

**NHS ENGLAND (CHESHIRE AND MERSEYSIDE)
FRESHFIELD SURGERY**

Patient Listening Exercise Analysis Report



Report Produced on behalf of NHS England Cheshire and Merseyside by:
H2A Partnership Limited

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1. Acknowledgements

This report has been prepared for NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside), in respect of the future of Freshfield Surgery ('the practice') in accordance with the terms of our agreement dated October 26, 2016 ('the agreement') and solely for the purpose and terms of the agreement with you. We accept no liability to anyone else in connection to this report.

This report contains information obtained from the patient population of the practice as indicated within the document. We have not sought to establish the reliability of these sources or verified the information that these individuals provided.

We understand that you may wish to disseminate this report to key individuals and stakeholders and, in doing so, we would draw your attention, and that of any other parties who may access and read this document, to the following:

1. The report is provided to NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) in accordance with NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) as a summary of the work carried out by H2A Partnership Ltd under the agreement, which was executed exclusively for NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) benefit and use.
2. The report may consequently not include all matters pertinent to the reader.
3. The report does not constitute professional advice to any third party.
4. The information contained in this report should not be acted on by any other party without first obtaining professional advice.
5. H2A Partnership Ltd accepts no liability (including for negligence) to any party, other than NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) in relation to this document.

In addition, we would like to extend our thanks to all the members of the public, patients and carers who took the time to take part in the listening exercise and attend one of the 8 organised listening events. During the listening exercise (April 3 – May 12, 2017) a total of 157 patients of the practice attended the listening events, 31 emails and 4 letters were received, and 8 phone calls were made to the Freephone helpline.

This is our final report.
Yours faithfully
H2A Partnership Ltd

2. Executive Summary

Service Background Information

In April 2013 NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) inherited 20 APMS contracts, operated by a single provider, one of which was Freshfield Surgery. The provider which ran the surgery in 2013, had been awarded a 3-year APMS contract with an option to extend for 2 years. Following inadequacies in the service provision which led to numerous patient complaints, NHS England worked with the provider to resolve these issues. However, when the contract terminated at 3 years, NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) chose not to extend the contract for a further 2 years.

Since March 2016 an interim provider of GP services has been in place at Freshfield Surgery. This contract ends on December 31, 2017.

As of April 2017, NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) and NHS Southport and Formby Clinical Commissioning Group are working together as joint commissioners of primary care medical services.

The average size of a GP practice nationally is approximately 7,500 patients. However, patient numbers at Freshfield Surgery fall significantly short of this figure, as detailed below, with numbers continuing to decline from April 2016.

Practice List Size	April 14	April 15	April 16	January 17
Freshfield Surgery	3039	2953	2694	2654

Following the appointment of the current interim provider, NHS England has been financially subsidising the practice at a significantly higher cost than standard General Medical Service (GMS) rates. This arrangement is neither sustainable or equitable in the long-term and across the locality.

In the Autumn of 2016, NHS commissioners conducted a review and options exercise looking at the future of 9 GP practices. Different solutions were sought for each of these practices and a procurement exercise was undertaken for seven of them. At the time, there was limited information available regarding Freshfield Surgery in respect of deciding the future of the practice.

Due to the small patient list size, NHS (Cheshire and Merseyside) and NHS Southport and Formby CCG's main concern is the viability of finding a suitable, quality provider for the practice in the future. The main challenge at the practice is delivering sustainable, improved quality and a wider range of primary care services that the NHS is required to provide in relation to the NHS General Practice Forward View.

As insufficient information was known about Freshfield Surgery, in January 2017, a Task & Finish Group was assembled with representatives from NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside), NHS Southport and Formby CCG, clinical leads, the practice's Patient Participate Group, Healthwatch Sefton and H2A. Through the collaborative work of the Task & Finish Group, NHS commissioners chose to undertake a Patient Listening Exercise to seek the views of the patients directly affected by any potential change, and to understand what is important to them. This exercise provided a platform for patients to feedback their views and present further potential options which commissioners may not have considered. The findings of this listening exercise in addition to the Independent Travel Assessment and Premises Survey will be considered, along with other statutory considerations to determine what happens next in respect of Freshfield surgery.

Listening Exercise Options

All attendees at the listening exercise were presented with several potential options for consideration, as listed below:

- 1. Procure a new provider for the surgery with the same level of funding as other practices.**
- 2. When the current contract expires, transfer patients to another local surgery with sufficient capacity.**
- 3. Merge Freshfield Surgery and Hightown Village Surgery to form one practice and procure a single provider to run both practices full-time.**
- 4. Merge Freshfield Surgery and Hightown Village Surgery, operating a full-time service across two sites, with each site operating part-time.**
- 5. Establish Freshfield Surgery as a branch surgery, which would be linked to another existing practice.**
- 6. Patients' ideas. NHS England hoped patients would offer options which hadn't been considered.**

Patient Engagement Prior to Listening Exercise

An interim communication was disseminated by NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) on November 18, 2016 to patients of Freshfield Surgery regarding the future of the practice. This included the H2A Freephone helpline number as a point of contact.

A further interim patient communication was sent by NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) on December 21, 2016, updating patients on the current position. It assured patients that no decision had been made, and that the current provider's contract had been extended to December 31, 2017, to provide time to undertake a patient listening exercise. NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) informed patients that they would write to them again in early spring 2017, in the meantime, signposting them to the Freephone helpline should they have any questions.

Following this communication, the Freephone helpline received one telephone call. This call was made from a patient who had received the communication and was seeking clarification on some of the content. In total only one call was received from a patient of Freshfield until the beginning of the listening exercise (April 3rd).

