

# Mullion & Constantine Group Practice

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## **Helston Community Hospital**

On 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018 Mullion and Constantine Group Practice gave notice to terminate the contract held with Cornwall Partnership Foundation Trust for the clinical cover of 12 beds at Helston Community Hospital.

This was not a decision taken lightly – following extensive discussions amongst the partners, staff and patient representatives we took this difficult decision in the best interests of our GMS registered patients. We also hoped that this would prompt Cornwall Foundation Partnership Trust to develop a contract model and clinical provision suited to the care of increasingly frail and unwell patients in community beds.

Historically the community beds have provided valued rehabilitation for frail patients following acute illnesses or injury. As a practice we strongly supported this. Unfortunately as the healthcare system is under increased pressure these systems have changed. We are no longer able to oversee admissions or directly admit our registered patients. Very few of the patients in Helston Community Hospital are actually registered with our practice.

These patients are increasingly medically complex and acutely unwell, rather than admitted for rehabilitation. In view of this complexity, we have had to commit more GP clinical time to patients at the Hospital to meet their clinical requirements.

We believe that Helston Community Hospital is a vital local resource, but that the current contract is not fit for purpose and does not care for the holistic needs of the patients

We have seen increasing demands on General Practice, both from Helston Community Hospital and within General Practice itself (ie increasing patient numbers, more complex medical needs, and a more elderly, frail population requiring frequent home visits). The current situation is sadly untenable and as such we are unable to continue with this contract.

We hope that this decision will enable the practice to free up valuable GP resources to provide the excellent care we strive for on the Lizard Peninsula for instance:

- Reduce waiting times for routine appointments
- Improve access to same-day reviews for urgent medical issues
- Enable more rapid response to home visit requests for severely ill and/or frail patients.

In turn this improves patient safety and also enables the GPs to thoroughly meet the patient needs within the practice. Ultimately our responsibility and duty is to concentrate on core General Practice and the patients registered with us.

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As a locality we have approached Cornwall Partnership Foundation Trust on several occasions about the unsustainable workload. We were under no obligation to serve a notice period (since the Trust had chosen not to renew the contract on its expiration) but gave the maximum amount we felt able to provide (3 months) and offered to work with the Trust on a smooth transition. This transitional offer was declined.

It saddens us that the Trust has failed to put a full model into place from changeover day on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2018 – the decision to scale back the beds provided on a temporary basis is theirs and should have been avoidable with robust planning.

Their decision puts more pressure on Treliske and the acute services, and with three months to find replacement clinical cover this is rather disappointing. We hope that in a short space of time they will fulfil their contractual obligations to Kernow Clinical Commissioning Group, and reopen all the vital community beds that serve our local community.

Dr Ben Ashmore  
GP Partner