

# Application to Close Branch Surgery Premises

St Albans Medical Group (Bede Centre Branch)

October 2016

## 1. Applicant – St Alban’s Medical Group

This application is being made by Drs Georgina Butler, Emily Raine and James Taylor, partners of St Alban’s Medical Group delivering primary care services through a GMS contract. The reasoning behind this application is twofold:

- Safety & Quality – as a consequence of acute staffing shortages and inability to recruit permanent medical staff.
- Financial – as a consequence of increased operational costs and contractual funding reductions.

St Albans Medical Group operates in a largely deprived area covering the East of Gateshead. The practice has a list size of 8,466 patients, with a weighted list size of 10,290.

The practice operates from the main site in Felling Health Centre, Stephenson Terrace, Felling NE10 9QA and a branch surgery at the Bede Centre, Old Fold Road, Gateshead NE10 0DJ located one mile from the main health centre site in Felling.

The practice converted from a PMS contract to a GMS contract in 2015. This decision was taken to safeguard the viability and sustainability of the practice in the long-term. It was deemed that a GMS contract would provide greater security for the partners delivering the service.

The practice currently has no permanent Practice Manager and is being supported by a team of Managers from Gateshead Community Based Care (CBC) – the GP federation in Gateshead.

A recent CQC inspection report identified that the practice ‘Requires Improvement’. Areas of concern included infection control, quality and management. A remedial action plan is being worked through with intensive support from Gateshead CBC.

NHS England have also recognised the vulnerability of the practice and have supported the practice through the Vulnerable Practice Scheme (May 2016).

## 2. Branch Surgery Site

The Bede Centre was opened in 2007 and has operated as a branch surgery. The original case for additional funding to support the Bede Centre was made under the PMS contract. The PMS contract growth monies supported the on-going running of the Bede Centre.

At the time of the opening of Bede, there was an acute shortage of space within the main site, Felling Health Centre. The health centre has recently undergone major refurbishment and redevelopment and has provided additional clinical space.

## 3. Dispensing arrangements

The practice is not a dispensing practice therefore there are no issues to note.

## 4. Business Justification for Proposed Closure

### 4.1 Service Access & Usage

Audit of patient attendances has identified a cohort of 105 patients who regularly use the Bede Centre. This represents 1.2% of the total registered list. These patients were the primary focus of detailed patient consultation.

### 4.2 Contractual

The change from PMS contract to GMS contract effectively removed the inflated contractual payments per head of registered population. This funding was used to support the Bede service financially, clinically and administratively.

The increased service charges that practices face places a significant financial threat to the practice. This is summarised as follows:

- Felling Health Centre – £17,201 to £40,859
- Bede Centre - £4,935 to £32,123

### 4.3 List Size Growth

It was anticipated that the growth in practice list size as a consequence of the location of Bede as a branch site would increase significantly allowing this to be a more sustainable business proposition. However, this has not been realised and the list size growth has been nowhere near anticipated.

#### 4.4 Medical Staffing

Recruitment and retention of GPs – several factors are affecting the practice’s ability to deliver clinical services. There have been several changes in GP personnel including the resignation of one full-time partner and a reduction in clinical sessions from part-time salaried GPs. The current number of vacant clinical sessions is 12. Recruitment is in progress but there has been a locality shortage of GPs. Work is underway to remodel the clinical workforce in order to skill mix the team with the addition of pharmacists and nurse practitioners.

#### 4.5 Lone Working

As a consequence of staffing issues, members of staff are often lone working and therefore a risk assessment has deemed the site as high risk.

#### 4.6 Clinical Effectiveness

Economies of scale – rationalising the service to the main site will be more clinically effective leading to improved patient care, and also more cost effective securing the long-term viability of the practice.

#### 4.7 Training Practice Status

Maintaining training practice status – in order to maintain accreditation as a training practice, the consolidation within a single site will allow the clinical team to be more effective, reduce dilution of clinical staff over two sites and provide a clinically supportive environment conducive to training.

## 5. Summary of Patient Involvement

An engagement process has been running between June and October 2016.

The following stakeholders have been consulted and notified of this proposed branch closure:

<b>Stakeholder Group</b>	<b>Date of Engagement</b>
Patients - household letter	July 2016
Patients – face-to-face consultation meeting x2	19 July 2016 & 4 October 2016
Practice staff – regular team meetings	On-going
Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group	On-going
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11 August 2016 (initial email contact) Meeting - 1 November 2016
Neighbouring Practices – Crowhall Medical Group	July 2016
Community Services	4 October 2016
Boots Pharmacy – Felling Health Centre & Bede Centre	4 October 2016
Health Watch	4 October 2016
Local Council (Councillor Weatherley)	10 August 2016

## 6. Summary of Patient Feedback

The feedback that has been received from the patient consultation events and from comments direct to the practice have been themed into the categories listed below. A total of 30 members of the public attended two public meetings (one lunchtime meeting, one evening meeting).

### 6.1 Ease of Access/Convenience

The location of the Bede Centre is convenient for residents in the immediate local area. These were particularly in relation to young and elderly patients. For people who live in the immediate area they felt the Bede Centre was accessible and convenient.

