
What we're hearing about The Molebridge Practice Phase 2

November 2025



"The staff are always very approachable. They help over the phone. This has definitely improved."



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Contents

Introduction and approach.....	3
Key findings.....	4
Communications.....	5
Accessing the practice services	5
Quality of service delivery	8
Service continuity	10
Community engagement.....	10
Ongoing concerns	11
One thing you would change.....	11
Recommendations.....	12
Thank you.....	13
About Healthwatch Surrey	14
Contact us	14

Introduction and approach

Early in 2025 Healthwatch Surrey were made aware of service provision concerns amongst some patients at The Molebridge Practice following a change in contractual arrangements. Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Board (ICB) were keen to know more about these concerns and to offer some reassurance to patients. They therefore commissioned Healthwatch Surrey to engage with local residents and to provide information and signposting related to the departure of Aspire Medical Health and new arrangements.

Initially in March 2025, our engagement teams visited both practice sites (The Molebridge Practice has sites in Fetcham and Leatherhead), as well as other local community settings: the Community Fridge at St Mary's Church, Fetcham; The Meeting Room and the Leatherhead Community Hub (café and community fridge). We engaged with over 70 people (71) during this first phase of engagements, talking to people about their experiences and concerns and signposting to reliable sources of further information. We also worked with Surrey Heartlands to produce a comprehensive [frequently asked questions \(FAQs\) page](#) on our website. This guided our engagement and ensured we could provide comprehensive answers to residents' questions. The FAQs were made available via our website for those who we couldn't speak to face to face, and they had had 155 views at the time of publishing the first report in March. They have now had 209 views.

To date we have had one meeting with the Chairs of the Patient Participation Groups (PPGs). One of the PPG co-Chairs also joined an engagement event in October. We have offered for the PPGs Chairs to meet and discuss the findings of the second engagements.

We were invited to the Fetcham Residents Association (FRA) annual general meeting following a successful meeting with an organiser. Two members of Healthwatch Surrey staff attended and several Surrey Heartlands representatives.

We proposed a 6 month follow up to the March engagements to get an indication of progress and patient reflections on the changes and new

management. We have returned in October 2025 to two venues to ask patients of the practice if they have noticed any changes: the Community Fridge at St Mary's Church, Fetcham and the Leatherhead Community Hub (café and community fridge). This report describes changes noticed or issues raised by the 26 experiences we gathered (16 in person engagements, 8 website and Helpdesk experiences and 2 Facebook posts). In total, we engaged about 40 people, but 14 were not patients of The Molebridge Practice. Of the 26 people we spoke to (and who provided demographic information), 5 people identified as having a long-term condition or impairment, 3 people as neurodivergent, 2 people with severe mental illness and 2 people over 80 years of age. There was a broad range of ages, from 25 to over 90 years old; of which 4 people identified as an unpaid carer. The majority of people were White British, with one person identifying as Black African and 1 from a Traveller community.

All appropriate information and signposting for people we spoke to has already been given.

If you would like more information or examples of what people have shared, please get in touch.

Key findings

In the October phase 2 engagements, we asked about the key areas that emerged from our March engagements and what changes people were aware of:

- Communications about changes at the practice – have they been helpful and accessible?
- Process to book appointments and notification of venue for appointments.
- Waiting time for getting an appointment and waiting to be seen.
- General kindness and helpfulness of staff.
- Clarity about what services are offered, where and at what times.
- Continuity of staff – can you see the same person over several visits?
- Community engagement – have there been any community events organised?

The data we gathered has then been themed under 7 headings as follows:

- Communications
- Accessing the practice services
- Quality of services
- Service continuity
- Community engagement
- Ongoing concerns
- One thing you would change.

Communications

When asked about general communications, people mentioned text messages and messages through the NHS App. People said the communications were clear. One person said they had been telephoned to remind them of a screening appointment and said they had never been called prior to the changes.

More than half the people we spoke to in October were aware of the changes of management for the practice.

When we engaged with people in March, there were mixed comments about the communications people received about the changes at the practice. There had been confusion about a text sent by Aspire Medical Health, leading some people to assume the practice was closing, while others felt the communications had been reassuring. Unfortunately, some people had already left the practice despite the communications about changes.

“I get messages from them that come in on the NHS App – about what is changing and what was happening. I am really glad it didn't close. I did go to a meeting about it.”

There were no negative comments about communications in our phase 2 follow-up engagements.

Accessing the practice services

In March people reported that booking services through the ‘practice app’ were inaccessible, and we suggested that support could be offered. People

also said booking appointments by telephone was difficult because of an 8am rush.

