

Planning Application Proposal: The Doctor's Lounge Clinic at 10 Sandy Lodge Way, Northwood, HA6 2AJ

This proposal outlines how it will meet the local council and government plans for improved healthcare provision and access and why it is important to consider this application by its merit.

Introduction

The goal of this proposal is to present the plans for our new clinic, which we believe will be a valuable asset to the community. This document will address concerns about integrating the clinic within a residential area, and will also detail the positive impact we expect the clinic to have on the local residents.

Clinic Description

The new clinic will provide General Practice healthcare services. Our services are aimed at improving community health and providing convenient access to essential healthcare.

Integration into Residential Area

We understand the importance of seamlessly integrating our clinic into the surrounding residential area. The following measures will be put in place:

- **Operating Hours:** The clinic will operate at socially acceptable hours to minimise disturbance during early morning and late-night hours. Currently the clinic is open Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 9-5pm, Monday and Wednesday 9-7pm and Saturday 9-12:30pm
- **Noise Management:** Noise levels will be carefully managed, with no outdoor activity, appointment only basis, spaced appointments to minimise traffic.
- **Traffic and Parking:** We have considered traffic flow and parking availability. We plan to provide ample parking on site with full time staff

meaning they minimise the number of cars and we make use of a valet parking service and the local public car park to minimise local traffic and congestion.

- **Exterior Aesthetics:** The clinic building will be designed to harmonize with the residential architecture of the neighborhood, ensuring a seamless visual integration.

Community Benefits

The clinic will bring numerous benefits to the residential area:

- **Improved Healthcare Access:** Residents will have convenient access to medical services without traveling long distances.
- **Job Creation:** The clinic will create employment opportunities for healthcare professionals and support staff in the local community.
- **Community Well-being:** By providing essential healthcare services, the clinic will contribute to the overall health and well-being of the community.

Environmental Considerations

We are committed to minimizing our environmental footprint. The following measures will be implemented:

- **Energy Efficiency:** The clinic will utilize energy-efficient technologies and practices to reduce energy consumption.
- **Waste Management:** Proper waste disposal and recycling programs will be established to minimize waste.
- **Sustainable Practices:** We are dedicated to implementing sustainable practices throughout the clinic's operations.

Meeting local and government plans - why should this practice be given consideration for planning and how does it support our community

Meeting the Hillingdon Council's Strategy

(See appendix 1)

https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/media/10592/Council-strategy-2022-to-2026/pdf/2iCouncil_strategy_2022_to_2026.pdf

The Hillingdon Council's Strategy outlines its commitment to collaborating with the NHS and other partners to develop integrated services that meet the diverse health, care, and support needs of our community residents. This includes the development of a new Hillingdon Hospital.

The Doctor's Lounge response and alignment with the strategy:

Our clinic currently will continue to provide home visiting to housebound and elderly patients, end-of-life care at home, and extended hours healthcare to support vulnerable and those unable to access services. Additionally, we address the challenges faced by those who often receive incomplete care due to NHS service strains.

We acknowledge Hillingdon Council's desire to work closely with both the NHS and other partners to meet the healthcare needs of our community residents and we are well placed to support this desire and will be a well positioned asset in the community.

Meeting the Hillingdon Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2025

(See appendix 2)

https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/media/7917/Joint-Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy/pdf/dbHealth_and_wellbeing_strategy_2022-2025_WEB

The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2025 outlines several areas our clinic aligns itself with to support.

Over the past 3 years we have implemented several changes which align with this Strategy, including expanding services available over the phone or online, establishing joint health and care teams to provide community care and prevent emergency admissions, and increasing capacity in key services like rapid response and home care to allow for hospital discharges to be expedited and allow people to return home.

The Strategy acknowledges the existence of numerous ongoing health challenges that demand our attention. The ageing population in Hillingdon is projected to increase by 7% over the next five years, accompanied by rising long-term conditions and an increased demand for hospital admissions. In Hillingdon, compared to the national average, the strategy observes the following:

- Higher mortality rates from all cardiovascular diseases.
- Lower rates of cancer diagnosed at an early stage.
- Reduced physical activity among adults.
- Higher incidence of tuberculosis.
- Increased rates of overweight and obese children between ages 4 and 5 and 10 and 11.
- Worsening dental health among children.
- Higher hospital admissions for alcohol-related conditions, including women over 65.
- Worse rates of hospital admissions due to asthma compared to the England average.