From February 24, 2017 to March 27, 2017, 11 emails were received by Anthony Leo, Director of Commissioning, NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) regarding the future of Freshfield Surgery. Of the 11 emails, 10 were sent by patients registered with the practice and 1 was sent by a non-patient. A thematic analysis of the contents and attachments identified the following themes, in order of popularity:

- Fight against the potential closure of the surgery (46%)
- Impact on the local pharmacy (46%)
- Excellent service received at the practice (36%)
- Demand on other surgeries in the locality (27%)
- The ideal location of the practice (27%)
- Increase demand on A&E and emergency services (27%)
- Increase in housing locally (18%)
- Capacity at other local surgeries (18%)
- Elderly demographics (9%)
- Problems with the previous provider (9%)

In March 2017, a local stakeholder started an online petition against the potential closure of the practice. At the close of the listening exercise this petition had received 497 online signatures.

Listening Exercise Summary

At the launch of the listening exercise (April 3, 2017), all patients of the practice aged 13 years and older received a communication from NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) and NHS Southport and Formby CCG. The mailshot included all relevant information to the listening exercise, including details of the listening events and other channels by which patients could put forward their views, including a dedicated email address and

the Freephone helpline. A pull-up banner was also placed within the waiting room of the practice which provided all the relevant information, and details of how patients could register to attend the listening events or feedback their views.

In total, 8 listening events were organised at The Gild Hall in Formby for patients to attend. Each event had a maximum capacity of 60 attendees presenting the opportunity for 480 patients to attend an event throughout the listening exercise. Should the events have become oversubscribed, NHS commissioners planned to organise and facilitate more events. To ensure inclusivity and adherence to the Equality Act, the mailshot signposted patients to the number of ways they could register to attend, this included registering online through Eventbrite, or alternatively, emailing the dedicated email address or calling the Freephone helpline. H2A registered all patients who contacted the email address and Freephone.

The aim of these sessions was to provide patients with further detail in relation to the options NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) and NHS Southport and Formby CCG have considered in respect of the potential solution for Freshfield surgery. It provided patients with an opportunity to discuss the options which NHS commissioners presented, whilst also allowing patients to put forward their own thoughts and options.

The listening events took place at The Gild Hall, Formby and there were 8 opportunities for patients to attend:

Date of Event	Session
Tuesday April 11, 2017	1:00pm – 3:00pm
Tuesday April 11, 2017	3:30pm – 5:30pm
Tuesday April 11, 2017	6:30pm – 8:30pm
Thursday April 20, 2017	10:00am – 12:00pm
Thursday April, 20 2017	1:00pm – 3:00pm
Tuesday April 25, 2017	12:00pm - 2:00pm
Tuesday April 25, 2017	3:00pm – 5:00pm
Tuesday April 25, 2017	6:30pm – 8:30pm

The venue was easily accessible, within walking distance of the centre of Formby Village and Freshfield Surgery, and close to regular bus routes. Representatives from NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside), NHS Southport & Formby CCG, clinical leads, Chair of the Task & Finish Group and H2A were present at events to discuss with patients their concerns and issues.

The format of each event was planned to include a presentation from Senior Commissioning Manager, for NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside), Alan Cummings, followed by a video featuring the Chair of the Task and Finish Group, Dr Niall Leonard, and, finally, a table-top workshop exercise with patients and NHS commissioners. Comment cards were also scattered on each table should attendees wish to make any additional comments at the end of the session, or feel that they did not get a question answered. A total of 6 comments cards were left with a variety of statements and

questions. Each event had a capacity of 60 attendees, with a total of 480 potential attendees throughout the 8 sessions. A total of 157 patients attended.

Each attendee was given an event pack of papers upon arrival. These included an itinerary of events for the session, a copy of the presentation, a copy of the Frequently Asked Questions and the transcript for the video featuring Dr Niall Leonard. Copies of these packs were additionally placed within reception at Freshfield Surgery, and patients who were unable to attend a session were signposted to them being there.

A decision was taken to cancel 2 of the planned events due to the very small number of patients who had registered. The events which were cancelled were scheduled for Tuesday, April 25, at 12:00pm-2:00pm and 3:00pm-5:00pm.

Each event had a total of 3 patients registered which was insufficient to justify running an entire session; 4 attendees had registered via email and 2 attendees had registered via the Freephone helpline. All were contacted via their chosen method of registration to inform them of the change of circumstances. Of the 6 patients involved, 2 were able to change their time slot and attend a different session, and the remaining 4 were sent the attendee packs in the post.

During the cancelled session time slots, representatives from H2A were present at the venue in case any unregistered patients choose to attend. During the 12:00pm-2:00pm session, 3 non-registered attendees arrived, and 2 non-registered attendees arrived for the 3:00pm-5:00pm session. In both instances, they were given an attendees pack and the representatives from H2A further explained the content of the presentation. Both groups were in attendances for over 1 hour and left having had any questions answered and having fed back their views.

Summary table of attendance

Date	Time Slot	Registered	Attended	Non-Attendees	Non-Registered
Tuesday April 11	1:00pm - 3:00pm	25	26	3	4
Tuesday April 11	3:30pm - 5:30pm	21	19	3	1
Tuesday April 11	6:30pm - 8:30pm	27	28	3	4
Thursday April 20	10:00am - 12:00pm	25	25	2	2
Thursday April 20	1:00pm - 3:00pm	20	16	5	1
Tuesday April 25	12:00pm - 2:00pm	CANCELLED	3	/	3
Tuesday April 25	3:00pm - 5:00pm	CANCELLED	2	/	2
Tuesday April 25	6:30pm - 8:30pm	32	38	3	9
Totals		150	157	19	26

Of the 2654 patients registered at Freshfield Surgery some 157 patients attended the events; a total of 5.9% of the surgery's patient population. The main concern articulated throughout the events was the desire to retain a practice within Freshfield, ideally on a full-time basis. However, patients would prefer part-time over no GP provision at all in the village. A qualitative analysis of the comments suggests that patients' main concerns regarding primary care services moving outside the village are the following:

- Capacity at surgeries in Formby and Crosby – currently long waiting times to see a doctor.
- Poor parking in Formby Village and it is expensive.
- Impact on the local pharmacy should the surgery close.
- New housing having planning permission in Freshfield.
- Continuity of care.
- Happy with excellent service being provided by the current provider.
- Concern about getting home-visits.
- Smaller surgeries mean a closer relationship with staff.

