



CROUCH VALE MEDICAL CENTRE, SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) version 11

The purpose of this FAQ is to share information with patients registered at the town's three GP practices about their move to the new Crouch Vale Medical Centre, which took place over the weekend of 8 and 9 November 2019. The questions and answers below reflect discussions with the community over the past 12 months and new information available since our doors opened.

You can download electronic copies of this document from the practices' websites:

www.greenwoodsurgery.co.uk/

www.brickfieldssurgery.co.uk/

www.kingswaysurgery.net/

1. Why did the South Woodham Ferrers GP practices decide to move?

The three practices' previous premises were no longer fit for purpose and we expect to see real benefits from sharing a space with other healthcare organisations, especially as the town's population grows. The GP partners at all three practices decided the move to Crouch Vale Medical Centre would offer more appropriate premises for delivering the best possible care in the future.

2. When was the formal opening of the medical centre?

The building opened its doors to patients on Monday 11 November 2019. The practices and other tenants are currently considering if a formal opening event is needed following the General Election. (Electoral rules make it difficult to plan any ceremony in the pre-election period.)

3. Was there any disruption to clinical services during the move?

The two-day move was enough time to move all necessary facilities for a full opening the following Monday. The Saturday Extended Access that Greenwood Surgery has been hosting since their launch in South Woodham Ferrers were hosted at Wyncroft Surgery in Bicknacre on the 8th and from now on will be offered at Crouch Vale Medical Centre.

Despite some initial issues during the medical centre's first week of opening, most notably check-in screens and pedestrian access, the usual services for South Woodham Ferrers patients were on offer from day one.

4. Who is equipping the surgery?

The three practices equipping the centre with office furniture and medical equipment taken from our old buildings and purchasing new equipment where needed. Our move included

installing new IT equipment to ensure the facility has the latest technology to support efficient working.

5. Are all medical services offered by the three current surgeries at their previous buildings still available?

Yes, services remain the same. Opportunities for improvements through closer cooperation and through other medical and community services also being based in the building should arise, however. There is a list of these services in the answer to question 25.

6. What is happening to the “The Practice” and South Woodham Ferrers Clinic?

The national body called [NHS Property Services](#) is responsible for the buildings where the Clinic and the former New Surgery (“The Practice”) are based and will determine how they are used in due course.

7. Will there be a medical facility in the town centre?

There are currently no plans for a town-centre healthcare facility – the future of the SWF Clinic and the GP surgeries there will be decided by their owners. However, the pharmacists who work in the town’s three pharmacies – including two in the town centre – are trained clinicians who can advise you on minor ailments as well as medication use. They can also signpost you to other NHS services if you are not sure what care you need.

8. What is the view of the existing pharmacists?

Local pharmacists have been broadly supportive of the scheme in local discussions.

9. Will the Sainsbury’s superstore include a pharmacy? How will I collect medicines I have been prescribed?

There is no current application for a dispensing licence for the Sainsbury’s store. The store does potentially have space to house a pharmacy should it wish to add one in the future, but it would be subject to all the usual application processes nationally. Patients can, though, continue to fill prescriptions at the existing town pharmacies.

10. Will I have to come to the new medical centre to drop off my request for a repeat prescription?

You can ask any of the town’s pharmacies to manage your repeat prescription. That way, you do not have to drop off a request each time. Each practice has online and telephone arrangements in place that offer you a way to request repeat prescriptions.

11. How did the new facility get its name?

The three practices’ doctors chose Crouch Vale Medical Centre from a shortlist put forward by local residents following a public meeting on 9 January 2019.

12. Will the practices remain separate? Is it better for them to merge?

The practices will retain their individual identities for the time being, though Dr Suzanne Everett of Brickfields Surgery is retiring at the end of November 2019 and Drs Mathew and Krishnamurthy of Kingsway Surgery are now also Brickfields partners. All three practices

have already been working closely together and are discussing ways to make best use of the shared facility and resources at Crouch Vale Medical Centre.

13. Will there be separate receptions? Can I still see my own practice receptionist?

A single reception area on the ground floor welcomes patients from all three practices, with clear instructions on how patients from individual practice can check in on arrival. Reception staff will still be employed by their own practice and there is a 'virtual reception' for community health and care services on the first floor.

14. How will the phones be handled?

A telephone system has been installed that allows you to ring your own practice directly.

15. Whose appointment booking protocols will be used? Will there be any extra appointments or clinical staff?

All three practices will use their individual booking protocols. Local and national NHS schemes may help bring more clinical staff to the medical centre over time.

