

27 September 2017

## **Expiry of GP contract: Wickford Health Centre (SEMC) Questions and Answers**

### **What's happening with my GP practice?**

NHS England is proposing to not renew the contract for services at your GP practice when it expires. If this proposal goes ahead, your GP practice will close and you would need to register with another practice.

### **Will the Wickford Health Centre building be closing?**

No. The Wickford Health Centre houses two GP practices – the service provided by South Essex Managed Care (SEMC) Ltd at your GP practice and the Swanwood Surgery.

This proposal will not see the Wickford Health Centre building close. The building will remain open, as will Swanwood Surgery, and NHS England is working with the landlord on plans for a refurbishment of the site in the future.

### **What's happening with the contract?**

The contract held by SEMC Ltd for services at your GP practice in the Wickford Health Centre is coming to the end of its term and will expire on 31 January 2018.

SEMC has a five year time-limited contract to provide primary care services. The contract has been in operation since 2013 and therefore is due to expire on 31 January 2018.

NHS England is proposing to not re-procure this contract when it expires.

### **Why is this happening?**

NHS England and NHS Basildon and Brentwood Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have been reviewing the future plans for your practice located in Wickford Health Centre. As you may be aware, two practices currently operate from Wickford Health Centre. These are Swanwood Surgery and your practice, run by SEMC. There is also the London Road Surgery in close proximity.

NHS England and NHS Basildon and Brentwood CCG are looking to bring together and strengthen GP services in the Wickford area by developing practices that have larger list sizes and long term contracts. This approach will ensure that GP services are more sustainable and offer patients continuity of care in the future.

As there are other practices in very close proximity to your GP practice - Swanwood Surgery and the London Road Surgery - we are proposing to not continue with the contract when it expires.

### **What other options were considered by NHS England and NHS Basildon and Brentwood CCG?**

When a primary care contract expires, it is the responsibility of NHS England to ensure all patients have access to continued medical services. It is our role to review options, alongside NHS Basildon and Brentwood CCG and decide whether the GP practice as a separate entity is needed or, whether there is capacity in the nearby practices to continue caring for patients.

Before making this proposal, NHS England and NHS Basildon and Brentwood CCG also considered:

- Extending the current contract for a further year;
- Going out to the market to re-procure services; or,
- Transferring the contract to another GP practice in the area.

However, none of these other options were viable, either because they are not in line with procurement law, or they do not fit with NHS England's and NHS Basildon and Brentwood CCG's vision to bring together and strengthen primary care services in the area.

There are four other GP practices in the Wickford area and two neighbouring practices are extremely close in proximity to your current practice. Swanwood Surgery shares the Wickford Health Centre building and the London Road Surgery has been recently relocated across the road. This is a brand new, purpose built medical facility.

These practices would welcome the opportunity to take on additional patients and offer a wealth of experience in delivering medical services. Further information about practices in the Wickford area can be reviewed on NHS Choices ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)) or via the National GP Patient Survey ([www.gp-patient.co.uk](http://www.gp-patient.co.uk)).

### **Will I have to change GP practice and how do I do this?**

Yes, if this proposal goes ahead, you will have to change GP practice and will need to register with another practice of your choice. You can register with any GP practice as long as you live within the catchment area and they have an open list for new patients. Each GP practice will be able to advise you if your postcode falls within their catchment area.

There may be other GP practices you can register with (if you live within their catchment area) and you can find out more by visiting the NHS Choices website ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)). This website is very useful and provides information on the number of GPs at the practice, what services they offer patients and what people think of those services.

**To confirm, you do not need to take any action at the moment;** NHS England will write to patients again confirming final plans and any action you would need to take.

## **Registering with a new practice**

Once you have chosen a GP practice you will need to register with them. To register you need to call or visit the practice and ask to register with them. You will need to ask for a registration form that will need to be completed and returned. You may be asked to prove your identification and address. Your chosen GP practice will be able to advise you fully on the information they require.

You will need to ensure that all members of your household, including children, are also registered at a new practice.

## **Can a GP practice refuse my request to register?**

GP services are based on geographical catchment areas. If you live within the practice catchment area your registration request should not be refused.

Sometimes GP practices will close their list to new registrations in certain circumstances either on a temporary or long term basis and an application must be made to NHS England to allow this to happen. NHS England can confirm that none of the Wickford practices have any sort of closed list and are all open and accepting new registrations.