During the listening exercise a Twitter account, Freephone helpline and email address were established as points of contact for patients. Coverage of Twitter reached 2 tweets, 59 profile visits, 55 impressions, 3 mentions and 2 comments. The Freephone helpline received 8 calls from patients and residents regarding queries about the listening exercise and future of Freshfield Surgery, and to share their views regarding the future of the practice. The established email address received 34 emails from patients and interested parties; 3 requesting the URL link to register for a listening event online and 31 expressing their views regarding the future of the practice.

Other key organisations and stakeholders were engaged in the listening exercise. Healthwatch Sefton and the practice's Patient Participation Group representatives both sit on the established Task and Finish Group.





3. Engagement Process

In April 2017, a listening exercise was undertaken to gather feedback of patient opinions and concerns regarding the future delivery of primary care services in Freshfield. Information was mailed to patients informing them of the listening exercise and inviting them to engage in the process. All patients were encouraged to engage to ensure that their views could be heard. All findings would be collated and analysed before submission to NHS commissioners to enable them to fully understand and consider the patients views and perspective regarding the future of their local surgery.

The exercise provided an opportunity for NHS commissioners to expand on their activity relating to the future of Freshfield Surgery, alongside discussing and sharing the potential options that they had previously given thought to. All options were presented to patients with an emphasis on the potential benefits and possible negatives which commissioners would need to take into consideration.

All patients of the practice aged 13 years and older received a mailshot from NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) and NHS Southport and Formby CCG informing them of the upcoming listening exercise. The mailshot included information relating to the various channels through which they can engage in the listening exercise, including how to register for patient listening events and if they were unable to attend the alternate contact points by which they can express their concerns, issues and questions relating to the information about the future of Freshfield Surgery.

Here's how you can tell us what you think...

	Online	Please register by copying the URL below into your web browser and selecting the date and time which is most convenient for you: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/nhs-england-13198312969
	Freephone help line 0800 044 8169	If you do not have access to the internet, please call the Freephone number below and we will secure you place based on availability. You can also feedback your views via the helpline number. Use the same number if you require information regarding Freshfield Surgery in large print, audio, Braille or an alternative format or language. Call 0800 044 8169 and we will do our best to help.
	Email	Alternatively, you can register via email or send any feedback on your views to: freshfieldpractice@h2a.global
	Twitter	You can feedback your views via twitter or follow us for more information: @FreshfieldGP1

The exercise concluded with 157 patients attending the listening events, 31 people emailing their feedback, 4 people writing letters, 2 individuals tweeting and 8 individuals contacting the Freephone helpline. A total of 7.6% of the patient population engaged in the listening exercise and fed back their views. Further analysis of the feedback received can be found in the following section of this report.

4. Listening Events Feedback

A total of 8 listening events were organised to engage with patients of Freshfield Surgery regarding the future of the practice. The events allowed NHS commissioners to expand in greater detail on the current position, the background, possible solution that they had already considered, and the rationale which had informed their decisions so far. All patients were encouraged to attend gain further insight but, more importantly, to allow their views, concerns and questions to be heard. This gave NHS commissioners the opportunity to fully understand any issues and concerns, and gain insight in to the impact their potential decisions will have on the patient population of the practice.

The events were held in a local venue, The Gild Hall, which is centrally located, a short walk from the practice, and on local public transport routes. Representatives from NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside), NHS Southport and Formby CCG, clinical leads, Chair of the Task & Finish Group and H2A were present at the events to discuss with patients their concerns and issues. The events were scheduled over a 3-week period, with a variety of timed sessions to ensure that there was equity of access.

All attendees were given an event pack of papers at the registration desk upon arrival. These included an itinerary of events for the session, a copy of the presentation, a copy of the Frequently Asked Questions and the transcript for the video featuring Dr Niall Leonard. Larger prints of the presentation were available for patients who required one.

The itinerary of the events included a presentation from Senior Commissioning Manager at NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside), Alan Cummings, who presented the current position and potential options. The presentation was followed by a brief video, featuring the Chair of the Task and Finish Group, Dr Niall Leonard. The video summarised the position and expanded further on the vision for primary care as detailed in the NHS General Practice Forward View. The session then moved to a table top facilitated workshop with 10 patients per table, an NHS facilitator from either NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) or NHS Southport and Formby CCG, and a scribe who took notes of the discussions taking place at that table.

Comment cards were also made available to patients during the table top workshops. Patients were asked to use these cards should they feel that they had been unable to express their views during the discussion, whether they simply had additional comments to add to the discussion or if they had a specific question that they wanted to raise with NHS commissioners. Patients requiring a direct response to their questions were asked to leave their contact details on the card. A total of 6 cards were left by patients of Freshfield Surgery.

Each event had a capacity for 60 patients/attendees, with a total of 480 patients being able to attend. Prior to the launch of the listening exercise the decision was taken to cap the number of events at 8. However, the Task and Finish Group appreciated that in doing this they were only providing capacity for 18% of the patient population of Freshfield Surgery. It was agreed that if it quickly became apparent following the launch of the

listening exercise that the events were going to reach capacity, NHS commissioners would increase the number of events for more patients to attend.

