

TITLE OF REPORT: Application to Consolidate Two Pharmacies in Ryton

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek the views of the Health & Wellbeing Board on an application to consolidate two pharmacies in Ryton.

Introduction

2. An application (PCC-201718-135) from Boots UK Limited to consolidate two pharmacies in Ryton has been received by NHS England. The two pharmacies are:
 - a) **2 Dean Terrace, Ryton NE40 3HQ**
 - b) **6 Elvaston Road Ryton NE40 3NT**
3. It is proposed that services will be provided from 2 Dean Terrace Ryton.
4. Paragraph 19(5), Schedule 2 of the NHS (Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013 (as amended) requires the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) to make representations on consolidation applications to NHS England, within 45 days of receipt of such notification.
5. Although NHS England suspended market entry and consolidation entries, due to the Coronavirus (Covid19) Pandemic, it was subsequently decided to proceed with this application and therefore requires a response from Gateshead HWB by 27th June 2020.

Background

6. Ryton is a small town in the west of the Borough of Gateshead, lying between Crawcrook and Blaydon. It has good transport links with the Newcastle/Gateshead conurbation with many of its population commuting there for work.
7. Currently there are 2 pharmacies in Ryton itself and a further 2 within the immediate locality all of which are contracted with NHSE to deliver a 40-hour service:
 - Boots: Dean Terrace, Ryton
 - Boots: Elvaston Road, Ryton
 - Lloyds: Pattinson Drive, Crawcrook, Ryton
 - Lloyds: Rockwoodhill Road, Greenside, Ryton
8. In addition there are neighbouring 40 hour pharmacies in Wylam, Winlaton and Blaydon.

9. The nearest 100 hour pharmacy in the Gateshead Borough is Well Pharmacy, Birtley (although Boots, Kingston Park Newcastle maybe equally accessible for residents in the West of the Borough).
10. The current direction of travel of NHS England is to encourage consolidation of closely located community pharmacies, to reduce the number of surplus pharmacies in England, provided the consolidation does not produce a gap in pharmaceutical services.

The Application

11. Boots UK has applied to close their pharmacy at 6 Elvaston Road, Ryton and move services to their store at 2 Dean Terrace, Ryton about 0.4miles away.
12. Both stores are contracted to deliver a 40 hour service and although both provide¹ more than these contracted hours, Dean Terrace currently provides longer opening hours: 8.30am-6pm weekdays and Saturday morning 9am-1pm, a total of 51.5 hours per week, whereas Elvaston Road provides a total of 41 hours per week; 9.30am-5pm weekdays and 9.30am-1pm Saturdays.
13. Dean Terrace is located (close to Grange Road Medical Practice) on the more major road running through Ryton whereas Elvaston Road is further down the hill, next door to Elvaston Road Surgery. There may be some concern raised by residents who live near to the Elvaston Road store and who are patients of the Elvaston Road surgery as they may find access to the Dean Terrace Store less convenient and possibly more difficult for those with limited mobility (up the hill).
14. There are plans to develop the premises at Dean Terrace by upgrading the upper floor to provide a dispensary for prescription items such as monitored dosage systems (weekly cassettes) which are largely currently supplied at the Elvaston Road premises. Work has yet to commence in the store for this development but current expectations are that the move to the newly refurbished store at Dean Terrace will be in September 2020. Proposals regarding the reallocation of staff either in the Dean Terrace branch or other Boots stores haven been discussed with the staff teams.
15. Both premises provide similar services including supervision of methadone/ buprenorphine consumption, stop smoking services, medicine reviews and minor ailment services. Neither service provides needle exchange. Although both premises are commissioned by Gateshead Council to provide emergency hormonal contraception services (EHC) in 2019/20, Dean Tce did 12 consultations, Elvaston did zero.
16. With regards to supervised consumption services, Dean Terrace and Elvaston Road currently support 13 and 4 clients respectively. Of particular note however, is that there have historically been clients who have been excluded from the Dean Terrace store and subsequently supported by the Elvaston Road store. Further assurance and clarification regarding the change of arrangements to ensure suitable and acceptable support is agreed between the clients, the pharmacy and the Gateshead Adult Recovery Service.

¹ Opening times taken from NHSE contract information, further interim changes due to pharmacy opening hours in response to Coronavirus (covid19) pandemic are not described in this review

17. Both premises are small, neither have wheelchair or step free access and both locations are difficult to park nearby. Each has a consultation room although both are equally small and difficult to access currently.
18. Patients will still have access to other providers of pharmacy services although not in Ryton town itself as described earlier in this summary.

Recommendation

19. The Director of Public Health recommends that the Health and Wellbeing Board supports the application to consolidate the two pharmacies in Ryton for the following reasons:
 1. The two sites are very closely located (0.4miles apart)
 2. As the Dean Terrace pharmacy has longer opening hours, patients will not experience a reduction in opening hours.
 3. Boots UK has undertaken to provide all services currently provided by both sites.
 4. Patients will still have choice of pharmacies within 2.0 miles (both operated by Lloyds – in Crawcrook and Greenside) and other stores within 3 miles (in Wylam, Winlaton and Blaydon)
 5. Gateshead Council PNA (2018) states that there is currently adequate provision of pharmaceutical services.
20. Consolidation of these two pharmacies would leave Ryton itself with only one pharmacy but with other pharmacy premises within 3 miles and a 100-hour pharmacy situated in Birtley (and also in Kingston Park, Newcastle upon Tyne).
21. It is important to recognise the role of pharmacies in seeking to address health inequalities and there is evidence of consideration regarding the possible impact experienced by the local community of proposed changes to service provision.
22. The Director of Public Health would like to see an undertaking from Boots that consideration be given to what mitigating action can be taken to better support people who have mobility issues given that neither of the two premises have wheelchair or step free access and that the consolidation of services to the Dean Terrace store may be more difficult for those with limited mobility to access due to the location (up the hill).
23. Assurance is required regarding the provision of commissioned services including supervised consumption with evidence of agreed solutions discussed with the service providers to ensure sustained support and safety both of clients, patients and staff.
24. In addition, assurance is required regarding the continuing hours of availability of pharmacy services in Ryton as a result of this consolidation to ensure that the local population have continued access to services as per the current service provision.
25. The Director of Public Health would like to see an undertaking from Boots UK that it will adequately staff the consolidated pharmacy to ensure that the NHS vision of better use of the pharmacist workforce is delivered. Also, that sufficient support

staff are employed to ensure that patient safety is not compromised by the increase in workload.

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