Lister House Partnership runs doctors’ surgeries at Wiveliscombe and Milverton. We are considering how these surgeries should be run in the future.

We want to explain why the future of the services is being considered at this time, how services might be delivered differently, and how the views of patients, carers and local people will be listened to before any decision is taken.
How does the practice work at the moment?

The Lister House practice provides doctors’ appointments and other health services (called ‘primary care’) to around 6,800 patients in Somerset. The main surgery is in Wiveliscombe with a branch surgery in the village of Milverton, 3.6 miles to the east of Wiveliscombe.

Why can’t the service stay as it is?

Like many surgeries nationally, we do not have enough doctors. In 2016 the senior doctor at the practice retired, and at the same time, the other doctors who helped manage the service (together called the ‘partners’) also resigned. This has meant that alongside the four permanent doctors (called salaried doctors) the two surgeries were using more and more temporary doctors (called locums).

In the six months from December 2016 to May 2017, locum doctors have had to be used to provide over half of all the doctor’s appointments in the surgery.

Why can’t the practice just employ more doctors?

We have tried to recruit more doctors. However, there is a national shortage of doctors, nurses and other health service staff, such as physiotherapists. This means that recruiting doctors to work at Lister House and Milverton surgeries is very difficult - as it is for surgeries across Somerset.
Why can’t the practice just use locum or temporary doctors?

Locum doctors are an expensive way to boost the number of doctors we have available and because lots of practices in Somerset are facing similar problems, locums themselves are in short supply. We are fortunate to have identified a small number of locums who regularly work for us but there just aren’t enough of them to fully replace the doctors who left.

How has this affected the service?

The lack of available doctors has meant that the time available for doctors’ appointments that can be provided in the Milverton practice has already had to be reduced, often to as little as a half a day a week and sometimes not at all.

The doctors also have practical concerns about the Milverton practice, for example, difficulties with poor mobile reception, slow broadband (meaning it can take a lot of time to look at and update patient medical records) and – most importantly – whether one doctor can respond quickly and safely in an emergency situation, for example, if a patient becomes very poorly at the surgery.

In addition, doctors often wish to discuss difficult cases with other colleagues to make sure they are providing the best possible treatment. This includes other doctors but also includes nurses and some of the other specialist colleagues such as physiotherapists and mental health advisers. This is more difficult when working across two sites.
What else has been done to reduce the impact of a lack of doctors?

The problem of a lack of doctors was one which we were aware of before taking over the management from the previous partners of the surgery. We had therefore already planned to add additional services to the surgery such as physiotherapists, specialist nurses and mental health support staff to enable patients to be referred directly to people who can help them instead of seeing a doctor. This has been done and is working well, allowing doctors to manage more complex cases.

What is happening to the Milverton surgery building?

The previous partners (doctors) own the Milverton surgery building and we are currently renting the building from them. However, they would like to sell this building in the near future. As a Trust, we are not looking to purchase the building as we do not think this is the best way of spending NHS money. There may be other organisations who wish to purchase the building, however, it is not the ownership of the building, or the cost of renting it which is the issue, as we would still not have enough staff to run the surgery safely.

What does this mean?

This raises questions about what is the safest way of looking after patients and how we can best use the local doctors that we do have.
This means that we need to be realistic about whether running the service from two sites is the safest and most appropriate way to deliver services for local people and also how this service can be sustained for the long term.

**Who is managing the service now?**

Since the previous partners retired, the Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust has taken over the management of the practice. The reason we did this was because we understand the importance of local doctors’ surgeries and health clinics in making sure the whole health service runs smoothly. Without this, hospitals could not function. We understand the importance of keeping surgeries working for local people and we are committed to continuing to run a local service.

The Somerset Partnership is a large NHS organisation that runs Somerset’s community health services, such as community hospitals, District Nursing and mental health services. It is not a profit-making organisation.

At present, due to the high cost of locum services, the practice is costing more money than it receives from the NHS and is currently being supported by the Trust. We are hopeful that this will change in the future, enabling any surplus to be put back into local services at the surgery.

**What options have been considered?**

We are considering the following options:

- **1 Continuing to run the service as it is.**
This raises questions about whether the service will be safe and whether the current doctors want to continue to work in this way. It is very important that we retain the excellent local staff that we have.

2. **Running a service in Milverton that is managed by specialist nurses or other health staff, instead of doctors.**

Nurses and other health staff can run and manage clinics, however, they do need the specialist knowledge and leadership of a doctor, and this is much easier when the doctor is on the same site.

3. **Running all services from Lister House in Wiveliscombe, with support for Milverton patients who have difficulty accessing the surgery (for example, prescription delivery for housebound patients).**

After careful consideration, we think that this is the safest and best way of using our staff and resources. This is our ‘preferred option’ but we want to make a decision that takes into account the views of local patients and their families.
What else do we need to consider?

There are lots of questions that we have to think about when we consider the future of the services:

- If services are reduced or moved, how can we best help our patients that currently use the Milverton surgery?
- How can we improve transport for patients and their families between Milverton and Wiveliscombe?
- Should we still provide some services in Milverton, perhaps from different venues?
- Can we use a local pharmacy delivery service for some patients?
- Local people will have good ideas about what else we need to think about. We are asking for those ideas.

