

---

## What we're hearing about The Molebridge Practice

March 2025

---



I was going to leave the practice but hearing from you has put my mind at rest so I'll stick to it. I don't want to go into detail but it's been awful the last few months but if they're going to make things better and stay open I'll stay where I am now.



If you would like a paper copy of this document or require it in an alternative format, please get in touch with us.

## Contents

Introduction and approach.....	3
Key findings .....	4
Engagement with Healthwatch Surrey.....	4
Communications about the changes .....	5
Accessing the practice services .....	7
Quality of service delivery .....	7
Service continuity .....	9
Ongoing concerns .....	10
Recommendations.....	11
Thank you .....	12
About Healthwatch Surrey .....	12
Contact us .....	12

## Introduction and approach

Healthwatch Surrey were made aware of service provision concerns amongst some patients at The Molebridge Practice following a change in ownership 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.

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), talking to them 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 have had 155 views to date.

To date we have had one meeting with the Chair of the Patients Participation Group (PPG) and we are waiting for a wider meeting to be arranged with the PPG members. We are invited to the Fetcham Residents Association (FRA) annual general meeting following a successful meeting with an organiser.

Outstanding at time of writing:

- To meet with The Molebridge Practice PPG.
- To attend the Fetcham Residents Association annual general meeting.
- To update the website FAQs once we receive a response from Surrey Heartlands regarding the ability to book appointments using the NHS App or website.
- Follow-up community engagement to evaluate progress - scheduled for September.

Any urgent or concerning experiences within this report have been escalated to the appropriate teams. All appropriate information and signposting have already been given.

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

## Key findings

From the engagement events that Healthwatch Surrey organized we gathered insights from people living in the catchment area for The Molebridge Practice. The insights have been organized under a number of themes as follows:

- Engagement with Healthwatch Surrey
- Communications about the changes
- Accessing the practice changes
- Quality of service delivery
- Service continuity
- Ongoing concerns.

## Engagement with Healthwatch Surrey

People felt reassured about the engagement with Healthwatch Surrey and expressed that although they had considered leaving they would now stay.

“I was going to leave the practice but hearing from you has put my mind at rest so I'll stick to it. I don't want to go into detail but it's been awful the last few months but if they're going to make things better and stay open I'll stay where I am now.”

In some cases, we were able to reach people who had not received or engaged with the practice communications sent through texts and letters.

“I feel left out of the comms. I didn't receive a letter or text but I do keep changing my phone to be fair. I have got info from The Meeting Room and people in the community. I was really worried before talking to you. I thought I was being

kicked out of the surgery, but I like it there. I didn't realise the surgery was able to continue. I am relieved.”

We were able to explain the changes and reassure relatives and patients that the service would continue and improve. Having the opportunity to ask questions to an independent organization was helpful in reinforcing the remote messages received.

“I feel reassured after actually hearing from you. I couldn't get to the community event in Leatherhead so I'm glad you were here otherwise all I had was the message from the app.”

## **Communications about the changes**

There are mixed reports about the communications people received about the changes in The Molebridge Practice. People mentioned a letter from the practice, a text from Aspire Medical Health, an email from the practice, a more recent text about the new management, posters and the engagement events by Healthwatch Surrey. The range of communications people reported highlights the importance of using different media to reach people in the community and may help to overcome barriers to accessing some digital communications.

The text message sent out by Aspire Medical Health to all registered patients was felt to be alarming in approach and several people said it had led them to assume the practice was closing.

“I had a text message a few weeks ago that made me think the practice was closing ... and said, 'we have made the difficult decision to exit from the contract'. I assumed from that they were closing the practice .... it came out at 7pm on a Friday so you couldn't call the practice. My husband is ill, so we need to have a doctor, so I moved to one in Bookham (I have since gone back).”

People mentioned the NHS App as the way they had found out about the changes in management.

"I found out about changes at the practice through the NHS App. I'm no computer whizz kid, I'm 80 now but I use the NHS App."

