

**Paper for the Kent Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)
from NHS England (Kent and Medway)**

**Future of services at Dover Medical Practice, Dover Health Centre,
Maison Dieu Road, Dover, CT16 1RH**

1. Background

The Dover Medical Practice is managed by the medical group Concordia Health Limited, which is contracted by NHS England to provide care to patients at the surgery under an Alternative Provider Medical Services (APMS) contract. The contract commenced on 1 December 2011 for a period of five years.

Concordia Health recently informed NHS England that they would not be able to guarantee the continued provision of services to patients at Dover Medical Practice for the duration of their contract and therefore requested that the contract be brought to an end on 30 November. Having given careful consideration to this request, and in order to ensure sustainable arrangements for the future care of patients registered at the surgery, NHS England agreed to Concordia Health's request.

2. Practice Profile

Dover Medical Practice is located on the ground floor of the Dover Health Centre, a multi-purpose healthcare facility within central Dover. The building is owned and managed by NHS Property Services Limited.

As at April 2014, the practice had 3,712 registered patients.

The surgery treats a range of different patients from across the local community. A significant proportion of patients registered at the practice do not have English as their first language and some patients do not speak English. A breakdown of patient demographics at the practice is shown at **Appendix 1**.

GP practices which have the capacity to treat more patients are required to accept new patients who live within their local catchment area. Practices also have discretion about whether to accept any patients who do not fall within their surgery boundary.

The catchment area for Dover Medical Practice is shown at **Appendix 2** as attached. **Appendix 3** then shows the geographic spread of patients registered at the practice.

3. Context

The APMS contract includes some nationally agreed core elements. This includes provision for either the provider, or the commissioner of the service (in this case NHS England) to end the contract early providing the required notice period of at least six months is served.

After Concordia Health gave notice of its intention to end its contract with NHS England for the provision of services at Dover Medical Centre, both parties agreed to an end date of 30 November 2014 in order to meet the requirements of the contract and allow sufficient time for alternative arrangements to be made for the care of patients registered at the practice.

4. Options

NHS England wrote to all patients registered at the practice and other local stakeholders on 18 June 2014, to seek their views on the two options available to NHS England to ensure the continued provision of local GP services to patients.

Further information about these two options and the potential implications of each option are detailed below.

4.1 Option 1: Ask patients to register with an alternative local GP practice

This option would allow the practice to close once the current contract ends on 30 November 2014 and for arrangements to be put in place to support patients to register with an alternative local GP surgery of their choice (providing they live within the boundary of their chosen GP practice).

4.1.1 Implications for patients

If this option were taken, patients registered at Dover Medical Centre would be provided with a list of alternative local GP practices to help them choose a new GP surgery. Information provided to patients would include addresses and contact details for other local practices, as well as the distance in miles from Dover Medical Practice for each alternative local surgery. Patients would also be advised that they could find additional information about alternative local practices and how close they live to them on the NHS Choices website at www.nhs.uk.

Alternatively, are also able to call the Kent Primary Care Agency to find out which local GP surgeries are in their area and the relevant contact details would be made available to patients if this option was taken.

Under the terms of the nationally agreed core contract for the provision of GP services, GP practices can accept new patients if their list of patients is 'open' (eg if they have capacity to treat more patients). Practices must accept new patients who live within their practice boundary if they have an 'open' list, but can also accept patients who live outside the surgery catchment area should they wish to do so.

As at 7 July 2014, all GP practices in the Dover area have open lists and can therefore accept new patients.

NHS England is aware that some concerns have been raised locally about whether other local practices would provide translation services to patients who do not speak English, a number of whom are currently registered at Dover Medical Centre.

Under the nationally agreed GP contract, GP surgeries cannot refuse to register patients on the grounds of an applicant's race, gender, social class, age, religion, sexual orientation, appearance, disability or medical condition. Practices cannot therefore refuse a registration request on the basis that a patient has need of an interpreter.

We are investigating concerns that some practices in Dover are not providing access to an interpreting service for patients.

It is important that all local practices meet the needs of patients and their local communities and we are working to raise awareness of the importance of interpreting services (which are

funded by NHS England) amongst local surgeries. We will take appropriate action if it is found that practices are not meeting the needs of patients.

NHS England will continue to work to ensure that the needs of all patients registered at Dover Medical Practice including any vulnerable patients, can continue to be met after 30 November.

4.1.2 Implications for other local GP practices

The CT16 postcode, where the majority of patients registered with Dover Medical Practice live, is covered by a range of alternative local GP practices in the town. These are:

- Pencester Health (also located within Dover Health Centre)
- Pencester Surgery (on Pencester Road)
- St James' Surgery (on Harold Street)
- Buckland Medical Centre (at Brookfield Place)
- The High Street Surgery (on the High Street) and Branch (in Whitfield)
- Peter Street Surgery (on Peter Street)
- White Cliffs Medical Centre (on Folkestone Road)

In addition a number of patients to the north of the boundary would be covered by the Lydden Surgery (on Canterbury Road).

