

Shrewsbury Health and Wellbeing Hub

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: What is a Health and Wellbeing Hub?

A: A Health and Wellbeing Hub provides joined up health and social care along with voluntary and community groups in a modern, state-of-the-art building. This means services working more closely together, under one roof. With the pressures faced in General Practice, the overall ambition is to increase levels of care in the community and deliver suitable services closer to people's homes.

Working in partnership with local authorities, community services and charity organisations, the Shrewsbury Health and Wellbeing Hub would pioneer a new way of working that would bring multiple services under one roof, reducing the need for patients to move to different places for different healthcare appointments.

The Hub is part of a vision to ensure that future investment in the NHS is made in a clearer and more planned way. The investment would be made into a professionally-managed building that is purpose-built to deal with increased pressures and to improve General Practice services for patients.

Q: What's wrong with General Practice buildings as they are, and why do we need a Health and Wellbeing Hub?

A: In a 2019 review, approximately 25% of General Practice buildings in England were identified as not suitable for present or future service delivery needs. We are therefore looking at a new way of working that will help General Practice provide better services for our patients in the future.

Current General Practice buildings in England vary hugely and often do not allow for different health and care services to be housed under one roof or different services being available at different times. Some GP practices also aren't very modern and they don't offer the latest facilities.

NHS commissioners aren't able to influence this so it means that in many parts of the country we are not making best use of our General Practice buildings or therefore of taxpayer's money.

Q: Why do we need to change the way our GP services are running?

A: We need to change the way we deliver some of our health services to make them easier for people to access and to make them more sustainable for the future.

At least two practices involved in the Shrewsbury Health and Wellbeing Hub project need to move from their existing locations due to lease and capacity issues.

There are also other challenges in General Practice; GP practices sometimes have difficulty recruiting enough GPs and they are therefore recruiting to different roles, such as Advanced Nurse Practitioners, Clinical Pharmacists and First Contact Physios, to help support patients. This means that they don't always have enough space in their existing buildings for their whole team.

Some GP practices also aren't very modern and they don't offer the latest facilities for patients. We want to offer up-to-date facilities that are easy for patients to access, for example, people who have mobility issues. We also need to think about the future; we have a growing population and more demand for appointments and so we want to be able to expand to meet these needs.

The problems in General Practice are significant and we need to be able to change the way health and care services are delivered to make it better for patients. When you consider that 90% of all patient contact in the NHS is within General Practice this gives you a good indication of the level of pressures experienced.

People are also living longer and often have long-term conditions such as diabetes, obesity and musculoskeletal diseases associated with an ageing population. We therefore need to offer General Practice services in a different way to help to support this need.

Q: What is the long term plan for General Practice services?

A: A new model for General Practice building ownership is proposed by NHS England and Improvement. The Hub would be managed by the local Integrated Care System (ICS) which would enable flexibility, give better value to the taxpayer, and allow the co-location of NHS and non-NHS services to improve patient experience and population health. We are currently in discussions with local charities and voluntary organisations about the services that may be offered through the Hub.

This model would also allow for rapid modernisation of General Practice buildings. It would make current complex payment processes easier and lower the annual cost of the buildings.

Another advantage would be removing building management responsibilities from GPs which would enable them to focus more on delivering medical care and promoting health and wellbeing for their patients. It would also help to improve the recruitment and retention of GPs and other clinical staff, which is a major threat to General Practice.

Q: What are the benefits to patients?

A: The primary aim of the Shrewsbury Health and Wellbeing Hub is for patients to be able to receive the right care, at the right time, in the right place.

Patients would be able to access different services in addition to GP services in one location. The new Hub would be in a state-of-the-art building with modern facilities, which would provide easy access and parking for patients.

Depending on the services in the Hub, it may mean that patients don't have to travel to a hospital site for some appointments or to different locations for other services.

A modern Hub with up-to-date facilities would provide a safer and more attractive working environment, which would help with the recruitment and retention of staff including GPs. This would improve access to appointments for patients. The Hub would also provide the capacity to extend GP services in the future.

Q: Does this mean that my GP practice is going to close?

A: Some practices have chosen to move fully into the Health and Wellbeing Hub and others have chosen only to move certain services into the Hub. This doesn't mean that your practice is going to close - even if it has decided to offer all of its services from the Hub. It just means that its services will be available from a different building, along with a wider range of services.

Based on the feedback we received through our engagement work with the public and practice staff, and by looking at which services patients use most and are likely to need in the future, we will develop our proposals about which services might be included in the new Hub.

Q: Will this affect my GP practice if it's not one of the eight practices involved in this project?

