

Agenda item: 12

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Norwich Walk-in Centre consultation report and recommendations</b>
<b>Presented by:</b>	<b>Sadie Parker, Director of Primary Care</b>
<b>Prepared by:</b>	<b>Sadie Parker, Director of Primary Care Kristen Hall, Communications and Engagement Manager – Primary Care</b>
<b>Submitted to:</b>	<b>Primary Care Commissioning Committee (part 1)</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>9 May 2023</b>

**Purpose of paper:**

To update Primary Care Commissioning Committee (**PCCC**) members on the final report summarising the activity of the Norwich Walk-in Centre consultation.

To seek support for recommendation to commission a new contract for the Rouen Road GP practice, Walk-in Centre (**WiC**) and Vulnerable Adults Service - Inclusion Health Hub (**VAS**) when the current contract expires in March 2024.

PCCC is asked to note that the ICB Executive Management Team (**EMT**) has approved a recommendation for the decision on this recommendation to be made at the ICB Board meeting on 30 May.

PCCC is asked to support EMT's recommendation, and to also recommend to the ICB Board that the decision to commission a new contract for these services and keep the WiC open be made at the Board meeting on 30 May.

Separately, in response to feedback received from the consultation NHS Norfolk and Waveney would like to investigate what capacity could potentially be released from the GP practice at Rouen Road to create additional patient capacity at the Walk-in Centre and further support GP resilience. This would require a separate period of data analysis and engagement with patients registered at the Rouen Road GP practice, and PCCC members are asked to approve a 3-month extension to the current contract to enable this.

## Executive Summary:

The ICB ran a consultation from 24 January – 26 March 2023 (9 weeks) on plans for general practice services in the Norwich area when the contract for the WiC, VAS, and GP Practice at Rouen Road expires in March 2024.

The consultation closed with over 3,000 responses which were received through the online survey and in writing.

A final report summarising the feedback received has been prepared by Engaging People - a third party organisation who also supported with the pre-engagement activities for the WiC consultation in June and November 2022. The ICB observed the pre-election period which ran from 16 March – 5 May. Observing this guidance meant that the ICB could not publish the WIC consultation report before 5 May.

Feedback received from members of the public who completed the survey and the stakeholders potentially affected by the change (including healthcare and local authorities) strongly indicated the desire for the WiC to remain open.

PCCC members are asked to review the report summary and recommend that a decision be made at ICB Board on 30 May to commission a new contract for the WiC, GP practice, and VAS.

The recommendation to commission a new contract for the WiC, VAS, and Rouen Road GP practice has been shared with the Norfolk Health and Oversight Scrutiny Committee (**HOSC**) for comment and information and will be discussed at its next meeting in public on 1 June.

In addition, in response to feedback received from the consultation NHS Norfolk and Waveney would like to investigate what capacity could potentially be released from the GP practice at Rouen Road to create additional patient capacity at the Walk-in Centre and further support GP resilience.

The GP practice at Rouen Road currently operates longer hours than other GP practices in Norfolk and Waveney. NHS Norfolk and Waveney would like to explore a potential release of capacity by reducing the practice's current opening hours, which are 8am-8pm, seven days per week, and potentially bringing that in line with the core opening hours of other GP practices, which are 8am-6.30pm, Monday to Friday. The savings made from this reduction could be invested to create additional patient access to primary medical care through the WiC and reduce duplication of services.

This would require a separate period of data analysis and engagement with patients registered at the Rouen Road GP practice, and a 3-month extension to the current contract for this activity to take place. PCCC members are asked to approve a 3-month extension to the current contract to enable this.

## **Introduction**

The ICB ran a consultation from 24 January – 26 March 2023 (9 weeks) on plans for general practice services in the Norwich area when the contract for the WiC, VAS, and GP Practice at Rouen Road expires in March 2024.

This paper aims to provide a summary of the consultation findings, as well as providing recommendations for PCCC to consider regarding the future of the WiC. PCCC are asked to approve a recommendation for the decision on the recommendation to be made at the 30 May ICB Board meeting.

## **Background**

The options for consultation were developed following two rounds of engagement with the public and stakeholders in 2022.

PCCC members were previously briefed on the initial public engagement that was conducted via online survey in June 2022. ICB EMT were briefed on the need to undertake additional pre-engagement work and data analysis in November 2022 into the vulnerable adult and adults with additional needs population and their use of the WiC, and to request a contract extension with the provider, Norwich Practices Ltd, for that work to be undertaken and enable a full consultation to take place.

