

Notes Alloa Community Council arranged meeting about the Plans for the Dr Stirling Practice and partners, Alloa Town Hall 27-03-2018

Chair Jennie Syme Alloa Community Council
Cathie Cowan, Chief Executive, NHS Forth Valley
Dr Stuart Cumming, GP and Associate Medical Director for Community Health Services, NHS Forth Valley
Mr Andrew Murray, Medical Director, NHS Forth Valley

Introduction

The meeting started with the NHS staff explaining that the GP practice was a private business and that many of the partners are retiring. In general across the health system, many of the Nurses and GPs are over 50 and along with the ageing population, this is putting a strain on GP practices. In the past about 50% of medical students graduating moved to become GPs. Now it is about 15%. Although the practice will be taken over by the NHS, they will continue to advertise the practice as a vacant practice should a group of doctors want to take it over.

Themes and questions

Transfer of some patients

There are about 8,500 patients registered with Dr Stirling and Partners and the plan is to reduce this down to about 6,000 to match the capacity of the new workforce currently being recruited. The majority of the existing patients will stay however some patients (around 2000 – 2,500) will be re-registered with other GP practices, mainly the other two GP practices in Clackmannanshire Community Healthcare Centre and the Clackmannan & Kincardine Medical Practice. This will be based on postcode so that patients don't have to travel further and, in many cases, will be registered with a Practice nearer to where they live. Households and families will be kept together and the needs of more vulnerable patients and those with more complex health needs will also be taken into account. NHS Forth Valley is working with local practices to review their patient lists, finalise numbers to enable them to contact patients over the next few weeks.

Who will be transferred

Health have maps that we asked them to share, but letters are likely to be sent out first, starting soon and extended over several weeks. The new practices will be practices within the Clacks Health Centre as well as practices further afield like Kincardine, Alva and Tullibody. Folk were keen that the receiving practice did not get over loaded and there was talk of different models of care.

Transfer of records

As GP records are electronic, these can be transferred to other practices with 24 hours given the systems used.

Staff

With the reduced size of the practice, there will be three full time evident GPs. The public were keen that there was a mix of genders, age and experience among the GPs. There was also talk from the health staff about nurse practitioners, practice nurses, Mental Health Nurses, a physiotherapist, as not everyone needs to see a GP. The team of allied professionals need to work well together and use their expertise. Often the Mental Health nurses will know more about their subject than a General Practitioner. Staff will be trained in triage to help direct the customer to the best professional to deal with their issues.

It is expected that many of the existing clinics will continue. For example Asthma and Diabetics.

In reply to a question from the audience NHS said that Health Visitors are independent of the practices.

Appointment System

There were several comments about the appointment system and clearly getting through to the practice is a problem for many.

There should be more phone lines put in and more staff to answer the calls.

The Whins medical practice uses an on line system and this was popular.

Many of the problems in getting appointments could be down to the shortage of staff at Dr Stirling and partners practice.

Triage was also mentioning this context.

Patient choice and customer relations

Although FV NHS would prefer to let folk choose which practice they join, the concern for the patients safety was more important, hence the need to move folk to different practices. Alloa Community Council hosted the event as we knew our local community was concerned and we will continue to work with Health to pass on information. FV NHS will write up a press release so there will be details in the Alloa Advertiser, as well as on Alloa Community Council's Facebook, Twitter and Web site. More public consultation and customer forums were mentioned several times and FV NHS will take on board these comments. With at least 160 folk attending the meeting it is clear that the patients of the Dr Stirling practice want to know what is happening.

Thank you and Conclusion

Thank you to the FV NHS staff who spent their evening informing the public of Alloa what their plans were for the practice and a special thank you to Dr Stirling himself for attending the meeting and adding to the debate. The greatest applause of the night was when folk thanked Dr Stirling and Partners for looking after their patients so well over many years.