

Stalbridge Surgery Closure Further Up-date as at 6th April 2018

I am aware that some residents of Stalbridge who are on Dr Clayton's Patient List have recently attempted to re-register with the Milborne Port Surgery. Although some Patients who made an approach previously were accepted on to that List, it now seems that this is no longer currently possible for the time being.

The situation is that each Practice has a geographical area allocated to it and this can be seen on their website. The map shows an outer boundary/area in respect of which there is a discretion for the Practice to be allowed to take on new Patients from that outer area. No Practice can close its List without permission from the relevant Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). It cannot therefore, unless there are special and perhaps personal reasons, refuse to accept Patients **who reside within their inner geographical area (within the "the Inner Boundary")**.

Regarding Milborne Port Surgery, it is important to note that it is in Somerset and thus under the Somerset CCG. Stalbridge is in Dorset and thus under the Dorset CCG. There are therefore cross border issues that will need to be addressed.

As previously stated, when the Stalbridge Surgery closes without a new Doctor to take it on, the **Dorset CCG cannot allocate Patients to a specific Medical Practice** and it is up to the individual patient to make their own arrangements for re-registering with the Medical Practice of their choice. The CCG will in due course send out a letter to all the patients on the Stalbridge Surgery List informing them of this and informing them of the neighbouring Practices available. The CCG state that Patients *"are given the support and choice to register with a Practice of their choice"*.

Regrettably, the Dorset CCG cannot take any steps until Dr Clayton gives his 6 month Notice to terminate his NHS Contract. When that Notice is served the CCG will then make a decision as to how it will meet the needs of the local population taking into consideration the Primary Care Strategy and Locality plans.

Where Milborne Port is concerned, Dorset CCG *"would engage with the neighbouring CCG on where the GP Practice boundary crosses into their area. However, it remains the responsibility of Dorset CCG to ensure that all patients are informed of their options and their choices to register with practices within whose boundary they reside"*. Please remember that *"Patients always have a choice"*.

Clearly, it should follow that the closed Stalbridge Surgery area will have to be divided or absorbed into any adjacent Surgery geographical areas. There is already some degree of overlap regarding the Blackmore Vale Partnership (BVP) and its surgeries in Sturminster, Shaftesbury and Marnhull. The BVP area includes "Stalbridge" and so it seems that an application to re-register with them from someone in Stalbridge cannot be refused other than on very limited personal grounds, but not on the ground of residence.

Ultimately, it may be that, when and if, the two CCGs have spoken to each other, that some other arrangement might make it possible for Milborne Port Practice to take on Stalbridge patients again. It should be remembered that this practice also has Doctor recruitment problems!

I have today learned that the geographical area was redefined by Milborne Port Surgery so that Stalbridge is now excluded. I also believe that there are now problems at this Practice over booking Doctor's appointments and this can now only be achieved by a system of telephone triaging ie you ring and await a call back to be told whether you need an appointment.

Tony Bishop (Chair Stalbridge PPG) 6th April 2018