



Proposal for the use of a mobile healthcare unit in Harbottle and in Northumberland communities

FRQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the proposal?

The proposal being considered is moving the GP/nurse clinic, that is currently provided from the Harbottle Village Hall, into a mobile healthcare unit. The mobile healthcare unit would be the permanent location from which the weekly GP/nurse clinic would be delivered from in Harbottle.

Would GP services be reduced in Harbottle, as a result of using a mobile healthcare unit?

We would like to assure people that this will not result in a reduction to current primary care services provided in Harbottle.

Would clinicians from The Rothbury Practice continue to run the weekly Harbottle clinic?

Yes, they would.

Would the day and times that GP services are provided in Harbottle change?

The day/time could change. When we are talking to patients and staff we want to know if this would impact on them and the best dates and times for them. We would use this information to decide if a change in date/time would be helpful.

What are other potential patient benefits of using of a mobile healthcare unit?

The additional benefit of services being delivered from a mobile unit is that it would be able to travel and deliver GP, public health and community/voluntary sector services in this rural area of Northumberland on the days that it is not in Harbottle.

What types of care or services could be provided from a mobile healthcare unit?

Examples of the services that could be delivered in local communities include vaccination clinics, annual health checks, blood pressure checks, public health services (like stop smoking clinics) and voluntary and community sector engagement and services.

All care and services that would be provided need to be appropriate and delivered safely.

What other NHS services could be delivered from a mobile healthcare unit (in addition to primary/GP, public health and voluntary/community sector services)?

We are in the very early stages of exploring if the community team at Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust could use a mobile healthcare unit to potentially deliver some appropriate services closer to home.

How would you decide where a mobile healthcare unit goes?

Feedback from talking to patients and stakeholders and the engagement survey would help inform this proposal. There is also potentially the opportunity of being responsive to the healthcare needs of local communities – as long as the workforce is available to support this.

Would patients registered with The Rothbury Practice need to re-register to access services from a mobile healthcare unit?

No, patients would remain registered with The Rothbury Practice and would not need to re-register.

How would patients access appointments to see a GP or nurse running a clinic from the mobile healthcare unit?

Patients would access appointments in Harbottle as they do now – via the online options or by calling The Rothbury Practice.

Will the mobile healthcare unit have the required IT/connectivity?

We appreciate that the connectivity in parts of Northumberland can be a challenge and we are looking into options in relation to this.

Could a mobile healthcare unit visit patients at their home/place of residence?

No, the purpose of the mobile healthcare unit would be to deliver services in a local community. A mobile healthcare unit could not be used to visit individual patient homes as this would not be an efficient or cost-effective way of consulting with patients and would lead to less people being seen due to travel time between locations. Home visits would continue to be provided as they are now.

How would you staff a mobile healthcare unit?

As we are in the early stages of developing this proposal, consideration will need to be given to how the mobile healthcare unit is staffed. There is the opportunity for Northumbria Primary Care colleagues from across the organisation to help deliver care/services. We would ensure that this does not impact on staffing levels in practices in a negative way.

Would this proposal cost more than what is currently paid to provide services from Harbottle Village Hall?

The cost of operating a mobile healthcare unit would be similar to providing GP services from the village hall in Harbottle. As a result, this option would be financially sustainable with the potential to offer additional services, as outlined above, to local communities in Northumberland.**How would the inside of a mobile healthcare unit be set up?**

The mobile healthcare unit would be a clinical environment, comfortable, heated and wheelchair accessible. You can change the set up depending on what the unit is being used for.

Will it be private for patients?

Yes, it would have separate waiting and consulting rooms and everything would be done to help ensure patient privacy.

Would it be wheelchair accessible and what size wheelchairs could access a mobile healthcare unit?

Yes, a wheelchair up to 90 cm wide.

Would a mobile healthcare unit have a toilet?

The unit we are considering does not have a toilet. We are looking at some options and will make sure we meet required standards.

Who would drive a mobile healthcare unit?

It would be driven by staff who have a valid UK driving licence and training.

Where would a mobile healthcare unit park in Harbottle Village?

Parking is currently under discussion. We would ensure that we had all the required permissions to park a mobile healthcare unit if it goes ahead.

What happens if the mobile healthcare unit breaks down or cannot be where it needs to be due to bad weather?

Planning and regular maintenance would help ensure, as much as possible, that the vehicle is where it needs to be.

Where would the mobile healthcare unit park when it goes to other Northumberland communities?

This will be a consideration when planning where a mobile healthcare unit could go. We would ensure we have any required permissions in place.

How would you ensure that a mobile healthcare unit is kept clean?

We would make sure that the cleaning regime of the mobile healthcare unit is consistent with the other clinical spaces that are part of Northumbria Primary Care.

Where would a mobile healthcare unit be parked when not in use?

Probably in The Rothbury Practice car park.

How are you planning to get feedback from patients, the public and stakeholders?

Patients registered with The Rothbury Practice (regardless of which surgery they access care from) will receive either a hard copy of or text message with a website link to a letter, survey, and a frequently asked questions (FAQs) document.

If a patient needs the information in an alternative format, please email encicb-nor.rothburypractice@nhs.net.

People can give feedback in a number of ways:

- By completing an **on-line survey** <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GW3HHGK>.
- By completing a **hard copy survey** – these will be available from and will need to be dropped off at the weekly Harbottle clinic on a Thursday morning or The Rothbury Practice and Longframlington surgery receptions.

All surveys need to be completed by **Friday 23 February 2024**.

- Patients that have a planned appointment at the clinic in Harbottle on **Thursday 14 December** or **Thursday 1 February 2024**, will be able to speak to someone if they would like to give feedback.
- Patients that have a planned appointment at The Rothbury Practice on **Tuesday 19 December** or **Thursday 18 January 2024** between **10.00am and 2.00pm** will be able to speak to someone if they would like to give feedback.
- Two **drop-in engagement sessions** for patients and stakeholders will be held on **Tuesday 9 January 2024** between **10.00am and 2.00pm** and **Tuesday 13 February** between **3.00pm and 7.00pm** at Harbottle Village Hall, Harbottle, NE65 7DG. **People do not need to register to attend**. All are welcome to attend.
- **By writing to or emailing the practice management team** – The Rothbury Practice, Whitton Bank Road, Rothbury, Northumberland, NE65 7RW or nencicb-nor.rothburypractice@nhs.net.

Can I give feedback about this proposal to an independent organisation?

Yes, you can do this via **Healthwatch Northumberland** in the ways listed below.

- **Text:** 07413 385275. Healthwatch also offers a callback service. Send them a text and they will arrange to call you back at a time that suits you.
- **Email:** info@healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk
- **Write to:**
FREEPOST
Healthwatch Northumberland
Adapt (NE)
Burn Lane
Hexham
Northumberland NE46 3HN

What is the process for approving this proposal?

This option has been approved in principle by the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board, subject to engagement with the community and stakeholders. Following the programme of engagement with patients and a wide range of stakeholders, all feedback will be considered, and a final decision will be made, hopefully in March next year.

If approved, when could a mobile healthcare unit be providing patient care/services from?

The earliest a mobile healthcare unit could be put in place is May 2024.

What would happen if this proposal is not approved.

GP services will remain as they are in Harbottle and be provided from the village hall. A mobile healthcare unit would not be available to provide additional services as outlined.