



February 2022

## **Update for Sunderland Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on the future of Monument Surgeries in Pennywell**

### **1. Introduction**

This paper provides an update to members following attendance at the Committee in October 2021 about Monument Surgeries in Pennywell. The report includes:

- A reminder of the challenges and rationale for change
- A summary of the communications and engagement strategy
- A summary of consultation responses
- Patient flow analysis
- Summary and next steps

### **2. Reminder of current challenges and rationale for change**

In April 2016, Sunderland GP Alliance (SGPA) took over the running of Pennywell Medical Centre alongside two other GP practices (Barmston Medical Centre and The Galleries Health Centre) as part of a single APMS contract. Together, the three practices are known as Monument Surgeries and have shared management support.

Monument Surgeries' main practice at The Galleries and its branch site at Bramston are located in Washington less than 1.0 mile apart from each other. The branch site in Pennywell is located in the West Locality of Sunderland approximately 6 miles from Galleries and 5 miles from Barmston.

Despite significant efforts being made since taking over the contract in 2016, Monument Surgeries has struggled to recruit any permanent GPs to its branch site in Pennywell. The service has operated entirely with locum GPs for the past five years and there remains no substantive GP at the practice. Prior to 2016, Pennywell had previously operated with locum GPs for several years. The staffing challenge has intensified recently with clinics having to be stood down on a number of occasions due to lack of staff. A summary of current challenges and implications for patient care is below:

- **Staff isolation**

Fundamentally, GPs prefer not to work at a site where they will be working predominantly alone for the majority of their time. They feel vulnerable and under intense pressure working in professional isolation and prefer to work in an environment where there is peer support on site.

- **Nurse staffing**

Pennywell also faces challenges from a nursing perspective with a practice nurse only available for 2 days a week. This means the service is fragmented and a nurse is not always available for patient care when needed.

- **Service quality**

Appointment availability is often very restricted at Pennywell due to lack of staff availability. There is no capacity to improve quality without a sustained staffing position and this means patients are not getting the quality of service which Sunderland GP Alliance is commissioned to provide.

- **Poor continuity of care**

The high reliance and turnover of temporary locum staff means there is a lack of continuity in patient care in Pennywell. Patients almost always have to repeat their history every time they attend or speak to a locum GP. There is very limited opportunity to build relationships with patients which is vital for understanding some of the wider determinants of their ill health.

- **Patient choice**

Locum GPs in Pennywell are predominantly male which impacts negatively on patient choice for women who may prefer to have a consultation with a female GP. Patient choice around when they can access services is also restricted. For example, if patients cannot book an appointment at a time to suit them, or if certain clinics are only offered on fixed days and times, patients may not attend at all. This may pose ongoing risks for their health and wellbeing and cause additional pressure elsewhere in the health system.

- **Staffing rotation**

As Pennywell is located further away from the other Monument Surgeries branches in Barmston and The Galleries, this makes it more difficult for staff to travel across sites to support the long-term service sustainability without significantly compromising service quality at the other two branch surgeries.

### **3. Communications and engagement strategy**

In October 2021, Sunderland GP Alliance launched a patient and public consultation into proposed changes at Monument Surgeries in Pennywell. This ran for a period of 8 weeks from Monday 4 October to Friday 26 November 2021. Activity undertaken adopted best practice principles as described in NHS England's ['Patient and Public Participation Policy'](#). A range of tactics were used including:

#### **Consultation document**

- A consultation document (*See appendix*) was produced which included details about the rationale for change and the need for potential closure as well as details of how to get involved with the consultation or attend an online / virtual engagement event. This was written in language that could be easily understood by members of the public and aimed at a reading age of 9-11. The consultation document included details of alternative nearby practices (within 2 miles) which patients could choose to register with if Pennywell did close. It also included detailed information on bus routes and travel times to other nearby practices.

#### **Patient survey**

- A self-completion survey (*See appendix*) was available both in paper copy and online to gather both quantitative and qualitative feedback from patients. This was mailed directly to all registered patients via 'Heads of Household' with a paper copy of the survey and a freepost return address so there was no financial burden on patients to pay for postage. An online version of the survey was available via the SGPA website and promoted via social media and through QR codes on posters within the practice in Pennywell. Following the initial mail out, patients who had a mobile number registered received three further follow up reminders via text message, asking them to complete the survey online. In addition, SGPA proactively reached out to patients who are known to have low literacy levels to gather feedback verbally over the telephone. Throughout the consultation period a prominent display was in place within the Monument Surgeries branch site in Pennywell. Patients were proactively reminded to complete their survey and a number of patients were given assistance to complete their survey whilst they were in the practice.

