



ALISON LEA EAST KILBRIDE PRIMARY MEDICAL SERVICES Q&A

What services does Alison Lea East Kilbride Practice currently provide and to whom?

NHS Lanarkshire has had a general medical service contract since April 2004 with the general practitioners at Alison Lea East Kilbride Medical Practice to provide primary care services to a population of approximately 2,704.

The service is currently provided by two general medical practitioners and a team consisting of a practice manager, receptionists and practice nurses. The practice is a tenant in Alison Lea Medical Centre. Community nursing services are also provided in the centre through the treatment room, phlebotomy service, district nurses and health visitors. In addition, podiatry, midwifery, counselling, smoking cessation, and child health provide regular sessions for the local population from the medical centre.

The practice provides essential general medical services – planned and emergency care in the clinic and at home when appropriate. It also provides the following additional and enhanced services:

- Cervical screening
- Minor surgery
- Maternity services
- Family planning
- Childhood immunisations
- Vaccinations and immunisations

Why are the contractual arrangements with the practice being changed?

Since April 2004, the contractual arrangements with general practitioners have changed. Before 2004, contracts were held with individual general practitioners to provide general medical services to a defined list of patients. Following the introduction of the new contract, contracts are now held with practices, not with individual general practitioners. Where practices have two or more partners, they operate as a partnership. If partners no longer feel they can work effectively together, or the Health Board is concerned that the care being provided by a practice is unsatisfactory, a process has been put in place to allow all interested parties to put forward bids for the contract to provide primary medical service for the practice population.

Will patients notice any difference in the service they are receiving, if the contractual arrangements are changed?

Patients will not notice any difference in the service they will receive. NHS Lanarkshire intends to put forward a new General Medical Services Contract with

the new service provider; this is the type of contract previously held with the partners at Alison Lea.

What is the process for putting in place a new contract for providing primary medical services?

The new legislation introduced in April 2004 enables Health Boards to provide general medical services through a number of different contractual arrangements. A practice is advertised by the Health Board, inviting the submission of bids (business cases) to take over the contract for providing general medical services. These bids can come from the existing general practitioners or other individuals/groups out with the practice.

Why can't we just split the practice and share the patient lists between both GPs?

Where there are two or more general medical practitioners, contracts are held with the practice, not with individual general medical practitioners. To ensure that patients have access to as wide a range of services as possible, NHS Lanarkshire supports the continuing existence of group practices. Furthermore, splitting practices leads to duplication of practice staff which creates additional pressure on already very scarce accommodation.

Why do you not just give the contract to one of the current GPs?

NHS Lanarkshire seeks to ensure that patients have access to the highest quality of primary care. Applicants for the practice have to prove to NHS Lanarkshire and patients that they have the skills, competencies and commitment to providing a safe, effective and accessible service. Putting in place a system to encourage a number of applicants enables the Health Board to choose the applicant that will be able to guarantee a service to the standard expected by the Board. In addition the Health Board has to comply with legislation concerning the tendering and procurement of public services including healthcare.

Will the GP service be provided in the same building?

The current premises will be available to provide services and there are no plans to change this.

What services will be lost in this change and is it just all about saving money?

No services will be lost as a result of the transfer of the contract. The budget held by the practice depends on the number of patients on the practice list, and the range and quality of service provided by the practice. Funding will not alter as a result of the change in contract.

Do patients get a say in who will be their new GP?

Yes, the selection panel for the new provider will include patient representatives. We will write to all patients informing them of the change to GP services and the process for this. We will also hold a meeting for patients when they will have the chance to let us know their views on how services are provided.

What if a patient wants to stay with their existing GP?

Depending on the outcome of the bidding process, a general practitioner who is currently providing the service may be one of the successful applicants. When the new contract is awarded to the applicant/s, patients who are currently registered with the practice can either choose to remain on the practice list, or register with a different practice nearby.

What if a patient doesn't like the new service – are there alternatives open to them?

Patients in East Kilbride have, at present, and will continue to have, the option of registering with neighbouring practices if they are not happy with the service being provided at Alison Lea Health Centre

Will the successful applicants receive more money than the existing practice?

The successful applicant(s) will receive the same baselines payments as the existing practice. However, if they choose to provide additional services or improve the quality of the service, they may receive increased income.

How will NHS Lanarkshire monitor the quality of the new service?

NHS Lanarkshire currently has a system in place for reviewing all contracts with general medical practices on an annual basis. In addition, through the Quality and Outcome Framework, the quality of the service (clinical, organisational and patient involvement criteria) is monitored on a regular basis.

How do we know that our records will be kept confidential and that the new GPs understand my condition?

Patient records remain within the practice. They are only removed if patients die or move to a different practice. The successful applicant(s) will have access to all the patient records and will therefore have all the information necessary to manage patients' conditions.

What if the new service isn't up to standard - how would I complain and to whom?

The NHS in Scotland has a system for making complaints. Information should be available in the waiting area of the practice. Complaints should be registered initially with the practice. If the complainant is not happy with the response, the complainant then has the option of contacting the Health Board or the Ombudsman.

To make a complaint about primary care services you can telephone or write to the Patient Services Department, Strathclyde Hospital, Airbles Road, Motherwell, ML1 3BW. Telephone 01698 245004.