In October, we asked people if they used the NHS App to book appointments, and all said no. Two people did say they found it inaccessible, one person saying their learning disability was a barrier to using the NHS App. This person positively commented:

"I go in person due to my location and learning disability. They help me to book. When I have called, they question me less than they used to."

Booking appointments

In our phase 2 follow-up engagements, people said they used a range of methods to book appointments including in person (walk in), over the telephone or through the practice website. One person did not seem to be aware that they could book over the phone, and it may be worth communicating this to all patients. A couple of people were pleased to have a telephone booking option.

"It's nice to have someone to talk to, especially about health. They make you book everything online now through their website. When they say they're going to ring you back about something, they don't always do it."

Please see our [Digital Divide report](#) highlighting that 47% of people use the telephone to contact their doctor's practice, but 58% of people would prefer to use the telephone.

Availability of appointments

There were no negative comments received in October about availability of appointments. One person said it was better as they can now schedule appointments.

"Previously it was 8am and once gone, start process over again the next day. Now you can schedule appointments."

“It was previously difficult to get a pre-booked appointment, but this has improved.”

“No trouble getting an appointment and usually seen on time.”

There was one request for a diabetic clinic in the evening or at weekends for people who work. There was praise for the October flu clinics on Facebook:

“Well, I know people like to bash The Molebridge Practice, but they have got their flu clinic running so smoothly this year. In and out before my allocated slot, 3 people doing the jabs being guided to separate rooms. In the front door and out the back door in a constant stream. Well done to all.”

Comments on this post:

“Absolutely we were done in a flash. Staff were welcoming and polite, fabulous service, thank you.”

“Absolutely, same here, new management definitely has the house in order. ”

Waiting time for appointments

In March, there was discontent about the 8am rush to book an appointment and the waiting time to see a doctor. In this latest phase 2 engagement, people were happy with how long they waited to see a doctor, some saying it was possible to get a same day appointment, and others saying 1 to 2 weeks is reasonable for non-urgent appointments. In terms of waiting at the surgery to be seen, people were also happy with this.

“Seen the same day. When waiting there, it seems quicker. Was an hour wait sometimes, now 10 minutes.”

Location of appointment

In March people reported there was sometimes confusion about the location of an appointment, so in the October phase 2 engagements we asked about whether people were clear about which practice their appointment was at (Fetcham or Leatherhead). Most people said this was now confirmed on the reminder text message which is helpful. There were 2 people still remarking about confusion about which location they should go to and several who said they double check to be safe.

“The receptionist even wrote it down on a piece of paper that it was Fetcham and when I got there it was Leatherhead – that was really annoying and also a waste of time for the person at Leatherhead waiting for me.”

Information about services

In October, several people said there was clear information about the services that are available on the website. There was also a comment that they felt there was more available now, mentioning physiotherapy as a new addition. For those people who do not use the website they had not seen any information about what was available. If there is no alternative to looking on the website, e.g. poster in the surgery, it may be worth considering alternative communication.

Quality of service delivery

In March, many patients of The Molebridge Practice reported poor services over the previous few months with limited appointments being made available, doors locked during opening times, unhappy staff and lack of basic stock such as dressings. In October we did not hear similar concerns.

Staff

In the recent phase 2 engagements we had 4 people specifically state that the staff were now more helpful, and as described in the previous section, accessing services has become easier.

“The staff are always very approachable. They help over the phone. This has definitely improved.”

One person also feels that their needs are now being met better.

“The staff are happier. Everyone has a smile, and they were on a downer which affected everyone's experience. Previously, when I had poor mental health if there wasn't an appointment, they would just say no appointments, which could make me feel awful. Now, they signpost to a crisis line and offer a next day appointment so this I feel is evidence of staff training.”

The doctors at the practice also received praise.

“The GP is always so kind to him [my father] (and to all of us). They have such a kind way with him and are very friendly. The GP has been so kind, efficient, and professional. They have really put my father at his ease.”

“My kids always say the GP at Fetcham is always smiling!”

General

This October we heard that the services have improved since our engagements in March.

“It's certainly easier to speak to someone on the phone now. I am not very good at going in, so I find this helpful. The appointment availability is better, too. When it was run by Aspire it was certainly more awkward.”

We had a comment that the buildings are much cleaner now and that a complaint was resolved by the new management which was previously ongoing.

However, there are still a small number of unsatisfied people.

One patient felt that the triage system did not help them to convey their issues, which resulted in them having a later appointment than they wished.

In March, a care worker told us that they were having difficulty registering with the practice. In October we also heard that registering is slow.

“Registration to this practice took over a month which left me short of regularly prescribed medication and knocked my confidence in them to work efficiently. Eventually I just decided to move with my feet and moved to another practice.”