16. Will I still have my named GP or regular nurse?

Yes – you will still be registered with your own practice and can book appointments with your own GP, nurse or healthcare assistant.

17. Are all the staff from each of the surgeries being redeployed?

Staff moved with their own practices to the new premises – and they will continue to work for their existing practices.

18. How is staff morale?

Good – the staff are excited about the move.

19. Some patients have expressed serious concerns about accessing the new surgery. Has an agreement with local bus companies been reached regarding bus services? (See also question 30)

From 1 September 2019, First Bus will be operating a new "South Woodham Ferrers Zone" allowing residents to buy a "Zonal Ticket" at £2.50 for adults or £1.50 for children that will bring a half-hourly or hourly service between 8am and 7pm Monday to Saturday to all stops in the Zone (including the new development) except for Marsh Farm. These services will be extensions of the current 36, 36a, 94 and 94a services.

More details are available on the First Essex website:

- 36, 36A and 36B services – www.firstgroup.com/uploads/news-attach/Service%2036-36A-36B%20-%20Chelmsford_0.pdf
- 94 service – www.firstgroup.com/uploads/maps/Service_10_13_14_94_Basildon_WEB_Sept2018_0.pdf

Bus pass holders can continue to use their pass as usual. Discussions with First around an NHS staff discount and a bus information board inside the medical centre continue. The local NHS also plans to talk to the Dengie DaRT operator, the Chelmsford Community Transport charity and is reviewing footpath access.

20. Have plans progressed regarding a shuttle bus?

As modern buses have good disabled access, it is better to make use of existing bus operators' services and First Bus has made changes to its service noted in the answer to question 19 to serve the development including the new medical centre.

21. Will there be a pedestrian crossing from the Hullbridge Road side across the very busy A132 (Burnham Road)?

The light-controlled crossings near the centre were operational within days of the centre opening and will allow safer access to the site for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists alike. Essex Highways are still in touch with the NHS staff about local roads.

22. Will there be enough parking?

There are 38 dedicated parking spaces for staff and patients, compared with no allocated patient parking at all at two of the surgeries' former premises. The medical centre has a dedicated drop-off point and ambulance bay. There are also designated disabled bays.

Sainsbury's are also working with the NHS to ensure the rest of the site's car park can be used as effectively as possible for both medical centre and superstore users. There is likely to be a three-hour waiting limit in the car park to deter commuters from using it all day, though we would ask people intending to shop after a visit to the medical centre to move their car from there into the main Sainsbury's car park.

23. Will the level of funding remain the same at the new surgery?

All practices will retain their current level of funding. The move does not change their contractual or funding arrangements with the NHS.

24. Will the move have any implications for the community nurses, health visitors, and midwives?

The Community Nursing and Integrated Care Team and other NHS services offered by [Provide Community Interest Company](#) (CIC) will be based in the new building (see question 25).

Health Visitors will continue to work out of their current premises in Maldon as Essex County Council is responsible for this service now (and Virgin Care currently holds the contract).

25. Will the move have implications for the existing SWF Clinic in Merchant Street? Will there be any voluntary group services at Crouch Vale Medical Centre?

The following NHS services, all from [Provide CIC](#), have now moved to Crouch Vale Medical Centre:

- Sexual Health Service
- Physiotherapy
- Children's Speech and Language Therapy
- Audiology
- Assessments for autism
- Mid Essex ENT (ear, nose and throat) Service
- District Nursing / Integrated Care Team (ICT)

Other services formerly based at the clinic that also moved to Crouch Vale Medical Centre include:

- Phlebotomy (blood services)
- Mid Essex Hospital Trust (MEHT) orthoptist
- MEHT Eye Clinic
- [Essex Partnership University Trust](#) Learning Disabilities Team
- Community Learning Disability Team
- [Mid Essex Health in Mind](#) (IAPT) counselling service
- Essex Ultrasound
- [Hearing Help Essex](#)
- Age UK Toenail Cutting Service
- Type 2 Diabetes Support Group

26. Will there be economies of scale brought about by sharing back office support (rather than having three of everything) in the expectation that this will release resources to deliver additional healthcare services?

Yes. This will be on a small scale initially. The practices hope to be able to share some of the reception duties as well as other back office functions. Details of these are being worked through,

27. What scope will there be for additional healthcare services to be introduced at the new medical centre?

All three practices and NHS Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are exploring additional NHS services that could be provided in the future in line with the NHS [Long Term Plan](#). The CCG has received a number of suggestions from residents for services they would like to see at the medical centre and these will be considered.