The findings from both programmes of pre-engagement activity, proposed consultation options, and a request for approval to proceed with a public consultation on the WiC were presented to EMT, HOSC, and the ICB Board in December 2022.

## **Content of the Consultation**

The consultation provided 3 options:

- Reprocurer the contract as it currently is (no change)
- Reprocurer the GP practice and VAS, and let the WIC contract expire
- Reprocurer the GP practice and VAS as they are. Redesign and recommission the resources currently provided at the WIC in a different way to improve health outcomes in underserved communities across the Norwich area

A key aim of this consultation was to encourage people to share their views to help shape what future general practice services could look like. The survey provided free text areas where the public could provide feedback on the three options, and provided a space for respondents to provide additional input/thoughts into how services could be provided.

It also included several additional questions to gain public insight into experiences and preferences of GP services that will be useful in helping shape planning for future services.

## Summary of the Consultation Engagement Activity

A programme of communications and engagement was planned throughout the consultation period which included:

- An iPad hosted at the WIC for the duration of the consultation period with the survey loaded onto it for patients to complete while at the WIC
- Face-to-face interviews with advocates of underrepresented groups, vulnerable adults, and at-risk adults to ensure voices from across the wider Norwich community are captured as part of this consultation
- Interviewers were on site at the WIC over a number of days throughout the consultation period (inc evenings, mornings and weekends) to speak to patients and support them to complete the survey
- Promotional posters and postcards with a QR code linking to the survey were delivered to practices across Norwich PCN, including to areas outside of Norwich such as Wymondham, Drayton, and Humbleyard practices where data show patients use the WIC in line with Norwich activity levels
- Weekly posts on the ICB social media channels and paid-for Facebook advertising
- Paper copies of the consultation document were provided at the GP Practice on Rouen Road and at the Walk-In Centre.
- A communications toolkit with promotional materials was distributed to all GP practices across Norfolk and Waveney to encourage participation by all patients that might use the WIC.
- Communications were supplied to PPGs, parish councils, and other organisations like Norfolk County Council and Community Action Norfolk to support sharing of the consultation opportunity through their communication channels.
- Advertisements in local newspapers were placed to promote ways that people could receive copies of the consultation documents who weren't online.

## How people responded to the consultation

A total of **3,043** survey responses were received. The below breakdown highlights the method of response and requests for materials:

- Completed via survey: **2,986**
- Emailed a completed copy – **16**
- Posted a completed copy – **41**
  
- Requests for printed copies – **19**
  
- Requests for alternative formats and translations – **2**
  - 1 x Braille
  - 1 x large format version of the document
- Emails received with comments/feedback – **52**
- Easy Read survey returns – **0**

## Overview Report Findings

These findings are based on 3,043 responses received to the survey.

In addition to the survey, feedback was also sought and gained from 14 qualitative 1:1 feedback opportunities with organisations supporting vulnerable adults, at-risk adults, adults with additional needs, and children and young people.

Independent feedback was also received from 9 organisations during the consultation period, including local councils and healthcare providers.

### Part A – Feedback on the Consultation Options

#### Respondent classification

- 98% of respondents (2,995 people) responded to the survey as ‘an individual’.
- 1% (29 people) were staff members working at one of the three services which are the focus of the consultation
- 1% (41 people) were representing someone else.

#### Feedback about Option 1 (unprompted)

- Unprompted, the overriding sentiment was that Option 1 was the ‘best’ of the three proposed options, and that the three services (Walk-in Centre, the GP Practice, Vulnerable Adults Service) should continue as they are.
- All three highlighted services were considered ‘essential’, although the focus of feedback was most focused on the Walk-in Centre.
- Many were responding as past users of the Walk-in Centre, or who knew someone who has used its services, and experiences were typically positive.
- The focus of the consultation document was Central Norwich. However, geographically, the Walk-in Centre serves more than just Norwich residents. Indeed, it has a county-wide reach.
- A city-centre location was deemed important for the Walk-in Centre within the feedback.
- The feedback indicated that patient needs were not currently being met by their GP practices, with widely cited difficulties in getting appointments.
- The Walk-in Centre was perceived to be supporting local GP services by helping to plug ‘gaps’ in service provision.
- There was concern that, should the Walk-in Centre close, people would turn to an already stretched A&E as the ‘next port of call’.
- Vulnerable groups, such as people experiencing homelessness, would likely be disadvantaged further by the loss of the Walk-in Centre.