Finally, one person felt that they had been sent round in circles, signposted to the pharmacy who then signposted them back to the practice, resulting in a 3 week delay in getting appropriate treatment.

Service continuity

In March, people said they wanted continuity of staff, the option to see the same doctor. In October we only had 2 people expressing concern about this. Most people seem aware that if they are prepared to wait a little longer, they can see the same doctor, which some people prefer for continuity of care and knowledge about the health issue(s).

“Usually, you end up seeing someone different - and sometimes that's ok and sometimes not. My daughter has had ongoing problems and different doctors say different things. It would be better to have the same doctor for something like this.”

Community engagement

One of the recommendations following the March engagements was to hold community events to increase the confidence of local residents about the future of The Molebridge Practice. Although confidence and levels of satisfaction seem to have increased over the last 6 months, nobody we spoke to was aware of any community engagement held by the practice.

Although most people said they had not been asked to join the Patient Participation Group (PPG) and/or were not interested, out of the 14 people who answered this question, 2 people did say they had been asked. This may indicate some proactive activity in this area. One of the PPG Chairs

attended one of our October engagements which was appreciated and closer working with the PPG may be helpful to the practice.

“Yes – I have had messages about it (joining the PPG) and did consider joining in the past, but I am not in the right place at the moment.”

Ongoing concerns

In March we heard that a key concern was about the future of the Fetcham site and difficulties getting to Leatherhead if it closes. In October, 11 people answered a question about whether they still had ongoing concerns. Of these, 9 people said they had none; 2 people said they were still concerned. Both concerns were about changes to the practice and potential closures.

“People are still worried and concerned about funding and eventual closure of Fetcham.”

One thing you would change

Some of the things people would like to see are as follows. However, about half the people who answered this question said there was nothing they would change.

- More information about prevention as I get older.
- Notifications for flu jabs by email.
- Seeing the same doctor each time.
- Clinics open longer or on an evening or weekend from time to time.
- Simpler process for scheduling appointments in advance.
- Quicker processing of referrals.

Recommendations

Below we have shown the recommendations made in March following our engagements. On the right, we have commented on the previous recommendations and added some new ones.

March 2025	October 2025
Communications to reassure patients that The Molebridge Practice is now under new management and that the services will improve over the next few months.	There seems to be awareness of the changes and improved services.
Ongoing communications to reassure patients that both sites within The Molebridge Practice will continue despite perceptions that patients have left and this may make the 2 sites unviable.	Carry forward as there are still concerns about the financial viability of the Fetcham practice.
Address the issues of getting and making appointments by offering timely appointments and more accessible ways to book (support to use the practice app, access to book appointments through the NHS App accessible web portal and longer telephone window for booking). However, not all patients are aware of the ways you can book so possibly provide additional communication about this.	This has improved and government regulations now mean the telephone booking option is open longer. However, ensure all patients know about the telephone option to book an appointment.

Transparency about what services the practices can offer such as dressing post-operative wounds and when people need to attend a walk-in centre.	Carry forward as not everyone can access the information on the practice website, and it is recommended that other communications such as posters are created.
Ensuring the practices are open to the public consistently against a published timetable.	No reports to the contrary.
Making sure stocks of essential items are available for nursing and clinical staff.	No reports to the contrary.
Engagement with the community to rebuild confidence in The Molebridge Practice.	Carry forward to continue building confidence and providing opportunities to recruit PPG members.
N/A	Review time taken for new patients to register at the practice.

Thank you

We would like to thank everyone who gave their time and shared their experiences with us. We would also like to thank our volunteers who supported us during our engagement sessions, the staff at The Molebridge Practice sites who put up posters, and the staff at St Mary's Church and the Leatherhead Community Hub (café and community fridge) who welcomed us again.

About Healthwatch Surrey

Healthwatch Surrey champions the voice of local people to shape, improve and get the best from NHS, health and social care services. We are independent and have statutory powers to make sure decision makers listen to the experiences of local people.

We passionately believe that listening and responding to local people's experiences is vital to create health and social care services that meet the needs of people in Surrey. We seek out people's experiences of health and care services, particularly from people whose voices are seldom heard, who might be at risk of health inequalities and whose needs are not met by current services. We share our findings publicly and with service providers and commissioners to influence and challenge current provision and future plans.

We also provide reliable and trustworthy information and signposting about local health and social care services to help people get the support they need.

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We are proud to be shortlisted in 2025 and commended in 2024 for the National Healthwatch Impact Awards, recognising our work helping to improve local NHS and social care.



We are committed to the quality of our information.
Every three years we perform an audit so that we can be certain of this.

Luminus

The Healthwatch Surrey service is run by Luminus Insight CIC, known as Luminus.

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