Discussions have taken place with these practices regarding their ability to accept new patients should NHS England need to ask patients to register with an alternative local surgery. The discussions with the practices have included reference to levels of patient access, staff numbers and building capacity for each of their surgeries in order to seek assurance about their ability to welcome new patients.

This has included initial discussions with Pencester Health given the surgery shares the same building as the Dover Medical Practice. The assumption therefore is that most patients would seek to register with this surgery first as an alternative to Dover Medical Practice. The discussions with Pencester Health have included consideration of their ability to take on a large number of patients from Dover Medical Practice and the potential to reconfigure their accommodation within Dover Health Centre and to increase the number of clinical and administrative staff at the surgery to manage this. We are currently awaiting further information from Pencester Health about this and discussions with other local practices are also ongoing.

It is acknowledged that a proportion of the patients registered at Dover Medical Practice are perceived by other local practices as having greater needs than other patients, particularly in relation to interpreting services and learning disabilities.

However information available from Concordia Health and staff currently working at Dover Medical Practice shows that appointments where an interpreter is required to support patient care do not impact upon access to appointments for other patients. Data provided by Concordia Health shows that on average 6.8% of appointments per week require an interpreter to be available, but all appointments are able to be managed within the standard ten minute timeframe for patient consultations (although longer appointment slots can be booked where clinically necessary).

As confirmed above, we have been made aware of concerns that some Dover practices are not providing patients with access to interpreting services or are referring them on to the Dover Medical Practice, advising that they are not able to register patients who need interpretation services. These concerns will be investigated fully and action taken where necessary to ensure no patients is being discriminated against.

4.1.3 Implications for other services provided at Dover Health Centre

The essential provision of other services within Dover Health Centre will remain unchanged regardless of the decision that NHS England makes regarding the future care of patients registered at Dover Medical Practice.

As noted above, there is the potential to reconfigure use of the rooms within the health centre pending further discussions with Pencester Health about their ability to register patients from Dover Medical Centre if needed. However this would have no detrimental impact on other services provided in the building.

NHS Property Services will also work with the local NHS to agree a new use for the space should discussions with Pencester Health not progress; however the space would remain for NHS use.

4.2 Option 2: Identify a new provider to deliver GP services to Dover Medical Practice's patients from the existing premises

4.2.1. Implications for patients registered at Dover Medical Practice

If this option were chosen, patients registered with Dover Medical Practice would continue to access GP services from the existing premises of Dover Health Centre. Patients would not be required to re-register with an alternative local practice; however they would retain the right to do so if they so wished.

4.2.2 Implications for other local practices

Whilst patients would retain the right to register at an alternative GP surgery, local practices would be unlikely to see a significant increase in registration requests if the Dover Medical Practice remained at Dover Health Centre, with an open list.

4.2.3 Implications for other services provided at Dover Health Centre

As noted above, the provision of other services in Dover Health Centre will remain unchanged regardless of the decision that NHS England makes regarding the future care of patients registered at Dover Medical Practice.

5. Engagement

NHS England is continuing its engagement process with patients and local stakeholders on the above options in order to determine how best to ensure ongoing care for patients currently registered at Dover Medical Practice.

The following activities have been undertaken to date:

- **18 June 2014:** Letters sent to patients registered at Dover Medical Practice to seek their views on the two options available for the future of services

- **18 June 2014:** Letters sent to other local stakeholders seeking views on the two options (including other local GP practices, NHS South Kent Coast Clinical Commissioning Group, Kent HOSC, the Kent Health and Wellbeing Board, Kent Healthwatch, Dover Town Council, Charlie Elphicke MP and the Kent Local Medical Committee)
- **25 June 2014:** NHS England held a meeting with the Dover Medical Practice Patient Participation Group to seek their views on the two options
- **Currently being arranged:** A meeting is also due to take place between NHS England, local GP practices, NHS South Kent Coast Clinical Commissioning Group and the Kent Local Medical Committee to help further determine the ability of other local surgeries to accept patients from Dover Medical Practice, if necessary.

The engagement process will conclude on 25 July 2014. NHS England will then consider all factors (including the views of patients and the local community) in reaching a decision about how to provide ongoing care for patients registered at the Dover Medical Practice.

In reaching this decision we will prioritise the need to achieve quality of care and improved health outcomes for local patients.

NHS England will update the Kent HOSC, patients registered at the practice and other local stakeholders once a decision has been made.

James Thallon
Medical Director

Appendix 1: Patient Demographics

The practice population is almost equally divided between male (49%) and female (51%) patients.

