

Swillington Health Practice (branch of Oulton Medical Centre) - Frequently Asked Questions

When is this change likely to take place?

The practice would like to hear from its patients on the potential impact of any change. All feedback will be reviewed by the partners and the Integrated Care Board. It would be the practice's intention that all services will be moved from Swillington Health Practice by 31 July 2025.

Why are the services having to move?

In recent years, the practice has been struggling to manage the costs associated with the Swillington branch site and those costs have now become financially unworkable.

Many meetings and conversations with West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (the ICB in Leeds) and the National Health Service Property Services (NHSPS, who own the building) over the past three years have failed to result in a solution which would mean the practice could remain open.

As a result, we are having to look at new ways of working. Patients living in the Swillington area have been travelling to one of our other sites since early 2020 for GP appointments, and patients who require home visits will still be able to receive their care this way.

There will be no reduction in patient services resulting from the branch closure and we want to ensure that no-one is disadvantaged by these services moving to other premises.

I am a patient registered at Oulton Medical Centre and currently access services at Swillington Health Practice, what will this mean for me?

The services which are currently still running at Swillington (nursing, physiotherapy and midwifery sessions) will relocate to Oulton Medical Centre and our branch site at Marsh Street Surgery by the end of July 2025.

There will be no reduction in service provision, and you will continue to be able to access medical services at our other surgeries (Oulton Medical Centre and Marsh Street Surgery).

We will be confirming which services will be running at which other site in the coming weeks and will provide updates about this on our practice website.

Following this change, can I choose which GP practice to register with?

You can remain registered as a patient of Oulton Medical Practice, meaning you can attend either of our other surgeries (Oulton Medical Centre and Marsh Street Surgery).

Alternatively, you have the right to register at another practice. The NHS GP finder website at www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-GP will provide you with a list of practices near your home postcode.

I receive home visits. When Swillington Health Practice closes will I still be able to receive a home visit?

We will continue to visit housebound patients in their own homes, as before, and will make sure capacity will meet the demand required, even if this increases.

With the Swillington Health Practice closing, can the other practice sites cope with the additional patients?

The services which are currently still running at Swillington will relocate to Oulton Medical Centre and our branch site at Marsh Street Surgery, along with the staff who deliver these services.

There will be no reduction in service and therefore no impact on the capacity of the two remaining sites.

We continue to have additional staff working with the practice, through our primary care network (PCN). These include pharmacists, first contact practitioners, physicians' associates, paramedics, health & wellbeing coaches, mental health support workers and social prescribers. These are in addition to the practice staff.

What will happen to the building when the surgery closes?

The building is owned by NHS Property Services (NHSPS) and, in the short-term, once staff and services are withdrawn, the building will remain empty. The long-term future for the building will be decided by NHSPS.

What will happen to the staff who work at Swillington Health Practice?

All staff will remain employed by the Oulton Medical Centre practice and will transfer to provide services at Oulton Medical Centre and / or Marsh Street Surgery.

What will happen if more houses are built in the area, and there is more demand on the practice?

The West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (the ICB in Leeds) has a statutory duty to look at the provision of healthcare in the area and this would be reviewed if planning permission were granted for more houses.

Swillington Engagement Feedback and FAQ Info

Swillington Village Hall 13.01.2025

Approximately 60 people attended the event

1. Why do patients from Rothwell and Oulton attend the Swillington site?

Our practice list size is approximately 15K and we get lots of people accessing services at Swillington from across the practice area. Services at Swillington, Rothwell and Oulton are available to be accessed by all the patients registered with us

2. Do you live in Swillington? (Directed at Dr Gatenby)

I do not live in Swillington however we are here today to listen to your opinions and concerns regarding the proposal to close the practice

3. How will you support people who are unable to travel on the bus?

We already provide home visits to those patients who are unable to visit the surgery for GP appointments. There hasn't been a GP in Swillington since the pandemic in 2020 and so we have already made provision for those that are unable to travel and need to see a GP. We already provide proportionally more home visit appointments in Swillington than other areas within our practice area and we will continue to do this. We will continue to monitor the demand for this and will put more capacity on to do visits if required.

4. Repeat prescriptions – where will these go if the surgery shuts?

These are some of the things we would need to work through but we have been speaking to the local pharmacy who are keen to support where they can so we will continue to explore options here for things like repeat prescriptions, collection of urine bottles etc.

5. A GP has not been in Swillington Practice since 2020 – how have you accessed services since then? (question from a member of the audience to the rest of the people attending)

Travelling to Oulton or Marsh Street but this has not been easy, and the transport links are unreliable

6. The elderly and vulnerable are concerned about how they will access services – what will you do to support them?

We will continue to provide home visits to those who are unable to get to Oulton or Rothwell who need to urgent or unplanned care. A lot of the services provided from Swillington are more planned care services such as long-term condition reviews which mean these are easier to plan for as they are booked in advance however we have committed to putting on more capacity for visits so will continually monitor the needs of patients.