Furthermore, it recognises the need to provide more support to individuals in taking control of their health and addressing the challenges posed by long-term conditions, such as poor cardiovascular health, dementia, diabetes, learning disabilities, mental health, and 'Post Covid'.

The Doctor's Lounge response and alignment with the above strategy:

In response to these challenges, our clinic prioritises the following areas:

- Helping people prevent the onset of long-term health conditions like dementia and heart disease.

- Supporting individuals to live well, independently, and for longer in older age and throughout their end of life.
- Improving mental health services through prevention and self-management.

Our clinic fully supports the above priorities, which align with our own priorities and values. We provide regular follow-up, preventative screening for dementia and heart disease, and home visiting to support older age and end-of-life patients. We offer remote and home visiting support out of hours to support these patients. We also provide fast appointments to help those with mental health disorders.

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy has created 6 work streams to deliver the above priorities:

- Workstream 1: Neighbourhood-based proactive care
- Workstream 2: Urgent and emergency care
- Workstream 3: End-of-life care
- Workstream 4: Planned care
- Workstream 5: Care and support for children and young people
- Workstream 6: Care and support for people with mental health challenges (including addictions) and/or people with learning disabilities and/or autism

The Doctor's Lounge response and alignment with the above strategy:

Our clinic clearly supports workstreams 1-4 by providing community-based neighbourhood-based care with a clear health prevention role. We offer proactive approaches to health checks, lifestyle change, and nutritional change. We also provide urgent appointments and home visiting, as well as weekend appointments, to ensure the urgent and emergency care of patients is a priority. We have developed relationships with local services to support the emergency care required by the community. Regular follow-up, health checks, and health reviews fit the planned care workstream clearly.

The benefits to the local community are significant and include:

Enhanced Access:

We provide additional appointment slots, reducing waiting times for patients. This helps alleviate NHS pressure by managing patients who opt for private care.

Integrated Care:

We can refer patients to NHS services, ensuring continuity of care.

Supports Mental Health Initiatives:

We align with local strategies to expand mental health support within primary care settings.

Meeting the NHS England Primary Medical Services Policy & Guidance

(See Appendix 3)

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/primary-medical-services-policy-and-guidance-manual-pgm/>

Within the Primary Medical Services policy and guidance manual updated in 2024, the equality and health inequalities duties are outlined. These duties state that the Equality Act 2010 prohibits unlawful discrimination in the provision of services on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. These are the "protected characteristics".

In addition, the manual states that commissioners must not try to vary the proportion of services delivered by providers according to whether they are in the public or private sector, or some other aspect of their status. Section 4.10.2 of this guidance states that:

"This means that commissioners must focus on the services delivered by an organisation and its sustainability, rather than making choices about contractors based solely on their status as, for example, a company, partnership, public sector, private sector, charity, or not-for-profit organisation."

The Doctor's Lounge response and alignment with the above strategy:

This indicates that services whether private or NHS, commissioners should make decisions based on the services that it provides. Our clinic, as a private clinic is open to the whole population, provides no discrimination and allows all parties to use the service. We appreciate that private services carry a financial burden to patients however, in the attempt to bridge financial constraints, we have built relationships with local NHS services to ensure that those relevant patients can also access these services should they wish or need to. This therefore provides the required sustainable, well-rounded service, which therefore forms part of the commissioning requirements.

