



November 2021

Dear Patient,

**Seeking your feedback on Pathfinder Village Surgery, Brookside, Exeter, EX6 6BT**

We are keen to hear your feedback and experience following the temporary closure of the Pathfinder Village Surgery, from the end of October 2020 to date.

As a result of pressures arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, services at the branch surgery have been suspended and general practice services are available to you at our main site, St Thomas Health Centre, Cowick Street, Exeter, EX4 1HJ and our Exwick branch site, New Valley Road, Exeter, EX4 2AD.

The limited service at Pathfinder Village surgery has been under review for a number of years, and following the temporary closure, we want to understand the impact that this has had on our patients residing in the village and surrounding areas, if any.

Previously we have only been able to provide a limited GP service at Pathfinder two days a week and the porta cabin building we were using isn't in line with modern healthcare facilities. Therefore, we want to hear from the residents in Pathfinder and the surrounding areas who have used the branch surgery. We also want to hear from patients about the effect on a possible option to permanently close the branch surgery and continue to access health care at our St Thomas and Exwick Health Centres.

With this in mind, we have attached an engagement document detailing our current position as well as a questionnaire to provide you with an opportunity to share any thoughts or feedback you might have as a recent user of the surgery.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions relating to the documents enclosed. The best way to do so is to email the practice at [stthomas@nhs.net](mailto:stthomas@nhs.net).

Yours sincerely,

**Chris Stoppard**, Practice Manager on behalf of **St Thomas Medical Group**.

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70 Cowick Street  
Exeter  
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Exwick Health Centre  
New Valley Road  
Exwick  
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Student Health Centre  
University of Exeter  
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## **Patient & Stakeholder Engagement Pathfinder Village Surgery**

### **Background**

St Thomas Medical Group is a GP Practice covering 25% of the Exeter and Pathfinder Village population.

There are approximately 40,000 people registered with St Thomas Medical Group and we currently operate from three sites:

- Our main site, St Thomas Health Centre is located in Exeter on Cowick Street, EX4 1HJ.
- Branch sites are Exwick Health Centre located on New Valley Road, EX4 2AD and the Student Health Centre, located on site at Exeter University.

St Thomas Health Centre is open fully for five days per week, has 25 consulting rooms and is a purpose built facility with access to a comprehensive range of primary care services from doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, paramedics and pharmacy team.

Exwick Health Centre is operated as an acute duty site every weekday afternoon. Our duty clinic is run by 3-4 doctors, 1-2 advanced nurse practitioners and a paramedic. When the practice has registrars on board, they also support the duty clinics. Routine nurse appointments are offered during the mornings every weekday at this branch site.

The Student Health Centre is open fully during the University Terms and Monday, Wednesday and Friday during the vacation period. There are 10 consulting rooms on campus for students to access a range of primary care services from doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, dieticians, paramedics and pharmacy team.

The branch surgery at Pathfinder Village has been temporarily closed over the last year. During the pandemic St Thomas Health Centre, Exwick Health Centre and the Student Health Centre have remained open and operational.

Following the escalation of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Spring of 2020, it was necessary to relocate the face to face GP and nurse consultations at Pathfinder to our main site and our branch sites. This was to ensure safe levels of service were maintained for our patients and to provide a safe, COVID-secure environment for doctors and patients, which we couldn't offer at Pathfinder Village Surgery.

The Pathfinder surgery is 5 miles from St Thomas Health Centre which is a 11 minute car or taxi journey. The number 6 (Bude to Exeter) bus service is provided by stagecoach that runs regularly throughout the day. We understand that these services have been utilised during the Pandemic and is a 13 minute bus ride to St Thomas Health Centre.

During the COVID -19 pandemic our patients residing in Pathfinder have been accessing our services, attending our branch sites and using our online facilities to order medication, consult with a clinician via video link and use e-consult to request non-urgent medical support. With the above in mind we need to establish the result of the temporary closure of the Pathfinder Village Surgery and how this has affected our patients.