The uptake from patients to attend the Freshfield events was relatively slow and resulted in two of the sessions being cancelled. Patients could register via different methods including a URL website link, by emailing the dedicated email address, or by calling the Freephone helpline number. A total of 157 patients attended the 6 events hosted over the course of 3 weeks, totalling 5.9% of the patient population of Freshfield Surgery. The attendance of patients and NHS staff can be found in the table below.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time Slot</i>	<i>Registered</i>	<i>Attended</i>	<i>Non-Attendees</i>	<i>Non-Registered</i>	<i>Facilitators</i>	<i>Floating Facilitator</i>	<i>Scribes</i>	<i>Clinician</i>	<i>Healthwatch</i>
Tuesday, April 11	1:00pm - 3:00pm	25	26	3	4	4	2	3	1	1
Tuesday, April 11	3:30pm - 5:30pm	21	19	3	1	4	2	3	1	0
Tuesday, April 11	6:30pm - 8:30pm	27	28	3	4	4	2	3	1	0
Thursday, April 20	10:00am - 12:00pm	25	25	2	2	4	2	3	2	0
Thursday, April 20	1:00pm - 3:00pm	20	16	5	1	4	2	2	2	0
Tuesday, April 25	12:00pm - 2:00pm	CANCELLED	3	/	3	/	/	/	/	/
Tuesday, April 25	3:00pm - 5:00pm	CANCELLED	2	/	2	/	/	/	/	/
Tuesday, April 25	6:30pm - 8:30pm	32	38	3	9	4	0	4	1	1
Totals		150	157	19	26	24	10	18	8	2

NHS commissioners and the scribes at each table top workshop were given 3 prompt questions to seek patients' comments on. This was to ensure that there was consistency in the group discussions. The 3 prompt questions were as follows:

1. Do you have any views in terms of the options which have been shared today?
2. Do you have any other options which commissioners have not yet considered?
3. Are there any other factors which you feel commissioners have overlooked or not considered? Do you have any comments?

Potential Solutions/Options

A key part of the presentation given by NHS England Senior Commissioning Manager, Alan Cummings, focussed upon the options which had already been thought through by commissioners and the Task and Finish Group members. The first prompt question aimed to get feedback on these solutions. During each of the 6 sessions in Freshfield there was an overwhelming consensus from attendees that **Solution 2**, which was to allow the current provider's contract to expire on December 31, 2017 and disperse the patient population to other local surgeries, was not acceptable and was strongly opposed.

Solution 1 - to procure a new provider with the same level of funding as other practices, under GMS rates. This proved to be the most favourable solution by attendees.

Patients expressed their need for quality primary care services in Freshfield and a wish for future services to be maintained at the current excellent standard, with appointments being easily available on the same day and with continuity of care. Ideally, they wished for the service to be run on a full-time basis with at least a single doctor present during working hours. Patients were less interested in having additional services which are available at some larger surgeries. Instead, they conveyed their happiness at having a basic or core level of service available at the practice and travelling occasionally when needing to access additional services. However, they also conveyed that although it wasn't a perfect solution, a part-time service at the practice was better than no GP provision at all. It was highlighted by some patients that a part-time service may well result in an increase in the demand for home-visits. Patients also discussed the premises at Freshfield as being ideal for expansion and growth and felt that this could easily be future-proofed for primary care services in the Formby locality.

Solution 3 - offered a potential merger with Hightown Village Surgery which is in a comparable situation, with a single provider running a full-time service at both sites.

Solution 4 - offered a similar option to solution 3, however the practice would be run part-time, with access to Hightown Village Surgery when a doctor wasn't present in Freshfield. Patients believed this not to be a feasible option for patients in Freshfield as there are surgeries in Formby which are geographically closer than Hightown Village Surgery. They agreed that Hightown Village had poor public transport links and was not easily

accessible via the road systems and for this reason they would prefer to merge with a Formby surgery should that be an option. They wished for Hightown Village Surgery and Freshfield Surgery's future to be considered by NHS commissioners separately. However, there was a suggestion that if the practice were to merge with Hightown Village Surgery, that this would be on an interim basis to allow the patient list to grow and make the practices viable, and to become stand alone as soon as possible if the patient list size increased in sufficient numbers.

Solution 5 - focused on Freshfield Surgery being run as a branch of an existing local practice. Patients believed that this was agreeable, potentially with the current provider whom they are very happy with. Patients expressed the view that they would prefer the service to be run full-time as it maintains a practice in the village, and they would be happy to travel to the other surgery should they need to access additional services.

Other Factors for Consideration

NHS commissioners sought patients views in terms of whether there were any other factors that they felt had not been considered? There were 4 main factors which were mentioned repeatedly by more than 50% of patients attending; these were:

- Reference to the planning which had recently been approved for new residential housing. Patients felt that this would increase demand on local GP services.
- The need for a new modern purpose built health centre which would meet the needs of the population of Formby.
- The impact a closure would have on the local pharmacy.
- Future proof primary care services by looking at the potential growth of the population of Formby, by not only looking at the increase in residential housing, but the population and demographics of local schools.

Other factors mentioned were the age demographics of Freshfield; the impact of the loss of the surgery on the community, and loss of relationships which have been formed between practice staff and patients.

Patients also felt that if a quality provider was successfully procured, and the future of Freshfield Surgery was secure, it was highly likely that some patients would return to the service. One patient suggested that the number of registered patients at the practice was not a reliable indication of demand on GP appointments, and asked NHS commissioners to revisit the number of appointments taken by patients.

Patient Suggested Options/Solutions

The listening events allowed NHS commissioners to share details of the options which had already been thought through, however, they were also keen to use the listening exercise to ask patients directly if they had any potential ideas or further solutions which could be explored.

