



The Corner Surgery **Southport**

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Out of Area Patients Policy

On 3rd March 2019, The Corner Surgery received a comment on its NHS Choices page, asking “what is the point of taking on more patients?” if we are struggling to provide convenient access for the patients currently registered at the surgery. In response, we agreed to discuss the comment internally to decide if any additional action was required.

Since then, it has come to light that there are a number of patients registered at The Corner Surgery who do not live within our practice area. Some patients live in Banks because our practice area used to extend to that area. When our practice area was changed, we agreed to retain any patients currently registered in Banks whilst they remained at that address. However, some patients also live in other areas of Southport, e.g. Town Centre, Birkdale & Kew and we understand that historically, previous practice partners have allowed patients to register or remain registered at the surgery from outside of our practice area.

We now need to address this anomaly so on 20th May 2019 the current practice partners discussed the available options for doing so. The issues we discussed were as follows:

- There is no simple computer search that is able to identify ‘out of area patients’ on our computer system, so we are only really able to identify the affected patients opportunistically;
- We have had a significant increase in our registered patient list size over the past 12 months, due to other local surgeries closing their lists to new patient registrations & a large number of patients leaving another surgery in Southport;
- This has caused additional pressure on our service because new patients require relatively high practice usage in the first year & we do not receive any additional funding for those patients until the following financial year;
- If an out of area patient were to request a home visit, this has a significant impact on the service that we are able to provide to our other patients, due to the time it would take for a doctor to travel to that home address;
- At a time when the NHS is moving towards more place-based care, e.g. forming Primary Care Networks, other services are becoming even more integrated around localities, including the district nursing team.

Therefore, we agreed the following action plan & this forms our ‘out of area patient policy’:

- We will only register a patient at this surgery if they live within our practice area;
- If a patient moves to a new address outside of our practice area, including those patients in Banks who remained registered at the surgery when our practice area was changed, they will be asked to register at an alternative surgery;
- If a patient is identified as living outside of our practice area, excluding those patients who are currently registered at an address in Banks, they will be asked to register at an alternative surgery as long as it would appear medically safe to do so;
- Any such patients will continue to be identified opportunistically, to reduce the impact on our neighbouring practices & because there is no other easy way to do so.

Dr David Smith
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