### Feedback about Option 2 (unprompted)

- Unprompted, Option 2 was widely and strongly negatively received by respondents.
- It was considered to be ‘the worst’ of the three options by many, due to the proposed closure of the Walk-in Centre.
- There were questions raised about where users of the Walk-in Centre would go, and how the Walk-in Centre’s appointments would be recovered elsewhere, in light of a lack of available appointments at local GP practices.
- There was concern that implementation of Option 2 would put increased pressure on A&E.

### Views on Option 3 (unprompted)

- The consultation document states that, ‘*We believe this is the most appropriate option*’ which resulted in some perceived survey bias and a degree of derision amongst respondents.
- The consultation document also states, ‘*We have not finalised details of how this would operate in practice because feedback from patients, the public, and healthcare professionals is essential at this early stage to shape how services could be delivered to best meet local needs.*’ Respondents felt that they were expected to make an uninformed decision on Option 3.
- Concerns were raised about whether local GP practices would be sufficiently equipped to meet increased demand on their services as they are currently considered to be ill-equipped to do so.
- From the feedback, it was clear that the WiC is fulfilling a need for immediate / urgent appointments. There was, therefore, some trepidation about this provision being lost, should Option 3 be taken forwards.
- There was sentiment that vulnerable groups (e.g. people experiencing homelessness / asylum seekers / migrant workers) are likely to be detrimentally affected, due to the loss of a ‘walk-in’ facility, which they can use without the need to be GP-registered.
- The feedback indicated that the loss of the WiC would be felt county-wide, not just by those living in Central Norwich.

### Advantages of Option 3 (unprompted)

- Many respondents were unable to think of any advantages of Option 3.
- There was notable mention that information provided in the consultation document was insufficient for them to make a fully informed decision (details have not been finalised).
- Cost-savings were mentioned by some, sometimes scathingly, in that they will benefit the NHS and not patients.
- Any advantages spontaneously cited were extremely small in number.
- There was some low-level, underlying scepticism as to whether proposals would be (able to be) competently delivered.

### Disadvantages of Option 3 (unprompted)

- Opposition to the closure of the Walk-in Centre was strongly voiced here.
- There was some doubt expressed that any alternative plans would actually be implemented, and concerns that any changes might not result in a more efficient service.
- There was significant mention that GP services are unable to meet current patient demand, due to lack of appointments and / or 'out-of-hours' provision.
- And there was an expectation that people would turn to A&E as the next option.
- There was some low-level mention that the healthcare needs of people living outside Norwich have been 'over-looked' by this consultation.

Key themes emerged for requests for input for additional ideas/suggestions as to how the healthcare capacity associated with the Norwich WiC could be managed, so that it offers more equal access for all Norwich residents, helps meet growing local demand for general practice services and supports resilience of general practices in Norwich:

- More funding to be made available
- Expand the Walk-in Centre provision (e.g., more centres / increased capacity at current site / move to larger site in Norwich)
- More staff / GPs / nurses generally
- Increased capacity at local GP practices (e.g., more staff, appointments, out-of-hours provision)
- Extended opening hours (Walk-in Centre and local GP practices)
- Better parking facilities at the Walk-in Centre (e.g., parking concessions / free parking)
- Better triage services

### **Part B - Helping to shape how health services are delivered locally**

Additional questions were included to help shape provision of general practice services in Norwich, and which will provide a useful bank of information to support development of general practice services across Norfolk and Waveney.

*How far would you be willing to travel for a pre-booked general practice appointment?*

<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than 5 miles	59
5 – 9 miles	25
10 – 14 miles	9

15 – 19 miles	3
20+ miles	4

*There are lots of important factors that influence your preference for accessing general practice services. Please choose the top 6 most important factors to you from the list below.*

- When asked to choose their ‘top six’ important factors, **the most important factor was ‘being able to book a same day appointment’**, and for the large majority (**86%**).
- Other important factors to most are **‘having a face-to-face appointment’ (79%)**, **‘being able to walk in without an appointment’ (72%)** and **‘being able to book an appointment in advance’ (72%)**.
- **Having healthcare services within walking distance** (‘close to where I live’) was important to just under half of respondents (**46%**); and being **‘close to public transport’ to 40%**.

*What is the most important consideration for you when you need to access general practice services, and why?*

- When asked about the most important consideration when needing to access general practice services, key words coming through were **‘accessibility’ and ‘availability’**.
- The key *theme* emerging, and overwhelmingly, was **being able to book an appointment with a healthcare professional (most likely a GP)**.
- Specifically, **same day appointments were important to many**, as were **face-to-face appointments** (albeit the latter to a slightly lesser extent).
- **Speed of service was also of notable importance**, with many saying they want to be seen promptly, and urgently if needed
- Also important, albeit to a slightly lesser extent, were **services being conveniently located** (close to home / within walking distance / easily accessible by public transport).