Patients were clear that their desired outcome from the process would be for primary care services to be maintained at Freshfield Surgery. Additional services, which many GP surgeries offer, were believed to be services which were only accessed occasionally and, for this reason, patients were happy to travel to the clinic in Formby should they need them. Some patients suggested that they would be happy with a part-time service or reduced hours at the very minimum to maintain some GP presence at the current location. However, if the surgery were part-time they were concerned there would be an increase in home visits. The patients suggested 11 potential solutions which are listed below:

- **Build a modern, purpose-built Health Centre** – This new build will not necessarily be built upon the site of Freshfield Surgery, but will future proof services for the population of Formby. It would have several clinical professionals under one roof, ensuring that all patients who require medical care will be seen by the appropriate professional. This will relieve the pressures on other local surgeries or provide premises for all practices in Formby to merge into. It would also provide several free parking spaces.
- **Establish Freshfield Surgery as a satellite or overflow surgery** – The practice could be established as an overflow surgery for a collection of practices, or single practice, in Crosby and/or Formby. There was an overwhelming suggestion that the surgeries in nearby localities are struggling with capacity, with registered patients waiting several weeks to see a GP. Patients suggested these surgeries could use capacity at Freshfield Surgery to relieve pressures in their own practices, whilst keeping the practice open for current patients.
- **Expand and modernise Freshfield Surgery** – Patients felt the current site is ideal and open for expansion and modernisation. The patients are very satisfied and happy with the current service at the practice and, by expanding the premises, there would be the opportunity for more patients to register. With many new residential houses being granted planning permission, the expanded modern Freshfield surgery would be more attractive to those new residents as it doesn't have long waiting times to see a doctor and isn't struggling with capacity. This would lead to an increase in patient list size making Freshfield viable and maintain primary care services in the current location.
- **Put GP services in Formby Clinic** – Formby Clinic is a new purpose built clinic which, in the view of patients, is currently being underutilised. As it is an NHS Property Services owned building, patients wondered whether Freshfield Surgery could relocate into these premises. This would prevent NHS commissioners having to find capacity for patients in other Formby practices and having any impact on their

services. It would also ensure GP services and additional services would be in the same building.

- **Merge Freshfield Surgery with the current provider's surgery, Chapel Lane in Formby** – Chapel Lane Surgery in Formby currently has the same provider as Freshfield Surgery, and patients are exceptionally happy with the excellent service that they are receiving. Instead of merging with Hightown Village Surgery, which had been suggested by NHS commissioners, patients wondered whether they could merge with Chapel Lane as it is closer, and they have confidence in the provider. As many surgeries in Formby are believed to be struggling with patient capacity, this suggestion would relieve some pressure at Chapel Lane Surgery. Having confidence in the provider's quality and future of the surgery could potentially entice some patients who have previously left the practice to return; subsequently increasing the patient list size and viability of the practice. It would also maintain primary care services in their current location.
- **Offer a wider range of GP appointment times** – offering GP appointments later in the evening and at weekends would be more appealing to patients. Young, working families are believed to be moving into the new residential housing in the area and these types of appointments would be more suitable and therefore attractive to them. This would interest those patients to register at the practice, therefore increasing the patient list size, increase viability and maintain GP services in their current location.
- **Merge Freshfield Surgery with Hightown Village Surgery but put all back-office staff at Hightown only** – This would keep both sites open, although there wouldn't be a GP present at the Hightown Village Surgery premises. Instead it would be a point of contact for patients of Hightown Village Surgery in emergencies, and they can contact the clinicians to either place a call, arrange a home-visit or organise a transfer to Freshfield Surgery. The rationale behind this solution was the ability to expand Freshfield Surgery, especially if the back-office function is elsewhere, and Hightown Village Surgery patients would have to travel anyway should their practice close and Freshfield is more accessible than the surgeries in Formby.
- **Use funding from GP Forward View to maintain Freshfield Surgery** – Freshfield Surgery is currently receiving a monthly financial subsidy. Although patients understood that this subsidy would not be available in the future, it was suggested that funding for the implementation of the GP Forward View could potentially maintain this subsidy. If this option were possible, patients believed that patients who had left under the previous provider would return, together with the new residents, which would increase the patient list size making the practice viable.
- **Merge the GP Practice with the local pharmacy** – there was a suggestion to combine the practice with the local pharmacy, by expanding across to the pharmacy. This would create bigger premises, expand the offer and create a partnership between the GP and pharmacy, which may relieve pressure of the clinician's time. The purpose of this solution was to ensure that primary care services and pharmacy services are maintained at the current location.

- **Allocate patients to Freshfield Surgery** – Patients were under the impression that surgeries in Formby and Crosby were at full capacity, with some having closed lists. Their idea suggested that NHS commissioners could allocate patients from those surgeries to Freshfield Surgery, therefore decreasing GP pressures elsewhere and increasing the patient list size at the practice. The increase in patient list size would make the practice more viable and more attractive to a potential provider.
- **Establish a walk-in centre alongside the GP Practice at Freshfield Surgery** – By using the additional space at the practice to expand and host a walk-in centre, patients believed that this would make Freshfield Surgery more viable; it would create a local walk-in centre and, most importantly, ensure that primary care services are available in the current location.

Salient Themes

A thematic analysis highlighted the following:

- The increase in residential housing planned for the village.
- Capacity at other local practices should they have to absorb Freshfield Surgery patients.
- The impact of a potential closure on the local pharmacy business.
- Parking to access other local practices is both poor and expensive.
- Continuity of care.
- Happy with excellent service from current provider.
- Impact on access to home visits.
- Personal relationships made with staff at a smaller practice.

Other concerns mentioned included the poor public transport links; patients experience of the previous provider; concern regarding patients with chronic conditions; elderly demographic; Freshfield Surgery is in an ideal location; the impact on other local practices if they had to absorb Freshfield patients; and the potential increased demand on A&E and emergency services.

Frequently Asked Questions

After the listening events, a list of all questions and patient enquiries was compiled. Patients were informed that they could leave comments or ask additional questions if they wished by using the comment cards. At Freshfield no additional questions or comments were left on the comment cards.