7. Do you have information on where other people in Swillington are registered as your documents state there are only 1500 people in Swillington registered with you but there are far more that live in the village?

The ICB has information on where other patients are registered, this tends to be with other practices locally and for Swillington we believe the nearest other surgery to be Nova Scotia

8. Can practices not put pressure on NHSPS collectively to reduce the costs?

The practice and the ICB have been working with NHSPS over the last 18 months to try and negotiate a reduction in costs which haven't resulted in any significant solutions. NHSPS are an independent organisation and unfortunately, we have done as much as we think we can to influence reducing the costs. Recently a practice did take them to court, but NHSPS won that court case.

9. Why are both engagement meetings in working hours? This means those people who work are unable to attend.

We did try and book the village hall later in the evening to accommodate this, but it was fully booked. We will take advice and look at putting on another session outside of working hours to ensure those who work are able to contribute to the engagement.

10. Why are the costs so high?

This is what we have been trying to work through with NHSPS and unfortunately, we are unable to influence the costs which are set nationally.

11. Why has there not been a GP in the practice since 2020?

When the pandemic hit, we had to reduce our face-to-face services and so at that time we took the GP out of Swillington. We were also at that time in negotiation with NHSPS about the costs. We realised that we were managing without a GP in Swillington. The impact of the rising costs has meant that whilst in negotiation with NHSPS we wanted to continue to monitor the demand to see whether we could continue to manage the services as we have been doing if we were unable to negotiate a reduction.

Comments:

- A lot of old people live in the village and the bus service between sites is unreliable meaning that people will need to get taxis. Shutting the surgery will cost people a lot of extra money in travel.
- All the engagement events are taking place within working hours, there is a perception that only elderly patients live in Swillington but there are a lot of working families that live here and are unable to attend these sessions due to them being in working hours
- Closing the practices is a done decision – these sessions are a joke
- Elderly people in Swillington have paid their taxes and this is how we are repaid by taking away our surgery
- You need to do some work on how far patients will have to walk to the surgery from the bus stops to Oulton or Marsh Street in comparison from walking from home to the Swillington practice to understand the impact
- We are going backwards – surely there must be more money somewhere
- There is such a wasted amount of money in the NHS – I used to work for the NHS and know how much money is wasted
- This is a disgrace

Oulton Medical Centre 14.01.2025

4 people attended the event

1. Do we have the right amount of space to accommodate the services that would move across from Swillington?

Yes, we feel confident that we do have this space as we did this in the pandemic. We feel confident we can juggle timetables to accommodate all the services that would be needed within the space we have across Oulton and Marsh Street

2. Will Oulton patients have to share appointment with Swillington patients?

This will not be the case as there will be no reduction in services and the capacity that there is now will remain the same. Its just the services that will be relocated.

3. There are lots of frail/elderly patients in Swillington who feel very vulnerable and will be wondering how they will be supported. The anger of some patients in Swillington will be due to being feeling isolated. What can be done to support frail patients who may not need a GP now but will in the future?

The PCN do have a proactive frailty team to go in and support frail patients in their own homes to prevent them going into hospital. We recognise the importance of this service and will look to boost that if the surgery closes.

4. It is a big ask to ask patients who are elderly to travel when there is a health centre there.

We do recognise this however we do already provide proportionally more home visit appointments in Swillington than other areas within our practice area and we will continue to do this. We will continue to monitor the demand for this and will put more capacity on to do visits if required. With the money we would save on the running of the building we would want to use on additional workforce to provide even more care to the registered patients.

5. Have NHS Property Services been fair and transparent in terms of the rising costs?

NHSPS, the ICB and the practice have been in negotiation over the rising costs for 18 months. Whilst NHSPS have given some understanding of the costs this isn't always totally clear. NHSPS use national companies to provide services which do drive up the costs in some situations i.e. Mitie
It should be said that this is not an isolated situation, NHSPS own several GP practice buildings and other practices have also raised that they are struggling with the costs.

6. Does the change of government and the commitment to putting more money into the NHS not help this situation?

The revised GP contract will be published in April which is expected to announce some uplift however this is likely to cover things like increasing staff pay – there isn't any expected funding to cover increasing estates costs.

Comments

- Rung the access bus line to see if this was an option but the service from Swillington is limited to a Saturday morning going to Morrisons in Rothwell.

Virtual Patient Engagement session via Teams 16.01.2025

No patients logged in to attend this session