

4 August 2017

# Media release

## Support for Ocean Health begins to show benefits for patients

Extra GPs have provided advice and direct care for dozens of patients from Ocean Health GP practice in Plymouth this week, as part of a package of support from NHS England.

The additional doctors are helping people over the phone or seeing them face-to-face, easing pressure on the three surgeries at Stirling Road, Chard Road and Collings Park.

NHS England has also now appointed Access Health Care to take over the running of the practice on an interim basis, following the decision of the existing GP partners to hand back their contract.

The handover to Access is due to begin over coming weeks. It means further staff and expertise will be brought in to augment the current Ocean team, who will continue to work at the three surgeries.

Amanda Fisk, Director of Assurance and Delivery for NHS England in the South West, said: “We’re already seeing a real difference for patients as the new GPs get to work. That takes some of the pressure off the existing doctors, who’re doing a valiant job.

“This will continue while Access Health Care gets ready to bring its experience and resources to bear, so we should see further improvements as we head into the autumn.

“It’s not an instant fix, but we’d urge patients to stick with the practice they know and allow it to get back on its feet.”

Ends

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## Background

1. Ocean Health has 22,000 registered patients, with three surgeries:
  - Ocean Health Centre, Stirling Road
  - Collings Park Medical Centre, Egguckland Road
  - Acute Hub, St Budeaux
2. The extra GPs are being provided by Devon Doctors, the county's out-of-hours service, which has been commissioned by NHS England since Tuesday 1 August to provide additional capacity for Ocean Health

On Tuesday 1 August and Wednesday 2 August, Devon Doctors' call-handlers took 318 calls from patients when the surgery became busy

Of these, 50 needed to speak with one of Devon Doctors' GPs for advice or were booked in for a same-day GP appointment

3. Access Health Care, a subsidiary of Devon Doctors, already runs the Ernesettle practice in Plymouth

It was appointed from a list of providers that are approved for stepping in to take on GP contracts at short notice in the south of England

4. It is NHS England's role to ensure that people have access to good primary care

Letters explaining about the new arrangements, how to find out more and how to get involved in shaping the practice's long-term future, are with NHS England's mailing house and due to go to each of the 22,000 Ocean patients early next week

NHS England and partners are also developing measures to ease pressure on GP practices across Plymouth