There were 18 table top discussions throughout the 6 listening events, and the following questions were the most popularly asked during these sessions:

- How will other practices manage the increase in capacity if patients are dispersed? (39%)
- Can patients be transferred from other practices in Formby to make Freshfield viable? (28%)
- Why can't Chapel Lane (the current provider) continue? (22%)
- What are the list sizes at the other Formby and Crosby surgeries, and which lists are closed? (17%)

NHS commissioners made the decision to answer all questions and disseminate these as a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) to be shared with patients via the practice. A total of 18 different questions were asked of NHS commissioners, the full list can be found in Appendix 2.

5. Contact Point Feedback

A Freephone helpline and dedicated email address were established to enable patients to register to attend one of the listening events, or to answer any queries they may have regarding the listening exercise and future of Freshfield Surgery. Patients were directed to the Freephone helpline should they require the correspondence in large print, audio, braille, or any alternative format, or translation of the mailshot into an alternate language.

During the 6-week listening exercise a total of 8 phone calls were received to the Freephone helpline, 34 emails to the dedicated email address, and 4 direct letters. All patients who contacted any of the channels were encouraged to attend a listening event and use the opportunity to engage with NHS commissioners face-to-face and raise their concerns and questions in that arena.

Freephone Helpline

The Freephone helpline began to receive telephone queries from April 6 through to May 1. A total of 8 phone calls were recorded during the listening exercise period; 3 of those conversations were with patients and 5 with non-patients.

The total duration of the 8 conversations amounted to 2 hours 8 minutes; an average of 18 minutes and 35 seconds per call (the longest lasting 35 minutes and the shortest 4 minutes).

Regarding the future of Freshfield Surgery, the themes raised in the calls mirrored those which were expressed at the listening events. An overwhelming majority of the calls stated their disagreement and anger at the potential closure of the surgery. Other themes were as follows:

- If Freshfield Surgery were to close and patients were transferred to alternative surgeries in Formby, the potential impact of having to accommodate the additional patients at those surgeries (50%).
- There is new residential housing planned for the locality and therefore an expected increase in the population size. Patients were concerned how this increase in population will be accommodated by other surgeries in Formby if Freshfield were to close (38%).
- Patients stated that there were poor public transport links in the area and patients would struggle to access primary care services elsewhere. They also commented that individuals who drive would also struggle as the traffic systems are poor and often congested (25%).

- There is a belief amongst members of the community, including patients, that there is a struggle with capacity at other Formby surgeries, with patients at these practices waiting many weeks to see a GP. If the Freshfield Surgery patients were to be allocated to these practices there is concern regarding further exacerbation in terms of capacity. (25%).

Other salient themes which arose during the telephone conversations included the excellent service which is currently received at the practice; conversely another patient mentioned a problem with locum doctors at Freshfield Surgery; and a concern about the new electronic repeat prescription system.

Emails

A total of 34 patient, non-patient and resident emails were received during the 6-week listening exercise. The dedicated email address was established to allow patients to either register to attend an event, request the URL link to register to attend an event, or express their comments, views, concerns and questions. A total of 3 patients choose to email to request the URL link to register for an event online themselves and no Freshfield patients emailed to ask to be registered for a listening event. The remaining 31 emails were from patients and non-patients who wished to express their views and concerns.

Of the remaining 31 emails received, 49% were sent direct to the dedicated email address, 51% were sent to Anthony Leo, Commissioning Director, NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside).

Some 90% of emails received were written by patients of Freshfield Surgery and 10% were sent by individuals who were not patients at the practice.

A thematic analysis highlighted the following:

- An overall majority of patients wished for a full-time service to continue at Freshfield with the current provider.
- 45% of emails were concerned what impact a potential closure would have on the neighbouring pharmacy business. Patients were extremely pleased with the service provided to them by this business and were concerned that if the surgery were to close then the pharmacy would suffer and close soon after.
- 39% of patients expressed their happiness at the current excellent services they are receiving under the current service provider. With a further wish for this provider to continue in the future.
- 39% of patients were concerned about the potential impact a move would have on the largely elderly demographic of patients and residents of Freshfield and those patients who make up young families.
- 39% mentioned that accessing different surgeries in Formby was difficult when travelling by car. The road traffic systems are believed to be poor and especially

difficult during rush hour periods. The other main concern related to parking when accessing the other surgeries, as there is either poor parking available or the parking available is considered expensive.

- 36% of emails mentioned that there are many new residential houses which have received planning permission from the local council. The patients believe that the individuals who move into these new houses will wish to register with Freshfield Surgery over other practices in Formby and will therefore increase the patient list size.
- 36% believed that the other surgeries in the locality, which are located in Formby and Crosby, currently are at full capacity, with some having closed lists. They are under the impression that at these surgeries patients will struggle to get an appointment to see a GP without waiting in excess of 2 weeks.
- 23% commented that the decrease in patient list size, and the reason why the practice is in the current position, was due to the poor service provision which had been provided by the previous provider.
- 16% of emails expressed concern relating to potentially having to travel to an alternate local surgery, as there are few and poor public transport links.
- 16% were concerned what impact would be felt by other Formby surgeries should they have to absorb the patient list from the Freshfield Surgery. Patients expressed their apprehension that other local practices would be required to increase their capacity when patients felt these practices are already struggling and there would be a direct impact on patients who were already registered at these practices.

Other topics raised included the petition which had been established by the local pharmacist (10%); the listening exercise being a waste of NHS time and money as the decision had already been made (7%); increased demand on emergency services and A&E (7%); and the belief that patients 'lost' under the previous provider would return (7%).

A total of 3 patient emails referred to a possible merger with Hightown Surgery, although a further patient email deemed this suggestion as unacceptable and unsuitable due to the poor transport links in and out of Hightown Village either by public transport or car. Another patient suggested that Freshfield Surgery be established as a satellite surgery of the other practices in Formby.