However, we continue to hear that text messages and digital communications are not always accessible.

"I found out about the changes at Molebridge as I received a text. I couldn't find out the detail though as there was a link in the text which I can't follow on my phone, so I'm very interested to hear what's happening from you."

Some people have been reassured by the communications.

"I'm with Molebridge and received a letter about the changes and spoke to someone at the Meeting Room from Healthwatch Surrey. I have also seen information at Leatherhead Community Hub in the form of a poster. I am a diabetic and was initially really concerned about how the changes were going to affect my care, but they have reassured me that nothing will change."

One person said they already felt there were positive changes at The Molebridge Practice.

"Already noticed a difference in terms of new receptionist and a completely different atmosphere."

However, some people have decided to leave and have not been swayed by the communications. One person also acknowledged that some people have left The Molebridge Practice and wondered if this would detrimentally impact the future viability of the practice.

"I have seen all the comms about the changes but it's too late for me and I would not return."

## Accessing the practice services

Booking services through the practice app are reported as being inaccessible and it would be helpful to provide assistance for people struggling with this or to provide a more accessible alternative.

“I’ve given up with the practice app though, it’s ridiculous the amount of jumping through hoops. I couldn’t get on so asked the receptionist for help and she gave me a 12 digit code. Well, I got home and couldn’t get that to work so gave up. I’d like it if they could help us with things like this though.”

Making an appointment by telephone is also reported to be very difficult and some people went without treatment as a consequence.

“There’s a mad 8am rush that needs to stop. People don’t even bother if it gets to 8.30, you’ll never get an appointment. What if you don’t have a computer, what do you do? They need to make appointments accessible.”

One positive comment was that the appointment confirmation texts now indicate which practice you should go to.

“One thing that’s been good is on the SMS it now says where the appointment is – I’ve been in before and an elderly couple have turned up for an appointment that they were told was Fetcham but then turns out to be Leatherhead and they got sent away!”

## Quality of service delivery

Many patients of The Molebridge Practice reported poor services over the last few months with limited appointments being made available, doors locked during opening times, unhappy staff and lack of basic stock such as dressings.

One person said they were not accessing regular appointments despite feeling they should be seen regularly by a doctor. Another person said they had only had calls to discuss ongoing health problems and really wanted a face to face consultation.

“I’ve had no health check in 5 years. I have osteoarthritis and should be seen more.”

Linked to not being able to get an appointment, it seems that the practice was often closed to the public.

“It’s been just awful since last year. Locked doors during surgery hours. My husband had shingles, and you have to get the antivirals in the first few days. I was banging on the door on the Friday, and no one was there. I went in again on the Monday and was told there was no appointments so we missed the time we could have treated him.”

It also appears that there has been insufficient access to appointments to meet demand.

“Back in December I needed an appointment, I rang on a Friday, and they told me to call back the following week as there were no appointments. I called back the following week, there still weren’t any. I tried again later in the week – I still didn’t get one.”

People have reported that they were refused treatment and were asked to pay for dressings post hospital treatment.

“Last July I had an emergency at Royal Surrey County Hospital... I had to have a daily dressing change done by my GP practice, I went to the practice (Molebridge in Fetcham), and they said I needed to go to a walk-in clinic each day to have it done. I stood my ground and said I was a registered patient with them and so they should do it. They agreed in the end, but then said I had to buy my own dressings – at a cost of £75 per week. In the end the Head Nurse there was marvellous and managed to get them on prescription for me.”

A care worker told us that they were having difficulty registering with the practice and that many of the residents of the care home were registered

patients at The Molebridge Practice but were not reliably getting their repeat prescriptions.

“I am a carer at the 16 Cobham Road care home. I am registered with Ashlea even though Molebridge is closer, and a lot of the people I care for are with Molebridge. I would prefer to be with Molebridge, but I've had problems registering with them. I am still waiting for them to call me back. The residents at the care home are having issues with Molebridge too. There are delays with prescription medications. One person has been waiting over 3 weeks.”

