

Question asked under Any Other Business – Questions from the public at the 8th August 2023 Primary Care Commissioning Committee by Alexandra Hooper

I would like to ask a question under item 12 on the Agenda for the meeting on 8th August. My questions is as follows:

What are you doing to change/address how Holt Medical Practice currently proposes to engage and include all of its patients and stakeholders as part of the patient engagement process for the proposed closure of Blakeney Surgery? Given their current plans are not inclusive and rely on access to a computer, a mobile telephone or a car, what specific criteria will you be requiring be used to ensure that the following groups have been included?

1. Those with limited or no access – to the internet/mobile phones
2. Those with limited or no access – to a computer
3. Those with no ability to physically access meetings/drop in sessions at the surgery in Holt or Melton
4. Those with a disability likely to affect engagement – such as visual impairment, dyslexia, etc
5. Those on very low incomes who are less likely to be in a position to respond via post or other means that require financial investment

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'Advice note 3 regarding branch closures states there should be practice led consultation and engagement meetings which vary in times to ensure access for all groups. Holt Medical Practice held a public meeting last week to discuss the potential closure of the branch surgery in Blakeney in the late afternoon. The venue was too small, the time was early for working residents and late for older ones, if travelling by bus you could get there but not home afterwards, and it conflicted with a prescheduled major event in a neighbouring village. We estimate at least 300 residents were prevented from attending because the size of the venue or couldn't attend because of the date and time. When will Holt Medical Practice be holding another public meeting? I understand the ICB role is to offer support and guidance so will you be working with them on this?'

Response

In accordance with the branch closure application process, it is the Practice's responsibility to engage with and receive feedback from its patients and stakeholders and to provide that information to the ICB as part of their application.

The practice will be required to show how it has communicated with its registered patients and other local stakeholders to engage with this consultation and provide a range of opportunities including face to face, digital, and print for patients to provide feedback so that all patient groups have the opportunity to meaningfully participate in this process.

The ICB is aware that the Practice is working very closely with Healthwatch Norfolk through this engagement process to ensure it is open and transparent, and to consider how all patient groups and stakeholders will be communicated with and how they can participate. The ICB will flag with Healthwatch Norfolk and Holt Medical Practice the questions raised at the Primary Care Commissioning Committee meeting on 8 August with regards to accessibility of the engagement opportunities to ensure that this process is robust.

Once the consultation period is closed, all the feedback received will be submitted by the practice as part of its formal application to NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB.

The ICB will then carefully examine the feedback received throughout the application process, as well as the information provided by the practice within their application before any decision is made.

Holt Medical Practice have published information about their consultation on their website here - [Blakeney Surgery Public Consultation | Holt Medical Practice \(holt-practice.nhs.uk\)](https://www.holt-practice.nhs.uk/blakeney-surgery-public-consultation). Within that webpage there is a link to a Powerpoint presentation with additional information about the engagement activity, which includes additional drop in sessions at a number of different venues that are being led by Healthwatch Norfolk.