

Primary care in OX12

Primary care in this OX12 area and for some inhabitants of Stanford in the Vale takes place from the Mably Way Health Centre, Mably Way, Wantage between two practices, Church Street and Newbury Street. These practices have now joined to become a Primary Care Network. Newbury Street practice took patients from Grove when its practice closed several years ago. This merger and the increasing population growth in the area have put the two practices under considerable strain especially as the premises are inadequate for the number of patients to be served.

Although Church Street has reconfigured to produce another consulting room, "hot desking" has proved the only other option. Some services have had to be moved from the building to make room for more GP consulting space. In 2017 England Health England allowed no extra finance for expansion of the building. The Commissioning Group was contacted by the Church St. Patient group who met with Assura who own the building and since then consultations have taken place to provide adequate expansion of the building. Two years later the talks between the Assura and the OCCG continue but no apparent progress has been made.

Continued expansion is taking place with around 5.000 houses imminently being built around Wantage and Grove but many more in the surrounding villages.

Concern is being expressed about the increasing average age, we already have above average numbers in the older age groups As more retirement flats are built in the area and a further two care homes, one of which has already been started, are being built Primary Care will be further stretched. Staffing the existing care homes is already a problem as care staff find living in this area expensive.

Receptionists are trained now to give patients appointments according the need perceived.

Nurses and Health care assistants are relieving the GPs of some of the burden of the inadequate time for GPs to see patients. Some patients are finding that they may have to wait up to six weeks to see their nominated physician for the continuity approved by the NHS. Maternity leave also interrupts the continuity of "one Dr. Supervision".

Physiotherapy has at last been made available in the town after a long gap when patients were asked to travel as far as Chipping Norton, Witney and Oxford for this treatment. We were promised access in Didcot and Faringdon but it is possible that the appointment makers had no geographical knowledge of the area! Some venues were difficult to access from an area such as this with so little public transport.

While Wantage Independent Advice Centre provides transport, this needs to be ordered one week in advance and patients are often given less than a week's notice for treatments and investigations. Patients who are reliant on small pensions find the costs of this a problem if they need multiple visits for treatment or investigations.

It is hoped that the expansion of the Mably Way premises will help in the future provision of care and that the provisions following the establishment of the Primary Care Network, including funding for Clinical pharmacists and Social prescribers, will also contribute .

The rural nature of the area and lack of convenient public transport calls for the much heralded “nearer to you” health provision to be a priority.

Closer liaison with services such CAHMS, District Nurses and social care and a minor injuries unit provision would all compliment future care.

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