Some patients have already left The Molebridge Practice and stated they would not return because of the poor service they experienced.

“I left the practice about 2 months ago, just before Christmas as the service was so poor. I've gone to Eastwick Park Medical Practice, that's both me and my husband.”

Two people mentioned that the practice staff have been treated poorly during the latter half of 2024 and stated that staff were not given breaks, doctors were often not at the practice and staff were not allowed to purchase stock.

“Before Christmas Dr Matzari was on her own for 3 weeks, she's a brilliant doctor – but she must have been doing 60 hour weeks.”

## **Service continuity**

People want continuity of staff; they want to be able to request a particular doctor or nurse and would like familiar faces at reception.

“I hope there will be more continuity going forward. I like to know who I am going to see.”

“I don't know the doctors as well as I did, there have been changes there over the last 2 years, you don't see the same

doctor, the receptionists keep changing, basically there's a lack of continuity."

## Ongoing concerns

A key concern is about the future of the Fetcham GP practice site and difficulties getting to Leatherhead if it closes.

"I was worried they wouldn't keep the Fetcham site open. I can't get to Leatherhead easily and like walking. It's the only practice in Fetcham and I don't want to lose it."

"What I want to know is are they keeping both open? It's a taxi ride to get to Leatherhead and I don't want to have to do that. If you're ill you can't sort all that out, it's a long way."

Some people are skeptical about whether the 2 practices are financially viable and if the last contract holder could not succeed, how the changes will make a difference. We reassured people that the operating model had changed, and this would ensure the practices would be able to stay open.

"I haven't got any concerns about the recent changes and what's happening but if the last lot couldn't make it viable, how are this lot going to?"

People are still concerned about the future and some people are wondering if they should move to another practice now before they are full. Further reassuring communications about the future of the practices and engagement with the community are needed.

"However, I do feel reassured following the last message that came out – so I haven't changed practice yet. However, I am concerned that if I don't leave and there's a crisis, will there be any space left at Eastwick Practice for me – so should I change now?"

"As someone resident in Fetcham, and registered with The Molebridge Practice since 2008, I need some assurance about the long-term viability of the Fetcham Surgery. I need

some certainty that there will continue to be a LOCAL GP service in Fetcham. In short, I need to know why I can trust this new regime any more than I could Aspire."

One person said that they felt that the practices now needed to work more with the community to overcome the problems of the last few months.

"I'm quite interested in joining the PPG. It's been an us and them thing in the last few months- community vs GPs and that's not how it should be. So if the PPG can help us work together that would be great."

## Recommendations

1. Communications to reassure patients that The Molebridge Practice is now under new management and that the services will improve over the next few months.
2. 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.
3. 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).
4. Transparency about what services the practices can offer such as dressing post operative wounds and when people need to attend a walk-in centre.
5. Ensuring the practices are open to the public consistently against a published timetable.
6. Making sure stocks of essential items are available for nursing and clinical staff.
7. Engagement with the community to rebuild confidence in The Molebridge 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 and to the staff at The Molebridge Practice sites, St Marys Church community fridge, The Meeting Room and the Leatherhead Community Hub (café and community fridge) who welcomed us.

## 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.

## Contact us

Website: [www.healthwatchesurrey.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchesurrey.co.uk)

Phone: 0303 303 0023

Text/SMS: 07592 787533

WhatsApp: 07592 787533

Email: [enquiries@healthwatchesurrey.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchesurrey.co.uk)

Address: Freepost RSYX-ETRE-CXBY, Healthwatch Surrey, Astolat, Coniers Way, Burpham, Guildford, Surrey, GU4 7HL.

 [healthwatchsurrey](https://www.facebook.com/healthwatchsurrey)

 [healthwatch\\_surrey](https://www.instagram.com/healthwatch_surrey)

 [Healthwatch Surrey](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Healthwatch-Surrey)



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.

Registered office: GF21, Astolat, Coniers Way, Burpham, Surrey, GU4 7HL.