

Frequently asked questions (FAQ) following 6 week Consultation Period

TRANSPORT & ACCESSIBILITY

1. As the bus service is so infrequent if patients need to wait for a bus after an appointment could a shelter or waiting provision be provided to avoid people having to wait unprotected in all weathers?

There is a shelter at the bus stop closest to the Practice by Eyemouth Community Centre (Albert Road). In addition there is a shelter at the bus stop next to the Co-Operative Food Store on the High Street.

2. How do we access community transport and is there a cost for this service?

Community Transport is available to anyone in the community who cannot access transport. As the service is provided through volunteers people are asked to book with as much notice as possible. There is a charge for this service which will be discussed at the time of booking. To book Community Transport please call 0300 456 1985.

3. There are insufficient/limited parking spaces at Eyemouth for patients. Is there anything that could be done to improve this?

There are two designated disabled car parking spaces, one duty GP parking space and one duty community nursing space which are protected in case of the need to attend an emergency, and a further 16 car parking spaces for general use. These spaces are shared with the Day Hospital, Community Centre, Registrar's office and Seashells nursery. Staff working in the health centre are aware of the limited car parking provision and are encouraged to use alternative parking in the vicinity of the health centre site. Unfortunately there is no scope to create additional car parking spaces within the site footprint.

APPOINTMENT AVAILABILITY

4. There is already an issue with having to wait for an appointment with a GP at Eyemouth Medical Practice. Will this just cause the waits to become longer?

The team in Eyemouth Medical Practice are working to try to provide as responsive a service as possible to their registered patients. However due to challenges associated to finding new GPs following the retirements of three GPs and the departure of two further GPs, along with similar issues for other clinical staff in the team, despite the best efforts of the practice to expand the clinical workforce, this has reduced the amount of consulting time available for patients in the practice.

As noted below, Eyemouth Medical Practice is not alone in this position, and unfortunately there are a range of vacancies across a number of GP practices in the Borders and across other rural parts of Scotland. Due to the current situation across Scotland, NHS Borders plans to commence work to GP sustainability shortly.

Because all patient contacts have been taking place at the Health Centre in Eyemouth since the onset of the pandemic there will be no impact on waiting times for an appointment. Every time a patient needs an appointment currently, the first conversation with a clinician takes place over the phone and this will continue for the foreseeable future. If a patient is calling about an urgent issue they will be phoned back by a clinician on the same day. If a face to face appointment is deemed necessary, the practice is currently offering approximately 85% of these appointments on the same day. For routine appointments, if a patient asks for a named doctor the wait is currently between five and six weeks which reduces to between four and five weeks if patients are happy to see the first available clinician. As a result of recent changes to procedures, more patients are accessing same day clinical advice now than before the pandemic. If GPs do not have to travel several times a week to Coldingham to undertake administrative tasks, this will release

additional time for clinical duties. In accordance with national developments, General Practice now consists of a multidisciplinary team and often assistance can be provided by healthcare professionals (such as physiotherapists, pharmacists and psychologists) without the need to consult with a GP.

5. As the bus service is very infrequent can the practice ensure appointments are given to Coldingham patients based on the bus timetable to avoid long waits before and after appointments?

There is now greater flexibility to offer appointments at a time to suit patients due to the new way of working with all initial clinical contact being over the phone. So if a patient requires a face to face appointment and relies on public transport the practice staff will be happy to accommodate this as far as is possible.

6. The GPs only appear to work part time - can they not extend their working hours?

The GP Partners and all the staff at Eyemouth Medical Practice work exceptionally hard to provide a service to the people of the community, in the context of a reduced workforce due to recruitment issues.. Partners and staff also have families and personal commitments. Working patterns are a matter for individual negotiation as flexibility will often improve recruitment and help to retain experienced team members. It is also important to remember that there is a significant workload which is not patient facing with clinicians regularly working late and at weekends to meet demand and keep up with workload.

7. Why is there such a challenge in the recruitment and retention of staff? Could incentives not be offered to recruit to the area?

The Practice encourages personal development and some staff have moved on to promoted posts or other development opportunities. There has also been a recent spell of scheduled retirements. The recruitment crisis in relation to the national shortage of GPs, Pharmacy Staff and other healthcare staff is not unique to Eyemouth or indeed the Borders – it is impacting on general practice across the UK. Further information can be found [here](#). The Partners are currently advertising for a second Advanced Nurse Practitioner and an additional GP. These posts have been advertised for a number of weeks now with very limited interest being shown; which is in common with other Practices in similar remote and rural locations across Scotland.

