

Why does Unity Health want to close New Chapel surgery in Long Crendon?

The building is no longer suitable for the purposes of a modern, safe general practice. The surgery is a converted chapel and has no space for expansion or redevelopment. It has inadequate disability access, a shortage of space, consulting rooms that do not comply with modern NHS building requirements and no patient parking.

The shortcomings of the building have been made even clearer by the coronavirus outbreak – we were forced to close the premises at the start of the outbreak because social distancing was impossible. As the building is now shut, we believe the most sensible course of action is for it to remain closed and instead focus our efforts on working in a different way to offer better facilities to our patients. We want to offer the best and safest range of services to our patients in the most appropriate setting, and we believe closing the Long Crendon surgery permanently is the best way to achieve that.

Will there be a new surgery at Long Crendon?

There are no plans to build a new surgery or acquire any other premises for this purpose in Long Crendon, and we do not expect this to change. The way the NHS is planning its primary care (General Practice) services, now and in the future, means that new surgery developments are only likely to go ahead when they can serve patient populations of 10,000 or more (Long Crendon has a patient size of around 3,500). We understand this may be disappointing for some people, but we are confident we can provide a full and satisfactory range of services to our patients from the Brill surgery instead.

How will I access appointments with GPs and Practice Nurses if the Long Crendon surgery should close permanently?

As you will probably know, even before the coronavirus pandemic Unity Health has embraced modern ways of working with patients. These have included telephone assessments and remote consultations with GPs. Since the coronavirus outbreak, we have taken these methods further to help keep patients and staff as safe as possible from infection. During this time we have still seen patients face-to-face at other surgeries, such as Brill, in cases where this has been necessary from a clinical point of view. We hope you will agree that these methods have been successful. We intend to carry on with this approach across all Unity Health surgeries in the future, adapting our procedures as and when coronavirus restrictions come to be eased.

How can I reach Brill surgery if I need to go there instead of Long Crendon?

When face-to-face appointments are required, the easiest way to reach Brill from the Long Crendon area would be by car. Parking facilities are available at Brill surgery. Several bus routes run between Long Crendon and Brill during weekdays which may be helpful for some people, but we are aware that these do not run regularly throughout the

day. Again, we plan to explore options to identify ways in which patients who are unable to travel by car may be supported if they should need to reach Brill surgery. We are aware that a number of voluntary groups help with patient transport in other areas (eg Good Neighbours; Age Concern etc and we plan to work with these and other local voluntary groups to see if something similar could be set up for patients from Long Crendon). We would appreciate you feeding back any concerns you might have over the way you think you might access Brill surgery.

What do I need to do if the practice were to close?

Nothing – you can continue to access the wider range of GP services available at Unity Health, and you will be able to access these via Brill Surgery. Your registration will be unaffected.

What happens if we need a home visit?

GPs and out visiting paramedic service will continue to provide home visits to housebound patients who remain registered with Unity Health.

Would I be able to see the same doctors/ healthcare staff that I am used to?

We anticipate that staff at the Long Crendon surgery will transfer to Brill surgery, and so would expect them to be available in the way that patients are used to.

How will I get prescriptions?

Brill Surgery has a dispensing pharmacy, so you would still be able to pick prescriptions up from there.

We are also exploring what options are available to support patients who may find it difficult to reach the pharmacy to collect medication. A very active group of local volunteers came together to organise a delivery service for ‘shielding’ patients during the covid pandemic and we would be very happy to work with this group on a more permanent delivery service. We are also aware of other areas which have arrangements with the local village shop and, again, we are happy to explore this as a possibility.