### 6.2 Transport

One theme that emerged (6 direct comments) related to transport facilities. There is a bus service that runs between the Bede Centre and Felling, however the location of the bus stop means that people had to walk up a hill to the health centre. This has been raised with Nexus who have agreed to conduct a site survey with a view to locating an additional bus stop at the top of the hill at Stephenson Crescent.

During the consultation process it was also discovered that there is a local service that offers transport (telephone booking) to elderly patients. This service will be publicised by the practice for those patients who may be eligible.

### 6.3 Pharmacy

Boots Pharmacy has an outlet located in the Bede Centre and patients find this convenient. The Practice is able to send prescriptions electronically to the pharmacy which will continue if the application to close is approved.

### 6.4 Parking

Two comments were received in relation to parking facilities at Felling Health Centre. There are a range of parking options around the health centre. There is a main car park which is used by staff and patients. There are also short-term parking spaces at the side of the road which is accessible for patients visiting the health centre.

## 7. Other Issues for Consideration

### 7.1 Bede Centre Lease

There is no signed lease in place for the practice's occupation of the Bede Centre. The centre is owned by Gateshead Council and managed by NHS Estates. It is not known what notice period would be required on the Bede Centre. This information has been requested and we await receipt.

### 7.2 Capacity at Felling Health Centre

A review of the accommodation at Felling Health Centre has concluded that there the accommodation and rescheduling of the appointment system is adequate to meet patient demand.

A review of the accommodation at Felling Health Centre was undertaken in February 2016 as a consequence of the flooding at the Bede Centre. At this point clinical sessions delivered at Bede were incorporated into the Felling schedule.

### 7.3 Availability of Appointments/Improved Access

The introduction of a revised appointment system and effective utilisation of skill mix in the practice will improve access for patients.

Improved access – consolidating service and clinical delivery into one site will allow us to improve the current appointment system utilising skills across the primary healthcare team, providing greater patient access. The introduction of telephone appointments will improve access to patients unable to attend in person at the surgery.

### 7.4 Additional and Enhanced Services

In addition to the core contract the Practices provides the following additional services:

#### Direct Enhanced Services

Learning Disabilities  
Avoiding Unplanned Admissions  
Child Immunisation  
Drug Misuse  
Extended Hours  
Minor Surgery

#### Local Service Level Agreements

Androgen Injection - PSA  
Anti-coagulation  
Care Home Retainer  
Care Home Reviews

Denesomab  
Diabetic Initiation of Injection  
Osteoporosis  
Near Patient Testing

#### 7.5 Opening Hours

The Practice is contracted to provide services between 8.00am and 6.30pm.

#### 7.6 Extended Hours

Through a Direct Enhanced Service (DES) the Practice provides 5.3 hours of additional clinical sessions.

##### 7.7.1 Staffing

There are no staff redundancies planned. There are no TUPE transfer issues to consider. Administrative staff who were based at the Bede Centre will be incorporated into the wider team based at Felling Health Centre. Consolidation of staff into a single site will make more efficient use of clinical resources and provide the opportunity to develop the skill mix from a broader range of staff (e.g. nurse practitioners and clinical pharmacists).

#### 7.8 IT Requirements

No discussions or costs have been agreed to decommission or relocate IT. This will be conducted in partnership with NECS pending the outcome of the proposed closure.

#### 7.9 Quality & Outcomes Framework

There are no issues identified relating to QoF performance. If patients choose to leave and register elsewhere the overall prevalence of chronic diseases may reduce. We wouldn't anticipate this would be to an extent that would adversely affect the financial viability and financial position of the practice.

#### 7.10 Home Visit Policy

The Practice has a policy for home visiting the housebound or people who are too ill to attend the surgery. This policy will not change. However, patients are encouraged to attend the surgery wherever possible as the GPs have access to a greater range of equipment at the health centre.

#### 7.10 CQC

Consolidating the service and delivery of services from a single site will support the improvements identified by CQC.

#### 7.11 Primary Care Web Tool

No detrimental issues have been identified.

#### 7.12 Active breaches

There are no active contractual breaches that have been served from NHS England.



## 8. Proposed Closure Date

The Bede Centre flooded in February 2016 which resulted in the practice withdrawing all services. Due to the staffing shortages the service has not resumed. No complaints have been received and patients have accessed services at Felling Health Centre from February 2016.

## 9. Patient Registration & Choice of Practice

Patients have choice about the GP practice that they register with. The following local practices operate within the vicinity of the Bede Centre:

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Distance from Bede Centre</b>
Crowhall Medical Practice Felling Health Centre	1.0 miles (4 minutes) drive 16 minute bus journey (every 12 minutes)
Bridges Medical Practice Trinity Health Centre 24 West Street Trinity Square Gateshead NE8 1AD	1.4 miles (6 minutes) drive 15 minute bus journey (every 12 minutes)
Millennium Family Practice Trinity Health Centre 24 West Street Trinity Square Gateshead NE8 1AD	1.4 miles (6 minutes) drive 15 minute bus journey (every 12 minutes)
Central Gateshead Medical Group Prince Consort Road Gateshead NE8 1NB	1.4 miles (5 minutes) drive
Longrigg Medical Centre Leam Lane Estate Gateshead NE10 8PH	2.2 miles (7 minutes) drive

## 10. Practice Declaration

### St Albans Medical Group – GP Partners

Partner	Signature	Date
Dr Georgina Butler		
Dr Emily Raine		
Dr James Taylor		