### Care home patients

- Monument Surgeries in Pennywell provides GP support to Sycamore Care Home in Grindon with approximately 38 patients registered at the practice. During the consultation period, one-to-one discussions were held with the care home management team who were keen to ensure continuity of care for their vulnerable residents. The care home, in conjunction with families and carers, has already taken the proactive decision to re-register its 38 residents at South Hylton Surgery to ensure that there is no disruption to care (should Pennywell close in future).

### Other GP practices

- Individual discussions took place with each of the eight neighbouring GP practices who would be potentially impacted by the closure of Monument Surgeries branch site in Pennywell. All practice managers and GP partners were extremely understanding of the situation being faced by Sunderland GP Alliance and sympathetic towards the challenges in Pennywell, many of which they were experiencing themselves, albeit not on the same scale. There were no issues identified from any neighbouring practices about the ability to accept new patients onto practice lists.

### Stakeholder engagement

- A formal letter (*See appendix*) about the consultation was shared with all key stakeholders (28 recipients) to invite their feedback and offer the opportunity for a one-to-one discussion. This included local councillors, MPs, NHS partners and the Voluntary and Community Sector.

## 4. Summary of consultation response

The table below provides an overall summary of consultation responses:

Activity	Response
Number of patient surveys completed	547
Number of patient interviews completed	10
Number of patients attending online events	0
Number of formal responses received from stakeholders	1

The overall response rate from patients was just over 20% (557 responses) which is above the required sample size of 336 responses in order to be statistically robust. This means the NHS can be assured that the insight provided through the data analysis is sufficient to inform robust decision-making. Key findings from the patient feedback are below (a full independent report of all patient feedback is included is provided in the *Appendix*):

### Overall feedback

- Most patients rate the service they receive at Pennywell Surgery good or very good (56.9%), with just under a quarter rating the service as poor or very poor (23.4%).
- Respondents would be disappointed, or saddened by the closure, or do not want it to close. In contrast, a small number suggested closure should have happened sooner.
- Respondents had mixed feelings around receiving support for long-term-health conditions, with some indicating they did receive enough support, others did not receive enough support, whilst other patients felt they did not need any support.

### Appointments

- Respondents acknowledged that getting appointments at Pennywell is difficult. Although, a similar proportion of respondents indicated they could book an appointment without too much difficulty.

- Concerns were raised around the waiting times for appointments – up to two weeks. Most respondents indicated the importance of getting an appointment when they need one.

#### Location / access

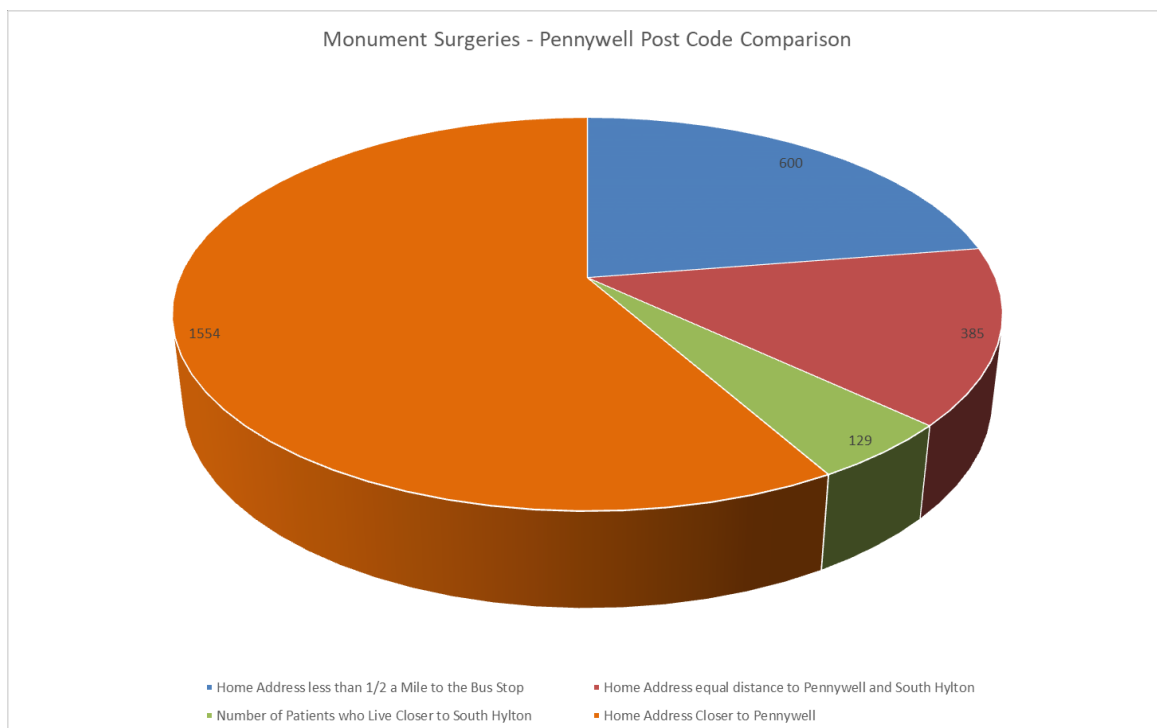
- Most patients walk, or live within walking distance of the surgery in Pennywell (50%), with a quarter of patients suggesting they travel by car to the surgery.
- The surgery being easy to get to is important for most patients. Concerns were raised around access to alternative sites for elderly patients or people without transport. Poor public transport was also discussed as an accessibility issue.
- Some patients would struggle to travel further afield, and there would be additional cost or financial implications for patients.