The percentage split by age range:

0-16yrs - 33%
16-30yrs - 21%
31-50yrs - 29%
51-70yrs - 13%
Over 70yrs - 4%

The practice has a number of groups of patients with particular needs, represented as a percentage of the practice population, as follows:

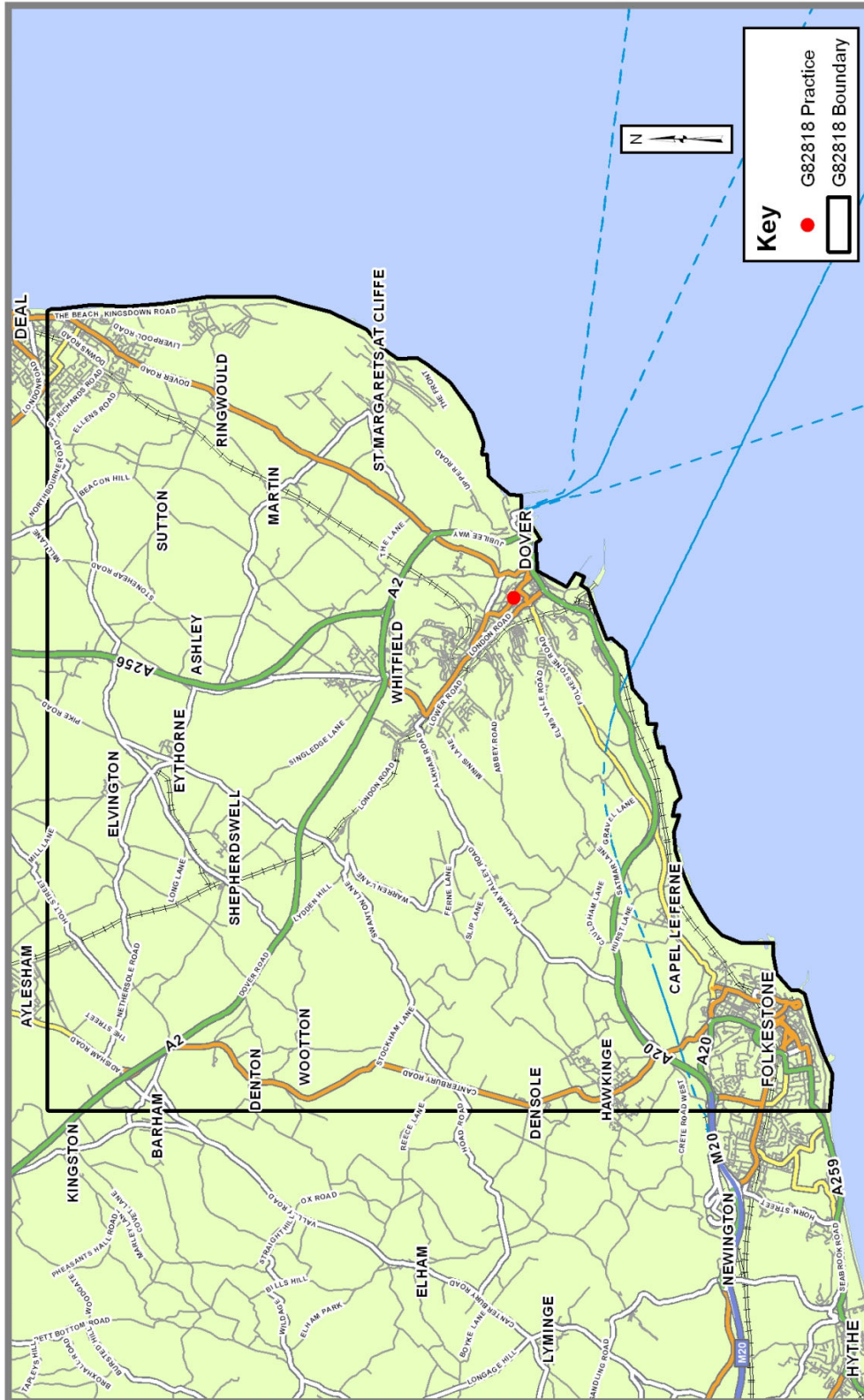
Patients who misuse alcohol - 7%
Drug abusers - 1.5%
Patients with a learning disability - 2%
Patients with a mental health condition - 4.5%

The ethnicity of the practice population is varied, mostly made up of ethnic minorities with a large Eastern European profile. The top five languages spoken amongst patients are:

English - 37%
Czech/Slovak - 27.2%
Nepali - 14%
Polish - 10%
Russian/Lithuanian - 7%

Appendix 2: Practice boundary

Dover Medical Centre (PCT Managed) - G82818
Location of practice - catchment area



Appendix 3: Patient distribution

