
	skipped	66

An overview of responses by postcode is displayed in this map:



As displayed, majority of responses came from the Bursledon, Hamble and Netley areas in line with the catchment area of the two practices.

Key themes which emerged during the engagement

A large number of comments were received as part of the survey and meetings with stakeholders. These comments reflect a wide range of views and do not all align with each other. Comments were received on the following issues, summarised in sections below:

Patient access

- Issues in being able to book a face-to-face appointment, and that the merger may make that process more difficult. Some comments in frustration that face-to-face appointments were not widely available during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A strong preference from people living in Bursledon to be able to have a GP surgery within walking distance.
- The length of time it takes to get through to a receptionist on the telephone
- Virtual appointments cannot be seen to replace face-to-face appointments.
- Preference to use online methods of contact to the practice because it is quicker
- Concern that people who cannot access the internet or find it difficult to navigate will struggle to access the practice
- Fear that inability to book face-to-face appointments will over burden other parts of the NHS such as ED
- Standard GP practice opening hours are not ideal for people who also work during those hours or have other commitments, such as caring for a relative/childcare
- Perception that it is easier to get an appointment at Blackthorn Health Centre than at Bursledon Surgery
- Perception that it is easier to get an appointment at Bursledon Surgery than at Blackthorn Health Centre
- Appreciation that pharmacy is available at Blackthorn and rated positively
- Positive comments about the quality of care to patients from both practices
- Individual and specific experiences of poor service
- Willingness to travel further to receive better care, but concern on how care will be provided for those who cannot travel. [further comments relating to travel can be found below]
- Patients with mental health conditions/anxiety may find it difficult to adjust to change
- Continuity of care is needed (e.g. same GP).
- Concern from Blackthorn Health Centre patients that they should not be expected to travel to Bursledon Surgery
- The priority should be about patients and not financial

Impact on the practice

- Car park at Blackthorn Health Centre is too small to handle more patients / difficult to park at 'peak' times / not enough children parking spaces / some people forced to park on road side
- Car parking is difficult at Bursledon Surgery
- Car parking is easier at Bursledon Surgery
- Possibility that a merged practice would not be able to handle the number of patients it serves
- Appropriate staffing levels must be in place for a practice serving a larger number of patients, particularly an increase in the number of GPs.

- The administrative burden on GPs in the event the merger goes ahead
- The administrative burden on GPs in the event the merger does not go ahead
- Perception that the proposal presents no real change from current arrangements
- IT issues will be fixed as a result of the merger
- Receptionists have the current circumstances challenging due to needing to book patients from different practices in to two IT systems
- Support about consolidating services if it means they are more sustainable

House developments / impact of increasing number of patients

- Impact of housing developments on the number of people who will be served by the practice / is the practice sustainable under these developments
- Significant road congestion on Hamble Lane at peak times and due to local shopping traffic will increase travel times to the site
- Having more patients use Blackthorn Health Centre will add to congestion on Hamble Lane

Future of Lowford Centre

- Lowford Centre building is modern and should be fully utilised by local organisations, including the NHS and others.
- Bursledon Surgery moved into the building relatively recently.

Travel

- People in Bursledon appreciate the ability to walk to their practice rather than have to drive
- Many people who cannot walk will struggle to go to Blackthorn Health Centre
- It will be difficult for older people, pregnant women and parents with young children to walk to Blackthorn Health Centre
- The cost impact on residents over using public or private transport (e.g. car fuel, taxi)
- Extra costs due to longer travel time, such as covering childcare costs
- Concern from Blackthorn Health Centre patients that it is not possible for them to travel to Lowford Centre, if the proposal were to be the other way around.
- It is possible to cycle to the practice in good weather and may be difficult in bad weather.
- Bus service times do not fit neatly into appointment times
- People's carbon footprint may increase if required to travel by car
- The bus stop is not close enough to the surgery
- Traffic on Hamble Lane means it is hard to judge travel time to the surgery to arrive for appointments at the right time
- Time it takes to travel / walk
- Suggestion that it would be beneficial if community transport to Blackthorn Health Centre be set up in the event the merger is approved