8. Can I switch to a different Practice (e.g. Dunbar?)

To register with a GP Practice you are required to live within the Practice boundary area of the Practice you wish to register with. There are currently restrictions on the movement of patients between practices due to Covid-19. All practices are currently following this Scottish Government guidance which states that practices are not obliged to accept patients who are already registered with a GP in their area.

For more information on registering with a GP please visit NHS Inform <https://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/nhs-services/doctors/registering-with-a-gp-practice>

ACCOMMODATION

9. You say that the Coldingham surgery is not fit for modern general practice, why is this when there was a refurbishment in recent years?

Although 2017, when the second consulting room was added to the Coldingham branch surgery, does not seem that long ago, modern general practice has changed since then. The building does not have adequate access for people with disabilities and it cannot accommodate bariatric patients. Nor is it sufficient in size to be able to accommodate social distancing measures as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

10. You say that one of the reasons is that there is lone working and that is a safety issue. Why can't

security measures be put in place especially with new technology available?

There are security measures in place which include CCTV cameras and panic buttons. However lone working presents too much of a risk for staff; and following two break-ins there is understandably heightened anxiety. Risk assessments have been undertaken and the risks cannot be mitigated without a second member of staff being on site which is not feasible.

11. Coldingham and surrounding area are increasing in population so why close a practice that will be needed more in future years?

The Practice is not closing. Should the Board of NHS Borders decide that the Coldigham Branch surgery is unsustainable, medical services will continue to be provided to the population from the Health Centre in Eyemouth.

12. Could volunteers help at Coldingham to support practice staff?

We appreciate the offer of support from the community in relation to providing volunteers to support staff safety. The roles that need support to be carried out though are trained dispensers and GPs; both of which are trained professional roles so volunteers would not solve the problems in this situation.

PHARMACY & DISPENSING

13. I'm aware that the Eyemouth pharmacy is already very busy. How will these additional patients affect the wait for prescriptions?

No concerns have been raised about the ability to meet additional demand. The practice will work with local pharmacies to look at ways of reducing the impact on patients. This may involve the use of what are termed 'serial prescriptions' where the practice issue a prescription for up to 12 months to suitable patients. This enables people to collect 28 or 56 days of medicines at a time.

14. Will my local Pharmacy provide a delivery service to Coldingham patients for dispensed medicines?

Your local pharmacy may offer a delivery service of dispensed medicines to people who require it. As this service is not funded by the NHS and is paid for by the pharmacy themselves, you should contact your local pharmacy to discuss this with them. Pharmacies ask that patients only use delivery services where they have no other means of obtaining their dispensed medicines.

15. Previously we have been able to collect prescriptions at our local shop/post office. Will this service be retained?

Eyemouth Pharmacy (George Romanes Pharmacy) has informed us that it is their intention to continue their current arrangement, however please contact your local pharmacy directly to discuss how you can obtain your dispensed medicines if you or someone you nominate are unable to collect them in person. We would always encourage medicines to be collected directly from a pharmacy wherever possible as this provides the best opportunity for pharmacy staff to offer you advice on how to use your medicines and answer any questions you may have.

16. How close to Coldingham are the nearby pharmacies that you mention?

- Eyemouth Pharmacy - 3.0 miles
- Chirnside Pharmacy - 6.3 miles
- Duns Pharmacy - 10.4 miles
- Lloyds Pharmacy, Dunbar and Aitken Pharmacy, Dunbar - 15.8 miles,

There are other Pharmacies in Berwick Upon Tweed. Due to these being in England patients should note that they may not be able to access the same services as if they visited a pharmacy in Scotland. Some Scottish residents may need to pay for their prescriptions if they are dispensed in an English Pharmacy.

- Boots, Lloyds and Castlegate Pharmacies, Berwick Upon Tweed Centre - 12.8 miles

- Lloyds Pharmacy, Union Brae, Berwick Upon Tweed - 13.3 miles
 - Tesco Pharmacy, Berwick Upon Tweed - 15.0 miles
- (This information has been sourced from [NHS Inform](#) and Google Maps)

17. How will patients be informed of where their prescription will be dispensed?

By default, the practice will transfer dispensing patient's prescriptions to Eyemouth Pharmacy. Further details will follow in due course and will be available on the practice website. Practice staff will assist patients where possible to make suitable arrangements to use whichever pharmacy they wish to. However, patients should note that only the Romanes pharmacies (Eyemouth, Chirnside and Duns) collect prescriptions from the practice. Patients will need to collect paper prescriptions from the practice should they wish to use alternative community pharmacies.

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