

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ's)

Access

Q. Isn't the Hartfields site closed already?

A. The Hartfields site of McKenzie Group has been temporarily closed since mid-March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The temporary closure was to enable us to use our staff more effectively and to ensure we could comply with social distancing regulations. We were not able to adjust the Hartfields site sufficiently to enable us to meet the social distancing regulations.

Q. Why do you want to close the Hartfields site permanently?

A. We will be applying to NHS Tees Valley CCG to request to close the Hartfields site permanently to bring services together at our other sites [McKenzie House, Victoria Medical Centre, Wynyard Road Medical Centre and Throston Medical Centre] to enhance clinical quality and practice resilience, run more efficiently and continue to deliver high quality of care to patients.

The premises at Hartfields is limited comprising up to three clinical rooms, one without daylight, and there is no scope to further develop the Hartfields premises to facilitate the delivery of additional services

Q: Has the decision already been made on the future of the Hartfields site?

A: No decisions will be taken about the future of the Hartfields site without taking full account of patient feedback. Following the engagement period, we will submit a business case to NHS Tees Valley CCG, and the feedback from the survey will inform the business case.

Q. Was permanent closure the plan all along?

A. No. We applied for temporary closure as a necessary measure at the start of the pandemic to ensure we could comply with social distancing requirements and to enable us to use our staff more effectively. Now that we have worked this way for over a year, we believe bringing services together at our other sites will enable us to enhance clinical quality and practice resilience, to run more efficiently and continue to deliver high quality of care to patients.

Q. How long will the period of engagement last?

A. We will be carrying out the engagement over a 6-week period to allow as many patients as possible to give their views and feedback. The period of engagement starts on Monday 19th July 2021 to Sunday 29th August 2021.

Q. Will I have to wait longer for an appointment and will there still be the same number of appointments available at the other McKenzie Group sites?

A. No, we have been operating with our appointment model since the start of the temporary closure of the Hartfields site in March 2020 and patients have not had to wait longer.

The same number of appointments will continue to be made available.

Q: Will there be more GP appointments at the other McKenzie Group sites to compensate for the closure of the site surgery?

A: In the last year 2 GPs have left the practice, but we have been fortunate in getting 2 new GPs to join us who will be commencing in August. We are currently out to advert for an additional Advanced Nurse Practitioner and the Primary Care Network we are part of is also employing more staff which will be available to the practice to improve quality of care.

Q. McKenzie House / Victoria Medical Centre / Wynyard Road Medical Centre / Throston Medical Centre is already my main practice, will the site closure mean I will experience difficulties making appointments as the practice will be looking after more patients from these sites?

A. No, the McKenzie Group has been looking after all its registered patients and has done since March 2020. We have also agreed a totally new telephone system connecting all sites which will enhance the number of lines available.

Q. Will we still be able to get same-day appointments?

A: Yes, most of the appointments we currently offer are same day bookable.

Q: Do I need to do anything if the Hartfields site closes?

A: No. Your registration will not be affected. When we have registered patients, it has always been through McKenzie Group, as this is our main site.

Q: Do I have to stay with McKenzie Group?

A: No. You are free to register with another GP Practice if you live within their boundary. Further details of practices local to where you live can be found by visiting 'Find a GP' on the NHS website www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-GP.

Q. During the COVID pandemic I have not been able to see a GP face-to-face, will this get worse because of the site closure?

A. Since March 2020 the practice has operated a triage system and patients have been offered face to face consultations where necessary as well as the option of online consultations.

Q. Will I still contact my practice on the usual telephone number to make an appointment?

A. Yes, however, you can ring any site number to obtain an appointment in any of our sites.

Q. I do not have my own transport. If the Hartfields site closes permanently how will I get to and from [the other sites]?

A. Our nearest other site to Hartfields is Throston Medical Centre which is 1.0 miles away, Victoria Medical Centre is 3.0 miles away, Wynyard Road Medical Centre is 4.2 miles away and McKenzie House is 4.3 miles away. (Information from Google Maps - alternative routes may differ in distance)

All sites are served well by public transport. For more information to plan your journey you can visit <https://www.stagecoachbus.com/plan-a-journey>

Q. If I use my own transport will there be sufficient parking available?

A. Yes, car parking is available at all sites

Q. How can I have a say as a patient?

A. We are asking all patients over 16 years old who are registered with the McKenzie Group to complete this survey as we want to understand what the impact of the temporary closure has been on you and your family to better understand what impact a permanent closure would have. We will then use this information to inform future decision making. Surveys can be completed online at

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Hartfields>

If you have not registered a mobile with the practice you will receive a survey in the post which you can complete and return to us by **29th August 2021**. Copies of the survey are also available from reception at our open sites.

Q. Is the proposed closure happening because of financial reasons or to save money?

A. No. The proposed closure would allow us to bring services together at our other sites to run more efficiently, effectively and continue to deliver high quality of care to patients.

Q: How will I be informed of the outcome of the engagement and whether the Hartfields site will close?

A. We will contact all patients who are over 16 years old by text message (and by letter for those that do not have a mobile phone) to inform them of the final decision and direct them to the practice website for further information.

www.mckenziegrouppractice.co.uk or www.wynyardandhartfields.co.uk

Continuity of Care

Q. If the Hartfields site closes permanently can I still speak to my regular GP or Nurse Practitioner?

A. Yes. You will still be able to speak to your regular GP or Nurse Practitioner.

Q. If the Hartfields site closes will I still be recalled for my Chronic Disease reviews at the practice?

A. Chronic Disease management will not be affected, and you will continue to be recalled when you are due your review.

Q. What additional benefits will I see?

A. The larger sites have a wider range of clinicians and services available Monday – Friday making it easier if you need an urgent investigation, such as a blood test, to be done before you leave the practice.

Staff

Q. Will the reception and clinical staff be affected by the proposed site closure?

A. All staff will remain the same and continue to provide business as usual.

Opening Hours

Q. Will the practice opening hours remain the same?

A. Each site will continue to open at the same time:

Wynyard Road Medical Centre: 8.00am - 6.00pm

McKenzie House, Throston Medical Centre and Victoria Medical Centre: 8.30am – 6.00pm.

Although Wynyard Road Medical Centre opens at 8.00am, staff only have access to be able to book appointments which are available at that site up until 8.30am. After 8.30am staff will have access to appointments at other sites.

Community Services

Q. Will the proposed closure affect the care of patients who are housebound?

A. No, Community nurses will continue to work closely with the practices as normal.

Q. Will there be any change to the service we receive from community midwives or health visitors?

A. No, Midwives and Health Visitors will continue to work as usual to provide care to our expectant mothers and young children.

Q: I am under the care of the District Nurse, will this continue?

A: Yes

Prescriptions

Q. Will I still be able to use my usual pharmacy for my prescriptions?

A. Prescriptions will continue to be managed in the same way and you will still be able to use your preferred pharmacy.

Q. How can I collect my prescriptions if the Hartfields site closes?

A. The vast majority of prescriptions are sent electronically; any paper prescriptions will continue to be available for collection from your chosen site.

Independent advice – Healthwatch Hartlepool

If you have any concerns and would like to discuss these changes with an independent organisation, you may want to contact Healthwatch, call: 01429 288 146 between the hours of 09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Thursday - the support organisation that listens to, advises, and speaks up for users of health and social care services.

If you or someone you know wants to provide feedback but are unable to complete the survey, please e-mail TVCCG.A81044@nhs.net as it is important we ensure all patients can have their views heard.