

University Medical Group

University of Reading
Medical Practice
9 Northcourt Avenue
Reading
RG2 7HE

Whitley Villa Surgery
1 Christchurch Road
Reading
RG2 7AB

T: +44 (0)1189874551

T: +44 (0)1189874551

www.readinguniversitymedicalpractice.nhs.uk

Tom Lake
Reading Patient Voice

tom@glossa.co.uk

21 November 2024

Dear Tom

I hope you are keeping well.

I am writing to share with South Reading Patient Voice that we will be closing our Whitley Villa Surgery on 16 December 2024.

The practice undertook a consultation in the summer regarding the proposed closure of the University Medical Group's small branch surgery with most of the patient feedback being in favour of the closure. The practice's proposal has now been approved by the relevant committee of the Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board.

Here is a summary of the reasons for the closure of the branch surgery in case any of our patients raise this with you.

The University Medical Practice merged with the Whitley Villa practice in 2016 and since then all patients have had a choice of which site they are seen at. Most patients choose the University Medical Practice site due to the greater availability of appointments and better facilities.

The Whitley Villa branch surgery is a Grade 2 listed converted Edwardian residence, which is currently open one day a week. The premises were identified as not being Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) compliant at the time of the merger. Since then, the fabric of the building has deteriorated further with damp, basement area flooding, rotting sash windows and subsidence impacting the integrity of the building.

Since the merger, we have been unable to source funding to build a new GP surgery and we are not expecting to obtain NHS funding in the current financial environment.

Closing Whitley Villa Surgery will ensure safer working for our staff, who have sometimes felt 'cut off' from neighbouring colleagues due to the lay out of the building.

The closure will also allow us to make more efficient use of our workforce, by removing travel times between the two sites for our clinical staff.

In addition, a receptionist works at Whitley Villa on a rota basis. As there is extremely low footfall, they also perform call centre tasks but may need to deal with patients at the front desk too. This makes the management of reception roles less efficient than it would be if they are all at the main site where there is a receptionist assigned to the front desk and others assigned to the call centre.

In light of the closure, we will be consolidating our Primary Care Services at the University Health Centre which is DDA compliant and maintained to an appropriate level for modern healthcare provision. The University Health Centre site is a purpose-built health centre which is open 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and Saturday mornings 8am to midday.

We recognise that for a small number of our patients, this closure will mean that they will have to travel a longer distance for their healthcare appointments, but we believe this move will greatly benefit the vast majority of our patients.

Possible disadvantages for patients might be travelling the distance from Whitley Villa Surgery to the University Health Centre. This is a 15-minute walk on foot.

By public transport there are bus routes which run some of the way between the Whitley Villa area and the University Health Centre and stop at Christchurch Green.

We plan to inform our patients and have been liaising with Healthwatch and the Practice Patient Participation group.

To conclude, I would invite any queries, concerns or points of clarification about this branch surgery closure to be raised directly with the practice via fiona.mullin@nhs.net

Best wishes

Elizabeth

Dr Elizabeth Johnston

o