Finally, a solution which had been suggested at a listening event was further recommended in a patient email; this was to expand and modernise the practice at Freshfield Surgery.

A further 2 emails have been received following the close of the listening exercise at 5pm, May 12. The contents of these emails have not been considered in this report.

Social Media

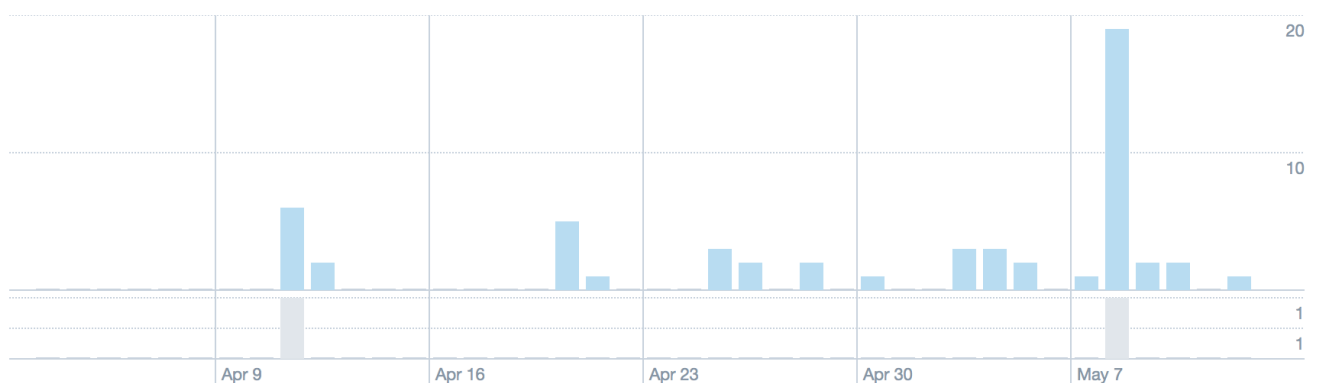
Formby has a very active social media community including a Facebook and Twitter account under the name Formby Bubble. There is also a website that regularly posts updates regarding the future of Freshfield Surgery.

A dedicated Twitter account, @FreshfieldGP1, was established, from which patients could ask questions, express their concerns or engage during the listening exercise (April 3 – May 12, 2017). The Twitter account was also available to convey immediate information, for example the availability of the event attendee packs in the practice for those patients unable to attend, and a reminder that the listening exercise was “closing soon”. Twitter analytics over these timescales were:

- 2 tweets
- 59 profile visits
- 55 impressions
- 7 followers
- 3 mentions
- 2 comments

Two patients choose to comment and leave their feedback regarding the future of Freshfield Surgery. Their comments mirrored those made via the other communication channels. The comments included the convenient location of the practice, additional car parking spaces, and a concern about the increase in pressure a dispersal of the patient list would have on other practices in the locality. Another comment from a patient reinforced that closing the surgery would be a loss to the community and highlighted the importance of having a general practice in that community.

Your Tweets earned **55 impressions** over this **40 day** period



Patient Letters

Although not an advertised method for patients to feedback comments or queries, 4 letters were received from patients during the 6-week listening exercise. Two letters were handed in during the listening events, 1 was sent via post to Alan Cummings and another was posted to H2A's offices. All letters were written and sent by patients of the practice, and each discussed their views and concerns regarding the future of Freshfield Surgery.

The themes in the 4 letters mirrored those which have been expressed by patients during the listening exercise and were as follows:

- There are poor and expensive parking facilities in Formby village.
- The patient population has a high elderly demographic.
- Other surgeries in the locality are struggling with capacity.
- There is planning permission for new residential housing in the area.
- Car parking facilities are good at the current location of Freshfield Surgery.
- The premises at the practice are excellent and could be expanded.
- There would be a significant negative impact to Formby surgeries if Freshfield Surgery patients were allocated to these practices.
- The impact a closure would have on the local neighbouring pharmacy business.
- The practice currently provides an excellent GP service.

6. Engagement Activity Plan

Audience	Activity
Patients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mailshot was sent by post to all patients of the practice aged 13 years and older. The mailshot included all information pertaining to the current situation relating to Freshfield Surgery. It explained the listening exercise that NHS commissioners were about to undertake regarding the future of the practice, and how patients could engage by attending a listening event and/or contacting the dedicated email address or Freephone helpline. • 8 listening events were organised over a 3-week period with sessions running in the morning, afternoon and evening, at The Gild Hall, Formby. Two sessions were cancelled so a total of 6 listening events took place. • A Freephone helpline was established to answer any queries or concerns patients may have and these would feed into the listening exercise. Patients who did not have access to the internet were asked to contact the Freephone helpline should they wish to register to attend a listening event. Patients were directed to the Freephone helpline should they require the correspondence in large print, audio, braille, or any alternative format, or translation of the mailshot into a different language. • A dedicated email address was provided for patients to contact who wish to register to attend a listening event, or to be sent the URL link to register themselves online. Patients who could not attend an event were encouraged to direct any questions, concerns, issues or comments to the email address to feed into the listening exercise. • A dedicated Twitter account, @FreshfieldGP1, was established to provide patients with information relating to the listening exercise, answer queries and convey relevant information when needed. • A pull-up banner was placed in the practice's waiting area containing all relevant information regarding the listening exercise. The banner also provided information signposting patients to the Freephone helpline, dedicated email address and Twitter. Additionally, it

	<p>informed them of the times and dates of the listening events and how they could register to attend.</p>
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the listening exercise, there was regular communication and engagement with Freshfield Surgery's Practice Manager regarding the listening exercise. • Office staff at the practice were briefed regarding the pull-up banner in the waiting area and the need to signpost patients to the listening events, and various points of contact, should they have queries.
Third Sector Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthwatch Sefton were invited to join the established Task & Finish Group for Freshfield Surgery. They were engaged throughout the planning and facilitating of the listening exercise and attended 2 of the 6 listening events.
Patient Participation Group (PPG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Patient Participation Group was asked to send a representative to join the established Task & Finish Group for Freshfield Surgery. They have therefore been engaged throughout the planning of the listening exercise and, as a patient, they were invited to feed into the exercise through either attending an event or using the dedicated Freephone helpline or email address. • The PPG have also been engaged throughout the process in order to disseminate information throughout the patient population and, when necessary, to counteract rumours. • Freshfield Surgery's PPG at the beginning of the listening exercise had 1 member. Throughout the listening events the PPG was advertised to patients who attended in the hope of increasing awareness of the group and aiming to grow its membership.