Meeting the Changes to the GP Contract in 2025/26

(See Appendix 4)

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/changes-to-the-gp-contract-in-2025-26/>

The GP Contract 2025 states:

- Since 2024, we have reduced the number of general practitioners (GPs) in England from 38,421 to 27,966, a fall of 5%. The ratio of patients to GPs has also significantly increased by 15% from 1981 patients to each full-time equivalent GP, reaching 2273.
- A 2022 report from the House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee highlighted the urgent need to address the crisis in GP recruitment and staffing. The report stated that GPs are leaving the profession at an alarming rate, and there are insufficient GPs to meet the ever-increasing demands on the service, coupled with the growing complexity of cases due to an ageing population.
- Despite record appointments, various reports and news articles have raised concerns about the struggle of people to access GP services. Decreasing levels of patient satisfaction in access to GP services continue to receive national attention. Several factors contribute to this decline, including rising demand, regional variations in general practice capacity and accessibility of appointments, retention challenges among GPs, longer wait times for routine appointments and 'scrambles' for same-day appointments, and mismatches in expectations between community pharmacists and additional services.

The Doctor's Lounge response and alignment with the above strategy:

- The significant reduction in the number of GPs directly affects the local Hillingdon population. Therefore, with The Doctor's Lounge providing another local practice we will support the provision of healthcare services.
- The urgent need to address the crisis in GP recruitment is supported by our practice providing more GP provision within Hillingdon. Whilst this is a private service it relieves the NHS burden and therefore supports this deficiency in the service provision.
- Planning for the reduction in the number of GPs is crucial for the local population, and providing additional services is vital. Providing increased capacity for routine appointments and same day appointments is the basis of our clinic and we will be able to increase capacity in the community

Access to GP services can be measured in various ways, such as physical access, timely access, and patient choice of appointments. Our clinic has taken steps to address these challenges. We have new GPs requesting to join us, indicating a desire to work in private practice. This retention strategy ensures that both private sector and NHS GPs are available to patients, as many often work in both settings. We also offer same-day appointments and extended hours to support patients.

Meeting the House of Commons 10 year health plan - General Practice Research briefing

(See Appendix 5)

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7194/>

- The government's 10-year health plan states that it will "bring back the family doctor" by incentivising GPs to ensure that patients most in need see the same doctor at every GP appointment.
- The plan also focuses on preventing diseases by providing financial incentives to reward GPs who help to prevent common conditions such as heart disease.

- To address the 8am scramble and improve patient access to appointments, we propose that general practices ensure patients can contact their surgery via electronic communication throughout core hours.

The Government's 10-year health plan suggests several measures to achieve this:

- Bring back the family doctor: The plan aims to incentivise GPs to ensure that patients most in need see the same doctor at every appointment.
- Reduce bureaucracy and GP performance targets: By removing performance targets and focussing solely on individual patients, we can deliver more appointments. While we have targets for clinical benefit for each patient, these are individually created rather than population targets based on cost savings.
- Focus on disease prevention: We provide financial incentives to reward GPs who help prevent common conditions like heart disease.

The Doctor's Lounge response and alignment with the above strategy:

- The Family GP is the core of our service, providing a named personal doctor who follows the patient's progress, fostering continuity and excellence in healthcare.
- Our health checks and health reviews offer a proactive approach to disease prevention.
- We have ensured excellent communication with our patients. This includes our telephone line, online booking, email access, and in-person services, all providing immediate access to book appointments.
- A significant part of our practice involves health screening and health checks to identify medical issues early, promoting healthy lifestyles and habits that reduce morbidity. This, in turn, leads to fewer hospital appointments, admissions, and GP appointments, relieving the burden on the NHS and social care.

Conclusion

In conclusion we believe that the evidence provided here meets with both local council and government plans to improve general practice care, provide improved community healthcare support and meet the healthcare demands of the local community. Hillingdon will benefit considerably from our clinic and allow residents to have a choice for their healthcare whilst it relives the burden of the current healthcare services. It is important to recognise that The Doctor's Lounge having a premises within the local community, close to the town centre will support rather than destabilise the services and we have shown in this document a number of ways in which it will do this.

We are confident that our clinic will be a valuable addition to the residential area. We have carefully considered the concerns related to integrating a clinic into a residential neighborhood and are committed to being a responsible and respectful neighbor. We believe this proposal demonstrates our dedication to community well-being and the positive impact the clinic will have on the residents.

REFERENCES:

APPENDIX 1:

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APPENDIX 4:

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