## **Is it better to register with a practice sooner rather than later?**

**No. To confirm, you do not need to take any action at the moment.** This is a proposal only at this stage. Patients will not be asked to register at another GP practice until a final decision is made. Patients do not need to register elsewhere in order to “beat the rush!” NHS England is responsible for ensuring that all patients have access to a GP practice.

## **Will I be able to continue to see my usual doctor?**

Your usual doctor is likely to be an employee of SEMC and will not automatically transfer to one of the neighbouring GP practices. It will, however, be the responsibility of the neighbouring practices to ensure that they have the appropriate clinical staff members in place to see and treat any patients who may register with them.

## **Will I still be able to access the same services at one of the new GP practices?**

All neighbouring practices offer a full range of general medical services via a range of staff – for example, GPs, nurses and healthcare assistants. You should see no significant change in the type of service you are currently offered; it may just be from a different building with different staff members.

## **Will anything else change?**

Depending on which GP practice you decide to register with, there may be some other differences, such as appointment booking systems and surgery times. You can check this when registering with a new practice, or on the NHS Choices website – [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk).

### **What happens if I do not register with an alternative GP practice?**

If the proposal goes ahead, we will be asking all patients to register with a new GP practice by a given date. This gives your new GP practice time to contact SEMC with any queries about your care before the contract expires on 31 January 2018. It also gives NHS England the necessary time to ensure all patients have successfully registered with a new GP practice before the contract expires.

Any patient who has not registered by the given date will be written to and advised that they have been allocated to a GP practice near to where they live. This is to ensure all patients have continued access to a GP practice. This does not stop any patient changing practice at a later date should they wish – as long as they fall within the practice's catchment area.

### **What happens to my medical record?**

Your medical record is electronic and will be transferred automatically to your new GP practice when you register. Your notes will be requested via the computer system and will arrive at your new practice within a matter of minutes. Any paper notes held by SEMC will also be transferred. This can take a number of weeks but your new GP practice will still be able to see and treat you during this time.

### **What about home GP visits?**

All patients registered with a GP practice are entitled to home visits where it is deemed clinically appropriate by the GP.

### **Can you guarantee that patients in care homes will still have a GP?**

Yes. NHS England will ensure that all registered patients in care homes will continue to have access to a GP.

### **How can I have my say on this proposal?**

There are lots of ways for you to have your say on this proposal and ask any questions.

There are two types of events scheduled: drop in sessions and group meetings. The **drop in sessions** provide the opportunity for you to speak to an NHS England or NHS Basildon and Brentwood CCG representative on a one-to-one basis, hear the plans, ask any questions you may have or, discuss your concerns. There will be 10 minute slots available by appointment only.

The **group meetings** are opportunities to hear the plans, ask any questions you may have or discuss your concerns. These events will be held at Wickford Community Centre, opposite Wickford Health Centre, which holds a maximum of 200 people. To ensure that fire regulations are not breached, we will not be able to admit more than 200 people to the meeting so you will need to reserve a place to attend.

Both the drop in sessions and the public events will share the same information and no decisions will be communicated at either. **We respectfully ask that you do not attend multiple sessions as we would like to speak to as many different people as possible.**

**Please remember to book a space for the event of your choice. You will not be able to attend any of the events if you have not contacted us to reserve your place.**

- **Drop in sessions:**  
**17 and 18 October 2017, 4.30pm - 6.30pm at Wickford Community Centre (Main Hall), Market Road, Wickford, SS12 0AG**  
These are drop in events for individuals, not group meetings and will provide patients with the opportunity to meet individually with representatives from NHS England and NHS Basildon and Brentwood CCG. Please call 0113 824 9106 or email [england.sweprimarycare@nhs.net](mailto:england.sweprimarycare@nhs.net) to book a slot.
- **Group meetings:**  
**17 and 18 October 2017, 7.30pm - 9pm at Wickford Community Centre (Main Hall), Market Road, Wickford, SS12 0AG**  
These are group meetings starting promptly at 7.30pm. Please book a place on one of the dates and come along to share your views with representatives from NHS England and NHS Basildon and Brentwood CCG. Please visit [www.goo.gl/R6rbS1](http://www.goo.gl/R6rbS1) or call 0113 824 9106 to register for this event.

#### **Who should I contact for further support?**

If you would like to speak to someone about the expiry of the contract or registering elsewhere please contact:

- Healthwatch Essex on 0300 500 1895 or email [info@healthwatchessex.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchessex.org.uk)
- NHS England on 0113 824 9106 or email [england.sweprimarycare@nhs.net](mailto:england.sweprimarycare@nhs.net)