

Newton Poppleford residents able to register at closer GP practice thanks to boundary change

People living in Newton Poppleford will be able to register at their closest GP practice in Sidmouth thanks to catchment area changes announced today (4 January 2022)

Until now, the village has been in the catchment of Coleridge Medical Centre, based 4.4 miles away in Ottery St Mary.

Changes recently approved by NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), which is responsible for GP practices in the county, mean the village will switch to the catchment of Sid Valley Practice, 2.9 miles away, as of 3 January 2022. The changes were jointly proposed by Coleridge and Sid Valley.

The boundary change means about 1,400 patients who live in Newton Poppleford who are registered with Coleridge can choose to either remain registered with Coleridge or switch to Sid Valley. New residents to the village will register at Sid Valley.

The boundary changes coincide with a decision not to reopen the branch surgery run by Coleridge Medical Centre in Newton Poppleford. The branch surgery, which used to operate for about 2½ hours on two mornings a week, was closed on a temporary basis at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic for infection control and access reasons. National NHS guidance changed and meant most GP consultations were conducted over the telephone or online and face to face appointments, when clinically necessary, and these have been held in a covid secure environment at the Ottery site.

The future of the branch surgery was under review before the pandemic and Coleridge practice successfully sought permission for the change from Devon CCG, having carried out a recent survey with patients who used the service about their views on the branch site and practice boundaries.

The branch site consisted of a single consulting room, meaning only a basic GP consultation could be offered from a lone working male doctor for a very limited time during the week. The site presented safety concerns and infection prevention and control issues along with future availability of workforce.

Dr Dilley said: "Anyone who currently registered with us can now choose to remain with us – in which case they don't need to do anything – or they can switch to Sid Valley by filling in a simple registration form.

“People in the village have long pointed out that Sid Valley Practice is closer and much easier to get to than our main site at Ottery-St-Mary, especially by public transport. The route is better and there is a direct bus service.

“Thank you to everyone who took part in our recent survey. We know some patients will miss the branch surgery in the village but we firmly believe the full range of modern GP services offered at the Ottery and Sid Valley centres will provide a much improved and safer offer to local people and our workforce in the longer term.”

Dr Stych said: “People living in Newton Poppleford will be welcome to register with us from 4 January 2022 if they would like to.

“We know getting to Ottery can be a challenge for some. Our main base at Beacon Medical Centre is a modern, purpose-built facility just off the main road near Waitrose.