*What are the things that make it difficult for you to get the general practice services you need?*

Key themes emerging included:

- Most significantly, **a lack of availability of appointments generally**
  - And, specifically, notable mentions of difficulties in getting face-to-face appointments
  - And same day appointments



- With some frustration vented at having to call at a 'set time', first thing in the morning
  - And appointments outside of working hours (including weekends)
- **Problems getting past the receptionist were cited by many ('gate-keepers')**
  - Some do not like discussing health conditions with / being triaged by receptionists (they are not medically trained)
- **Not enough staff / GPs** (generally and / or at local practice)
- The overriding sentiment emerging was that **GP services are overwhelmed** and struggling to cope with current demand

## Conclusions

The overriding feedback from the consultation, both from public responses and organisational feedback received, was for the WiC to remain open to support patient access to primary medical services and to support resilience in GP practices not just across the greater Norwich area, but county-wide. Additional significant concerns were raised around the impact of the closure of the WiC on emergency departments.

The additional information provided by Part B of the survey demonstrates the factors that are important to patients focus on availability of appointments within GP practices and being able to access healthcare when needed – whether that's through same day appointments, facility to walk-in, or being able to book appointments in advance for less urgent medical needs.

## Recommendations

Taking into account the extensive feedback received from the public, media, health and political stakeholders, the recommendation is for the WiC to remain open and for NHS Norfolk and Waveney to commission a new contract for the Rouen Road GP practice, WiC, and the VAS.

Separately, in response to feedback received from the consultation NHS Norfolk and Waveney would also like to investigate what capacity could potentially be released from the GP practice at Rouen Road to create additional patient capacity at the WiC and further support GP resilience.

The GP practice at Rouen Road currently operates longer hours than all other GP practices in Norfolk and Waveney. NHS Norfolk and Waveney would like to explore a potential release of capacity by reducing the practice's current opening hours (8am-8pm, Monday – Sunday), and bringing that in line with the core opening hours of other GP practices (8am-6.30pm, Monday to Friday). The savings made from this reduction could be invested to create additional patient access to primary medical care through the WiC and reduce duplication of services.

In order for the required engagement with the registered practice list and data analysis on usage of the GP practice to be undertaken, this would require a short further 3-month extension of the contract.

ICB EMT has noted the above recommendation for the future of the WiC and approved the recommendation for the paper to go forward to PCCC members, HOSC, and then ultimately the ICB Board for decision in May.

**Recommendation to PCCC:**

Members are invited to consider this report and its findings, taking into account the volume of public and provider feedback received and existing system pressures.

Members are asked to support the recommendation to commission a new contract for the WiC, VAS, and Rouen Road GP practice when the current contract expires in March 2024.

Members are asked to recommend to the ICB Board that the decision to commission a new contract for these services and keep the WiC open be made at the Board meeting on 30 May.

Members are lastly asked to note that NHS Norfolk and Waveney would like to review what capacity may be released at the GP practice at Rouen Road to create additional patient access to primary medical care through the WIC, and support general practice resilience. A period of engagement with patients registered at that practice and data analysis will be required to investigate this. Members are asked to approve a 3-month contract extension to enable this investigation.

<b>Key Risks</b>	
<b>Clinical and Quality:</b>	Feedback from the consultation is vital for the stability of services in Norwich and to maintain stability of ED.
<b>Finance and Performance:</b>	Cost envelope to remain the same for the overall service.
<b>Impact Assessment (environmental and equalities):</b>	EIA completed as part of consultation. New EIA required to support proposals
<b>Reputation:</b>	Significant reputational risk attached to this decision
<b>Legal:</b>	Legal advice was sought on the original consultation document. HOSC will consider the ICB's recommendations against the consultation report and determine their next steps.
<b>Information Governance:</b>	None identified at this stage
<b>Resource Required:</b>	Primary care commissioning team, communications and engagement team, Engaging People

<b>Reference document(s):</b>	Not applicable
<b>NHS Constitution:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Conflicts of Interest:</b>	GP practice members are conflicted, therefore they will be excluded from this section of the meeting
<b>Reference to relevant risk on the Board Assurance Framework</b>	Resilience of general practice

## **Governance**

<b>Process/Committee approval with date(s) (as appropriate)</b>	
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