#### Future preferences

- The vast majority of patients (91%) indicated they would not stay registered with Monument Surgeries should Pennywell close.
- Respondents were most likely to choose South Hylton Surgery (33.9%), closely followed by Springwell Medical Group (22.3%) and Pallion Family Practice (18%).
- Most respondents (69%) indicated that they would need clear information/instructions about how to register with another surgery.

### 5. Patient flow analysis

There are currently around 2,700 patients registered on the practice list at Monument Surgeries in Pennywell. A postcode analysis of patients registered at Monument Surgeries in Pennywell was undertaken during the consultation. This shows 500 registered patients live either the same distance from Pennywell as they do from South Hylton Surgery, or even closer to South Hylton. A further 600 patients live within half a mile of a bus stop.



#### New registrations and deductions

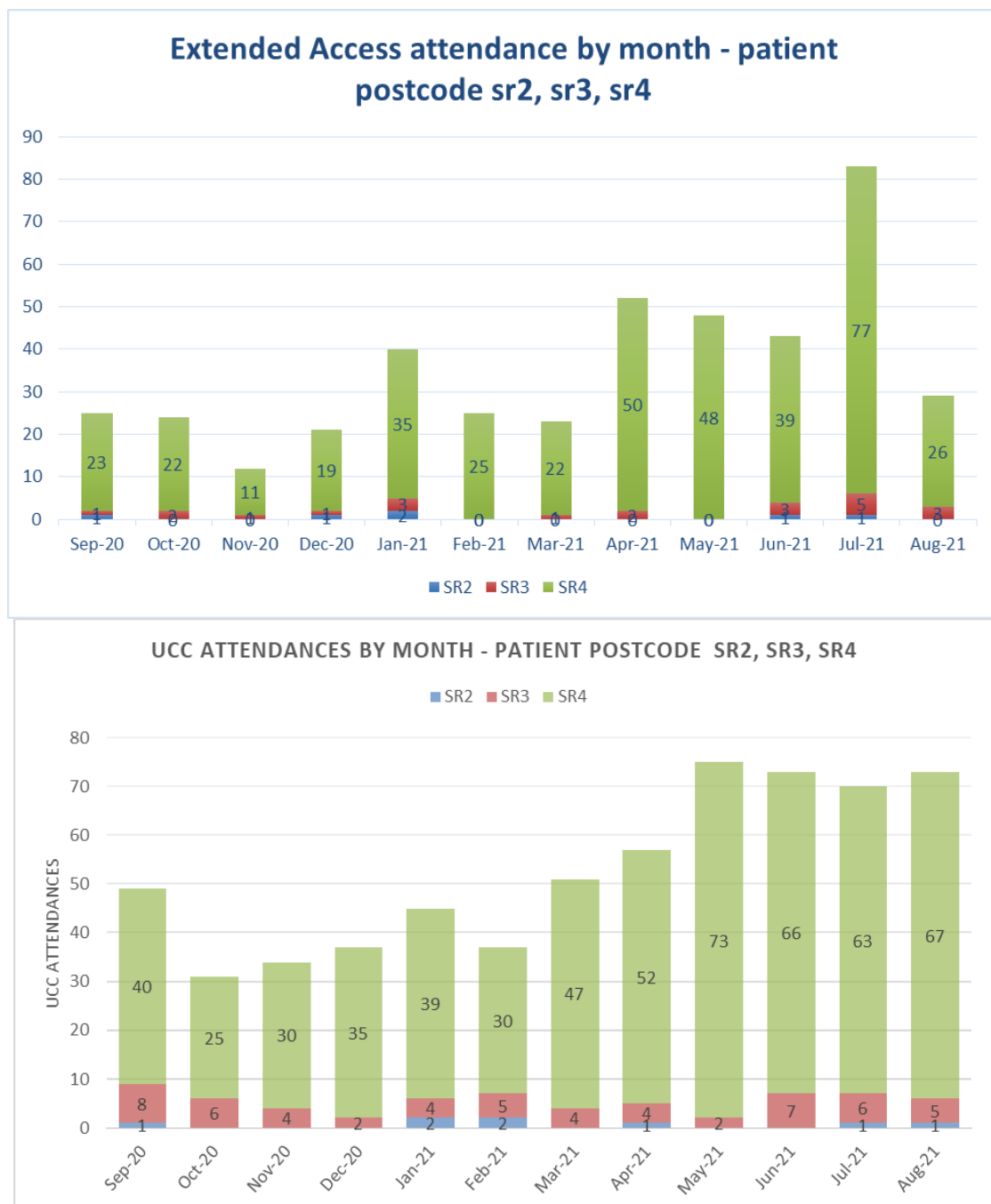
During the consultation period, Monument Surgeries had 306 requests from patients to be removed from the practice list, 203 of which were Pennywell registered postcodes. During

the same time period, there were 110 new registrations at South Hylton Surgery (109 of which were transfers from Pennywell).