7. Outcomes and Next Steps

Of the 2654 patients registered at Hightown Village Surgery, 7.6% of the patient population engaged in the listening exercise, either through attending a listening event, or feeding back their comments through the Freephone helpline, by letter, via Twitter or the email address. An overwhelming majority of the patients who engaged did not want to see the contract expire on December 31, 2017 and the patient list be dispersed amongst other surgeries locally in Formby and Crosby. There was overwhelming consensus to keep primary care services at Freshfield Surgery with additional services being accessed elsewhere when required.

Although other solutions were considered acceptable by patients, their main concern was to keep a full-time primary care service provision at Freshfield Surgery. Patients weren't concerned which solution NHS commissioners agreed upon to achieve this, and believed that either a branch surgery or an overflow surgery were feasible and acceptable to maintain the primary care service at Freshfield, if the current arrangement could not continue.

The principal concerns regarding a potential closure and move to another local surgery were echoed in all the different channels for patients to feedback and included:

- The capacity at other surgeries in Formby and Crosby to take Freshfield Surgery patients should they be allocated there and, furthermore, the impact this would have upon the level of service capable of being provided with additional patients.
- The poor public transport links both for rail and bus services, and the poor road networks which make it difficult to access services in Formby centre. In addition, the poor and expensive parking facilities that would need to be used to attend a surgery in Formby.
- The elderly population of the practice, who may not drive and would have difficulty accessing the public transport links which makes their travelling to GP services challenging. In addition, concern was raised regarding the number of young families who require a GP to be located locally.
- The belief that should the practice's future be secured with a suitable, quality provider, that those patients lost during the previous provider's contract would return subsequently, increasing the patient list size and making the practice viable.
- There is approved planning permission for new residential housing and new residents will need access to GP services locally, ideally at Freshfield Surgery, which again will increase the patient list size and make the practice viable.
- Other reoccurring themes worth noting are the excellent service delivered at both the practice and the neighbouring pharmacy that would be greatly missed if they were to be closed.

This report, in addition to the independent Transport Survey, Premises Survey and Equality Impact Assessment will be considered by both NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) and NHS Southport and Formby CCG commissioners in relation to the next steps for the future of Freshfield Surgery. In addition to these documents, further consideration is required in relation to the 4 NHS reconfiguration tests, which commissioners must demonstrate that any decision taken takes account of:

1. Strong patient and public engagement;
2. Consistency with current and future need for patient choice;
3. Clear, clinical evidence base;
4. Support for proposals from NHS commissioners.

Once a decision is reached in terms of next steps, NHS commissioners will present relevant materials and evidence base to the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, scheduled for June 27, 2017.

Further consideration:

- A copy of the report and next steps to be shared with the relevant NHS internal governance body(s).
- A copy of the report to be shared with the NHS Southport and Formby CCG Engagement and Patient Experience Group.
- A copy of the report and findings to be shared with Sefton Public Consultation Panel.
- A copy of the report to be shared with key stakeholders as recognised by NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) and NHS Southport and Formby CCG.
- A copy of the report to be shared with the Patient Participation Group of Freshfield Surgery.
- A copy of the report to be shared with Healthwatch.
- During the listening events, patients suggested a local survey to ascertain how many Freshfield residents and patients who had previously been registered at the surgery would be willing to register or return to Freshfield Surgery if a long-term provider was secured. NHS England supported the suggestion but explained that, as a commissioner of services, it could not conduct the survey. It was suggested that an independent survey could be conducted by the Parish Council, Patient Participation Group and local pharmacist. NHS commissioners confirmed that they would be willing to include any findings of the survey in a future procurement exercise, if the decision is taken to seek a new provider for the practice following the listening exercise.

- A commitment was made by NHS commissioners at the listening events to undertake a scoping exercise across other GP practices within the vicinity of Freshfield. The purpose of the scoping exercise would be to determine which surrounding practices would have the capacity to take additional patients in the event of dispersal.

End of report.

8. Appendix 1

FRESHFIELD SURGERY LISTENING EVENTS QUESTIONS

Questions Asked During Session

1. What were the previous patient numbers between 2013-2017? When did they begin falling?
2. What makes a GP service viable?
3. What are the list sizes at the other Formby/Crosby surgeries, and which are closed?
4. Are the Freshfield Surgery premises suitable?
5. How are the patients who are unable to attend the listening events having their views captured?
6. Why can't the funding be maintained?
7. What is the maximum distance patients can be expected to travel?
8. Can patients be transferred from other practices in Formby to make Freshfield viable?
9. Why can't Chapel Lane continue?
10. How did SSP get the contract?
11. What is the cost for the listening exercise ie, hire of venues, transport survey, premises survey, mailshot?
12. What budget is currently being used to subsidise the practice?
13. How many more patients would make the practice viable?
14. Can we use funding from the GP Forward View to help subsidise the practice until the list size grows?
15. Do practices get more money for elderly patients?
16. What is the average waiting time nationally to see a GP?
17. How will practices increase their capacity if we are allocated there?
18. How many practices nationally have similar or smaller list sizes to Freshfield and remain open?