



Improving outpatient appointments in East Surrey Changes to outpatient services at Oxted Health Centre

Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust wants to provide the very best service possible for local people. We want:

- **The best environment for patients**, with access to experts, diagnostic tests and other services when they need it, in settings which meet modern standards for safety and patient experience
- **Fewer delays to waiting times and cancellations** across all our services, and to do that we need the right number of staff in place where they're needed most
- **To spend precious public funds in the most efficient way** that will benefit the highest number of people

To help us achieve these things we will be relocating the small number of outpatient clinics currently provided at Oxted Health Centre.

Currently a small number of outpatient clinics take place at Oxted Health Centre. These are primarily follow-up appointments for patients needing, for example, rheumatology or diabetes services and they take place relatively infrequently, with individual consultants visiting once or twice a month.

This small number of clinics operate from rented rooms within a challenging environment which makes it difficult to maintain the standards patients and staff rightly expect.

The Trust believes it can improve local services by moving these appointments to East Surrey Hospital. Patients can also choose to have their appointments at the Trust's clinics at Crawley Hospital, Horsham Hospital and Caterham Dene Community Hospital. This change will enable:

- More patients to access other services such as diagnostic tests, at the same place rather than having to attend another appointment elsewhere. This 'one-stop' approach offers a better experience for patients, can improve their outcomes, and is more efficient for the NHS
- More robust staffing arrangements across services, helping to reduce cancellations and waiting time delays to appointments.

What is happening?

From July 2019 the small number of outpatient clinics currently provided at Oxted will take place at East Surrey Hospital, Crawley Hospital, Horsham Hospital and Caterham Dene Community Hospital instead of Oxted Health Centre. These include clinics associated with Rheumatology, Urology, Endocrinology and Diabetes, Care of the elderly, Dermatology, Gastroenterology and General Surgery. The frequency of these clinics range from once a fortnight to once every other month. Neither GP services nor maternity services at Oxted are affected by this change.

Why do changes need to be made?

It is increasingly challenging to provide the best service possible from Oxted. We want:

- The best environment for patients, with access to experts, diagnostic tests and other services when they need it, in settings which meet modern standards for safety and patient experience
- Fewer delays and cancellations across all our services, and this requires robust staffing arrangements in the places which see the most patients
- To spend precious public funds in the most efficient way that will benefit the highest number of people

To achieve these three things it is no longer viable to provide such a small number of clinics at Oxted. Doing so significantly impacts on the local NHS' ability to improve outpatient services for the whole population.

Currently not enough people use Oxted to enable us to fill the clinics to their capacity – clinics at Oxted are used less compared with the Trust's other services. The clinics do not run on a consistent, weekly basis, meaning it is more difficult to ensure patients are always seen as quickly as we'd like. For example, cancellations to a clinic that runs monthly or every other month results in unnecessary delays for patients being seen.

Outpatient referrals have risen by 4% every year for the last 10 years. They are set to increase in the coming years. There are difficulties up and down the country recruiting important roles such as geriatricians and dermatologists, and this means we have to maximise the clinical time available from our clinicians in order to keep up with the rising demand while living within our means. More appointments can be offered by ensuring we have robust staffing arrangements at locations where more appointments and clinics take place.

How can I get to East Surrey Hospital?

We do recognise that this will mean that some patients will need to travel further for their appointments. East Surrey Hospital is however an accessible site to which a range of local transport links operate. We have also introduced additional car parking spaces and a number of disabled spaces. In the last seven years we have increased our patient parking; we now have 552 spaces to keep up with rising demand and we have developed new disabled parking bays near our entrances resulting in a total of 47 blue badge bays.

If travelling by public transport or by car is not an option for you, the community transport schemes that run in Surrey and West Sussex may be able to help with transport to and from hospital for

disabled users. Search for 'help with travel costs' on our website, or contact your local borough or district council to find out more.

In addition, if your disability or current medical condition stops you from using other forms of transport, it may be possible for your doctor to arrange non-emergency hospital transport for your appointment. Please speak to your doctor or nurse for more information.

Details of how to get to East Surrey Hospital can be found at www.surreyandsussex.nhs.uk

I can't always get to East Surrey Hospital in time for early or late appointments – what should I do?

As much as possible we arrange appointments around our patients' needs and if a patient cannot attend a specific appointment they can call us to arrange a more suitable time or make specific arrangements.

I have an appointment at Oxted coming up – will this change?

If you have already received a letter with an upcoming outpatient appointment at Oxted Health Centre you should assume this is going ahead. You will be contacted directly if your appointment is going to change.

How can I find out more?

If you would like more information or have specific questions please contact PALS on 01737 231 958 or sash.pals@nhs.net

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