

LEYBURN MEDICAL PRACTICE

PROPOSED SERVICE EXPANSION

In 2007, Lord Darzi issued a review of the NHS in which it was broadly agreed that the focus of the NHS should be on providing services that:

- Offer patients choice;
- Offer patients convenience of access;
- Are provided closer to patients' homes;
- Are clinically effective; and
- Are cost efficient.

As there is no scope for a stand alone walk in or similar centre in Leyburn, the Practice considers that it has a responsibility to respond locally to the needs and aspirations expressed in Lord Darzi's review and to fill the gaps in healthcare provision that he highlights. However this places unachievable demands on its existing accommodation though the Practice has tried to do what it can within the present constraints.

As a first step the Practice has already used a generous bequest from a deceased patient to procure an ultrasound machine with which to offer a community based ultrasound service. The service began in January 2010 and has had very positive patient feedback with 95% rating the concept of a community based service as excellent.

The success of the ultrasound service now being provided by the Practice is a very real reflection of the extent of the need that was previously not being met locally, or least which was only being met by putting patients in the position of having to travel significant distances for appointments which typically last less than twenty minutes. It is however only one of a number of otherwise unmet needs in the local provision of healthcare to the community. Bearing in mind the often extreme difficulties that patients can have in travelling to and accessing hospital based services, the Practice believes that it would be logical to move towards the aim of hosting NHS commissioned general outpatient clinics in the following specialities:

- Orthopaedics;
- Dermatology;
- General Surgery;
- Audiology;
- Ophthalmology;
- Rheumatology;
- Gynaecology;
- Urology;
- Plastic surgery; and
- Cardiology.

These are clinics that can be safely provided in a community setting and for which there is a significant need in a population with the Practice's demographics (predominantly older patients).

At the same time and for similar reasons, the Practice recognises that there is a need to provide a range of surgical procedures that can be safely provided under local anaesthetic from community based premises. This is a model that has begun to expand across the UK from its pioneering beginnings at Probus Surgery in Cornwall which is similar in its rural character to Leyburn (see <http://www.probussurgery.co.uk/page1.aspx?p=5>). Led by a consultant surgeon the model provides a service that meets the Darzi principles at a cost that is often substantially less than when it is offered within a hospital setting. The sort of procedures that are envisaged are:

- Hernia repairs;

- Minor hand surgery;
- Minor plastics surgery; and
- Minor foot surgery.

Using consultant surgeons, the Practice would be able to deliver this service and meet patients' needs if compliant accommodation was available in which to provide a properly equipped operating theatre.

Both the outpatient clinics service and the surgery in primary care service require facilities that necessitate the expansion of the current practice building. When considering this, the Practice also identified the benefits of further centralising other local healthcare providers on the same site in order to better meet the needs of its population. To that end the Practice has held discussions with Leyburn Physiotherapy Practice who are currently applying to offer NHS physiotherapy services recognising the needs identified in Richmondshire District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recent report into physiotherapy provision in Richmondshire. They have committed to working with the Medical Practice to meet the need for healthcare services along the lines of Lord Darzi's principles.

By expanding its range of services as described the Practice will:

- Offer patients a **choice** of where to have outpatient appointments and procedures;
- Offer patients **convenience of access**;
- Provide services which are **closer to home** for its patients;
- Provide services which will be **clinically effective** and safe by offering it in partnership with consultant specialists; and
- Provide services which **integrate** primary and secondary care pathways.

By including Leyburn Physiotherapy Practice within the same building that already hosts NHS community healthcare teams the Medical Practice will be providing a single point of delivery for many of the services that patients need. This will benefit the local community by helping to address some of the significant issues faced by patients living in a rural economy where access to key services is frequently extremely difficult to gain due to distance, and difficult to afford due to transport costs. There is a real concern that without developing services close to patients' homes, their healthcare needs will increasingly be left unmet thereby exacerbating some of the existing health inequalities that are often a factor of rural life.

Working with our landlord, Trinity Medical Properties, the Practice has now had architectural plans drafted to expand the first floor of the existing building to create facilities for outpatient clinics; a properly equipped operating theatre; and physiotherapy treatment rooms. A planning application has been submitted by Trinity Medical Properties and it is hoped that planning permission might be granted in time for construction work to begin in the autumn of 2011 with services commencing in the autumn of 2012.