A: No, for this current proposed Health and Wellbeing Hub, the only practices involved are:

- The Beeches Medical Practice
- Claremont Bank Surgery
- Mytton Oak Surgery
- Radbrook Green Surgery
- Belvidere Medical Practice
- Marden Medical Practice
- Marysville Medical Practice
- South Hermitage Surgery

If this project works well, we might consider replicating it in other areas in the future.

Q: How can I give my feedback?

A: In August and September 2021 we ran an initial public engagement exercise to gauge the views of the local population on the proposals and to help to identify which services in the Hub would most benefit our local patients.

We will be engaging in a much more extensive way over the coming months to ensure that public feedback is captured and fed into plans. How people can participate and give us their views will be advertised locally in the media, on social media and via GP practices and other local organisations.

Q. How will my feedback influence the project?

A. Our proposals outline an investment in General Practice; all aspects of the project are being driven by senior NHS leaders focused on General Practice services. However, we are looking closely at the impact the Hub will have to our patients and will be gathering as much input as possible to design the new centre around the community.

Extensive engagement will help us to shape the services that are needed for the area and will place patients in the centre of the development, planning and delivery of health and wellbeing services in the proposed Hub.

Q. Has the decision already been made?

A: No decision has been made yet about which services might be included in the Health and Wellbeing Hub although we are currently in discussions with the voluntary sector about the services that may be offered.

We will take the needs of our local GP practices into account as well as listening to the views of our local patients - this will help us to develop our proposals. We will then run an in-depth engagement exercise when we will ask for people's views again and will collate all the feedback received to help us make a decision.

Q: Why has a Health and Wellbeing Hub been chosen for Shrewsbury?

A: A Health and Wellbeing Hub is being proposed for Shrewsbury to meet current and future patient and practice needs. This is a pilot project and there may be scope to extend it in the future based on patient and practice needs in other areas.

Q: How much will it cost?

A: Due diligence is currently being undertaken to establish costings and benchmark costs against market competitors to ensure value for money for the taxpayer. Value for money will be a key part of the business case.

Q: When will it open?

A: Clarity on delivery timelines will come through the business case development process but the Hub could open in Spring 2025.

Q: What services will be available in the Hub?

A: The proposed Health and Wellbeing Hub would be owned, managed and maintained by the local Integrated Care System (ICS). This presents an opportunity to establish more varied services in response to local population health and wellbeing needs and it would include a range of NHS and non-NHS services. These could include outpatient, community and charity activities – in addition to the traditional GP-led, primary healthcare offer. We are currently in discussions with the voluntary sector about the services that may be offered through the Hub.

An in-depth engagement exercise will be carried out to ask local patients their views on more detailed proposals once these are established.

Q. You mentioned the inclusion of non-NHS services; could this include private health providers?

A. Any non-NHS services would be commissioned by local commissioners and will depend on local population needs. Our public engagement will help identify which services would be most beneficial.

Q: Who will own the building?

A: The building will be owned, managed and maintained by the NHS in the form of the local Integrated Care System (ICS).

Q: Where is the chosen location?

A: We have identified a number of preferred sites in Southern Shrewsbury. We need to ensure that the location offers value for money, that we can get the necessary planning permission, and it is suitable in accordance with HM Treasury guidelines.

Q: Who makes the decision about the location of the Health and Wellbeing Hub and the services provided from it?

A: The Governing Body of NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) will make the decision about the location of the Hub and the services it includes. It will take all of the feedback given, as part of the engagement exercises, into account when making its decision.

Q: What's the difference between a Health and Wellbeing Hub and a Community Diagnostic Centre?

A: A Health and Wellbeing Hub's main focus is on providing General Practice (GP) services but it can also provide a wide range of other health and care services like physiotherapy, social prescribing and sexual health services, for example, as well as possibly some diagnostic services.

The focus of a Community Diagnostic Centre is much more on services like tests and scans to diagnose illnesses and conditions including CT/MRI and ultrasound scans, X-rays, ECGs, phlebotomy and endoscopy services.

Q. Would I be able to see a clinician from my own practice in the new Hub?

A. Practices that are planning to move into the new Hub will occupy their own area of the building and will retain their own identity. For those practices moving into the Hub, this presents an opportunity to expand their services to meet the needs of their patients without substantial change to the makeup of their teams.

It is planned that patients will be able to see their GP to ensure continuity of care and to maintain community ties.

Q. How many appointments would be available and would they be face-to-face, by telephone or video?

A. With the changes to GP practices during and following the pandemic, appointments will remain a mix of face-to-face, telephone and video consultations depending on the patients' needs.

Q. What would the Hub's opening hours be?

A. Core GP opening hours will remain from 8am till 6:30pm, however provision of extended hours and delivery of other services will be considered as part of the Hub's development.

Q. Would parking at the Hub be free?

A. We anticipate that free parking will be offered at the Hub's location and that a bus route will be available for all patients needing to use public transport.