How will a decision be made?

No decisions have been taken. However, we do have to seriously consider the option of moving all services to Lister House surgery.

Big changes like this ultimately have to be confirmed by NHS England who lead the National Health Service (NHS) in England. Before we make a recommendation to them about the future of the surgery at Milverton, we want to listen to the views of patients, carers and the public so that we make the right decision for the local area. We will take these views into account when we make our recommendations.

What happens next?

A ‘consultation period’ will begin on 17 July 2017 and conclude on 4 September. During this time we will listen to
the views of patients, their families and local people, as well as other important groups such as local Councillors, Healthwatch Somerset and other health organisations in Somerset.

This will help us better understand the needs of the patients who use the Milverton Surgery. It will also help us develop ideas for services that benefit local patients.

**Where can I find out more?**

If you have any questions or would like to receive updates or the report from this consultation, please email myvoice@sompar.nhs.uk. Copies of the final report will be available online at the website below and also available at the surgeries from October 2017.

**How can I have my say?**

You can give us your views in a number of ways:

**By survey:** A questionnaire is available for patients to complete at both the Milverton branch surgery and the Lister House main surgery. You can drop the survey in at the surgeries or post to a FREEPOST address. It is available in large print and other languages on request.

**By telephone:** You can complete the survey or give your views by telephone by calling the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Service on 01278 432022 and asking to complete the Milverton Surgery Survey.

**Online:** This survey can be completed online at: https://sompar.customervoice360.com/uc/milverton/

**In person:** We will be arranging public meetings to discuss these proposals. For more information, please ask at the surgery or see our website: www.sompar.nhs.uk/milverton/
Consultation Survey for patients and local people

This survey is anonymous. Please do not include personal information that might identify you.

1. Where do you live?
   - Milverton
   - Wiveliscombe
   - Other [please state: ............................................. ]

2. Which surgery do you prefer to use?
   - Lister House Surgery in Wiveliscombe
   - Milverton Surgery
   - Don’t mind

3. How often do you visit the surgery on average?
   - Once a week
   - Once a month
   - Less frequently

4. If you use services at Milverton surgery, what do you use? (Please tick all that apply)
   - See a GP
   - See the nurse or Healthcare Assistant
   - See the Talking Therapies counsellor
   - Order and collect medicines or other things that are on prescription
   - Book appointments
   - For general enquiries
5. What would you like to happen to the Milverton Surgery?

☐ Continue as it is.
☐ Run a service in Milverton that is managed by specialist nurses or other health staff instead of doctors.
☐ Run all services from Lister House in Wiveliscombe, with better ‘mobile’ services for Milverton patients (the ‘preferred option’).

6. What is the reason for your answer?


7. If there were a reduced service at Milverton (i.e. no GP appointments) what services would you like to be available? (Tick all that apply)

☐ Prescription service
☐ Nurses’ surgeries
☐ Talking therapies
☐ Other – please state: ………………

8. If Milverton branch surgery closes, would you be able to attend the Lister House main surgery?

☐ Yes
☐ Yes but with some inconvenience
☐ Possibly or with difficulty
☐ No
9. What would you find most difficult about accessing services at the Lister House main surgery and how could this be improved?

10. Do you have any other concerns about a possible closure of Milverton surgery?

11. Please let us know your postcode:
(you do not have to give this information if you prefer not to do so)

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### About you
You do not have to answer these questions, but doing so will help us ensure that our decision takes into account the different groups of people that may be affected by these proposals. This information will be used for a report called an ‘Equality Impact Assessment’. You are welcome to answer as many or as few questions as you like.

**What is your age?**

**What is your sex?**

- [ ] Male
- [ ] Female

**Are you a carer?** for a relative, spouse or friend

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
Are you pregnant or have you had a baby in the last six months?
☐ Yes  ☐ No

Do you consider that you have a disability?
☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ I don’t know

If yes, how would you describe your disability?
☐ Sensory  ☐ Learning  ☐ Mental Health
☐ Physical  ☐ Other __________________________

What is your ethnic group?
**White**
☐ British  ☐ Irish
☐ Gypsy, Romany or other traveller heritage
☐ Any other White background, please state __________________________

**Dual-Heritage**
☐ White and Black Caribbean
☐ White and Asian  ☐ White and Black African
☐ Any other Dual-Heritage, please state __________________________

**Asian or Asian British**
☐ Indian  ☐ Pakistani
☐ Bangladeshi
☐ Any other Asian background, please state __________________________

**Black or Black British**
☐ Caribbean  ☐ African
☐ Any other Black background, please state __________________________

**Chinese or other ethnic group**
☐ Chinese
☐ Any other ethnic background, please state __________________________

Do you have any concerns that relate to any of the above equality issues regarding the possible closure of Milverton surgery?

Thank you!

Please return the completed questionnaire to either Milverton or Lister House surgery or send via FREEPOST to:

Freepost RSXK-USUL-SUHY
Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
Mallard Court (PPI)
Express Park
Bristol Road
BRIDGWATER
TA6 4RN