Pathfinder patients who are currently accessing services with St Thomas Medical Group have access to a much wider and comprehensive range of primary care services including specialist practice nurses, pharmacists, advanced nurse practitioners, health and wellbeing coaches, occupational health coach, paramedics and first contact physiotherapists. These

services are not available at Pathfinder Village Surgery and due to the limitations of the building, this is unlikely to change.

During these challenging times, and to ensure the continued safety of our patients and staff we have changed our service in line with national changes and the response to the pandemic to provide greater access to digital services such as online and video consultations.

The technology is here to stay, but we continue to see people face to face when they need to be seen. We will review how our patients accessed our services over the last year to develop our plan for strengthening our services in the future.

## **Our Proposal**

Following discussion with all of the Partners at St Thomas Medical Group and taking into consideration the changes that have taken place over the last year as a response to the pandemic and new ways of working, we would like to hear from our patients in Pathfinder.

St Thomas Medical Group would like to collect feedback from patients, local stakeholders, including the Parish council and local pharmacies regarding their experience while the Pathfinder Village site has been temporarily closed over the last 12 months and share any impacts this may have had on them.

This is so that we can understand any concerns and try to address identified issues before we make a decision about permanently closing the Pathfinder site. We plan to gather feedback in a variety of ways from patients who used Pathfinder Surgery in the preceding months prior to March 2020, using a variety of ways:

- SMS/Test message or email to patients, inviting them to participate in the engagement.
- A letter outlining details of the engagement sent to patients in the cohort described above if we are unable to text or email.
- Online questionnaire for completion.
- Hard copy questionnaire forms available from a box outside Pathfinder Village surgery.
- Engagement with the practice's Patient Participation Group.
- Details of the engagement on our practice website's and social media.

While we will mainly be targeting the engagement with people who used Pathfinder Village Surgery, other residents from surrounding areas will be welcome to share their views as part of this engagement.

In addition to engaging with patients we are also seeking feedback from a variety of local services and stakeholders.

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## **Patient & Stakeholder Engagement Pathfinder Village Surgery**

- Our commissioner, NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group
- Pathfinder Parish Council
- Surrounding Parish Councils
- Local Pharmacies
- MP Mel Stride.
- Community Nursing Services.
- Avondale Park Homes
- Residents association at Pathfinder

It is proposed that the period of engagement will commence for a minimum period of 21 days on 4 November 2021 and is scheduled to conclude on 25 November 2021. However, feedback received after this time will still continue to be considered on an ongoing basis as we consider our next steps.

St Thomas Medical Group will review the feedback received and determine what will happen next.

### **Implications for Patients**

We recognise the temporary closure of Pathfinder Village Surgery may have been cause for concern for some patients. It is vitally important that we receive feedback on how the temporary closure may have affected people so that we can ensure all concerns and feedback are captured and taken into consideration before any further decisions are made.

All feedback will be treated confidentially and we will use the feedback to identify any concerns or issues as they arise.

## Questionnaire

Which of the following best describes you?	
A patient who used the GP and Nurse service at Pathfinder Village Surgery prior to March 2020.	
A patient registered with St Thomas Medical Group who hasn't visited Pathfinder Village Surgery.	
A parent, relative, friend or carer of a patient registered with St Thomas Medical Group.	
I am interested in these services	
Other (please specify)	
What effect, if any, has the temporary closure of Pathfinder Village surgery since March 2020 had on you?	
A positive effect (please provide details below)	
A negative effect (please provide details below)	
Neither a positive nor negative effect	
Undecided	
If Pathfinder Village surgery did not reopen and you had to access medical care at our St Thomas and Exwick sites, would you be affected by this, and if so how?	
No it would not adversely affect me (please provide details below)	
Yes, it would adversely affect me (please provide details below)	
Neither a positive nor negative effect	
Undecided	

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**Patient & Stakeholder Engagement  
Pathfinder Village Surgery**

<b>Is there anything else you think we should take into consideration when contemplating the future of Pathfinder Village surgery?</b>	
Yes (please provide details below)	
No (please provide details below)	
Undecided	

Please return completed questionnaire to the surgery via email [stthomas@nhs.net](mailto:stthomas@nhs.net) or post.

Thank you  
**St Thomas Medical Group**