Unfortunately, it may not be practical to implement some suggestions due to the availability of NHS staff or other logistical reasons.

28. How will the Extended Access to GP-led services at evenings, weekends and bank holidays work when the practices move?

An Extended Access hub offering Saturday appointments in South Woodham Ferrers between 8am and 2pm opened earlier this year and has now moved to the new medical centre. You can book these Saturday appointments in person at the medical centre or by telephoning reception.

29. How do the practices want the patient groups, patient representatives and other residents to be involved and what scope is there for their input?

Local patient groups have been involved in discussions with the GP practices about the medical centre's opening and our Patient Participation Groups kindly volunteered to help patients find their way around the new building when it opened. We are very grateful to all the volunteers who gave up time to do so.

30. Why doesn't the bus take us closer to the new building?

Unfortunately, it proved impractical to install a bus stop within the site, but the bus stop on Burnham Road should be roughly the same distance from Crouch Vale Medical Centre as the Sainsbury's development. The local NHS is talking to Essex Highways about whether crossing the road can be made even safer and the medical centre more accessible.

31. What resources and arrangements will be deployed to address the serious concerns which have been expressed by patients about the accessibility and location of the new health centre?

Along with the bus changes noted in the answer to question 19, there are disabled parking spaces in the site's car park. (Contractors incorrectly using these spaces on opening day were spoken to and parked elsewhere while finishing their work.)

Pedestrian crossings have also been installed and patients eligible for the NHS non-emergency patient transport service or home visits will still be able to access these services. Improvements to the roads around the medical centre site were carried out by Essex Highways.

A number of improvements are also being made to footpaths, bus routes and parking to ensure you can access the site on Burnham Road, which is 1 mile away (20 minutes' walk at a normal pace) from the current town centre. And Chelmsford Community Transport may also be able to help you – see chelmsfordct.org for details.

32. How will the local NHS monitor how easy it is for people to use the new centre? Will there be air quality monitoring? How will that monitoring be reviewed and acted on?

The practices and other NHS services in the new centre will be seeking patient feedback through the national 'NHS Friends and Family' test as well as through a suggestion box and contact details for NHS Mid Essex CCG's Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). Other ways to seek feedback from patients are being explored.

A post-project review will also be undertaken by the CCG and NHS England 12 months after occupation of the site, and the findings (including the raw data) will be shared with patient representatives prior to publication.

There are no plans to monitor air quality – all required regulations around environmental impact for the development have been met.

33. Have health and safety been considered in locating a petrol station near the medical centre site and around possible effects of local air quality, mobile phone signals from the nearby mast and fast-moving traffic? Was there a risk assessment before planning permission was granted?

The site plans were approved by Chelmsford City Council in line with its usual checks and procedures. The design, construction and operation of the petrol station have been reviewed by Local Planning Authorities and Petroleum Officers, as with similar facilities at other Sainsbury's stores. There is very little difference to a petrol station being collocated to a medical centre.

The mobile telephone mast near the new development meets the same legal standards as those close to other buildings around the country. The new crossing and roundabout layout near the site are designed to maximise road safety and air quality has not been raised as a potential concern during any stage of the planning process.

34. Were residents consulted on the plans for the new development? Will the practices and wider NHS pay attention to the feedback from residents in the survey results published online and in the SWF Focus in July 2019?

There was a robust consultation in 2014 including a two-and-a-half-day public exhibition to which all SWF households were invited by post and a survey about the development

received 930 responses of which 65.8% (930 responses) supported all or some of the development.

The NHS had no responsibility for the recent survey whose results were published in July 2019 and we are concerned that it might create false expectations among residents. The practices have to move into Crouch Vale Medical Centre as the current surgery premises are no longer fit for purpose.

Services currently based in the SWF Clinic were invited to move to Crouch Vale Medical Centre as noted in the answer to question 25 to offer more joined-up care for local patients.

For further information on the highways and transport plan for South Woodham Ferrers please follow [this link](#) (if you have an electronic version of the FAQ) or visit bit.ly/32paE8Q. Please see document reference SOCG20B – “Statement of Common Ground with Site Promoters of SWF”.

Useful contacts:

- **Essex Highways – phone 0345 603 7631, textphone: 0345 758 5592 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5pm)**
- **Chelmsford City Council Planning – phone 01245 606826**
- **NHS England – phone 0300 311 22 33 or email england.contactus@nhs.net**
- **Healthwatch Essex Information Line – phone 0300 500 1895 or email enquiries@healthwatchessex.org.uk**