### Patient flows

90% of the registered practice population at Monument Surgeries in Pennywell live in the SR4 postcode area. Given the challenges outlined with GP service provision in Pennywell, a further analysis was undertaken by Sunderland GP Alliance to understand any potential impact on other parts of the health and care system as a result of this poor GP access.

The graphs below show the usage of the Sunderland Extended Access Service (SEAS) which is also ran by Sunderland GP Alliance on behalf of GPs across the City, as well as the patient flow into the City's Urgent Treatment Centre at Sunderland Royal Hospital. Of particular note is the increase in usage over the summer at a time when GP services in Pennywell had to be reduced to two and a half days a week due to staffing pressures.



## **6. Summary and next steps**

Despite extensive efforts by Sunderland GP Alliance over several years (and the benefit of Monument Surgeries in Pennywell already being part of the City's GP alliance network), there is no easy solution to the workforce challenges being faced.

During consultation, the issues being faced in Pennywell were acknowledged and understood in many stakeholder conversations and by patients themselves in the responses received.

Although Sunderland GP Alliance would clearly prefer not to be in this position at all, in December 2021 a decision was supported by the Board to proceed with a full application for closure of the Pennywell branch to NHS Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

Sunderland CCG's Primary Care Commissioning Committee (PCCC) will meet on 27 January 2022 to discuss the application for closure of Pennywell. If this is approved, a full mobilisation plan will be developed. This would include a detailed communications and engagement strategy to inform patients and stakeholders of the decision to close and extensive support to help patients register with an alternative practice. Typically, a practice closure would usually be mobilised within three months of the decision to close.

Should a decision be made to close, SGPA would welcome the Committee's previous offer of support with patient engagement and, in particular, any influence around public transport routes to be considered by the relevant Scrutiny Committee.

## **Recommendations**

Members are asked to note the robust patient consultation process followed and next steps.

## **Appendices**

Consultation document  
Patient letter and self-completion survey  
Stakeholder letter  
Full patient feedback report



## IMPORTANT INFORMATION



### The future of Monument Surgeries in Pennywell

**WE NEED  
YOUR  
VIEWS**

Due to staff shortages, we might need to close our branch site in Pennywell. We want to explain why. We also want to understand how this would affect you and your family.

**Please read this leaflet and tell us what you think**

If you need this leaflet in a different language or in large print please call us on: 0191 516 6076





## Why are we thinking about closing Pennywell?

For over five years, there has been no permanent GP based in Pennywell. We have tried our best to attract more GPs to come and work with us permanently. This has not been successful. This is because GPs do not want to work alone. They want to work in practices with lots of other GPs.

As we have no permanent GPs in Pennywell, this means we must use locum doctors. This is not good for the quality of patient care. The service is not as good as it should be. For example:

- It's hard for patients to book an appointment
- There is no continuity in care. Patients have to repeat their story
- Patients rarely see the same GP
- GPs don't get to know their patients
- There is a lack of patient choice around when they can access services
- Locum GPs are often male. This is not good for patients who want to speak to a female GP

We also don't have enough nurses in Pennywell. A practice nurse is only available on two days of the week. This means a nurse is not always available for patient care when they need it.

Staff from our other GP practices often help out in Pennywell. But we do not have enough staff to keep doing this. Over the summer, we had to offer patients from Pennywell appointments at our other practices. This was due to staff shortages.

Because of these staffing challenges it is hard for us to improve services. It is not just the poor quality of service that concerns us. Our GP practice in Pennywell costs a lot of money to keep going.

## What are we proposing?

Every patient deserves a good quality GP service. We know we can't offer this in Pennywell. We have tried for a number of years to attract more GPs but we haven't been able to.

Because of this, we think we may need to close our services in Pennywell. If we make this change, we believe patient access to GP services and experience of care can be improved.

**We want to hear your views before we do anything.**

## What would happen if Pennywell did close?

If Pennywell did close, there are a number of options for patients to choose from. If you would like to stay registered with Monument Surgeries, there are two other sites at The Galleries and Barmston. This means patients who are happy to travel to these sites for their care would be able to do so and would not need to re-register with another practice.

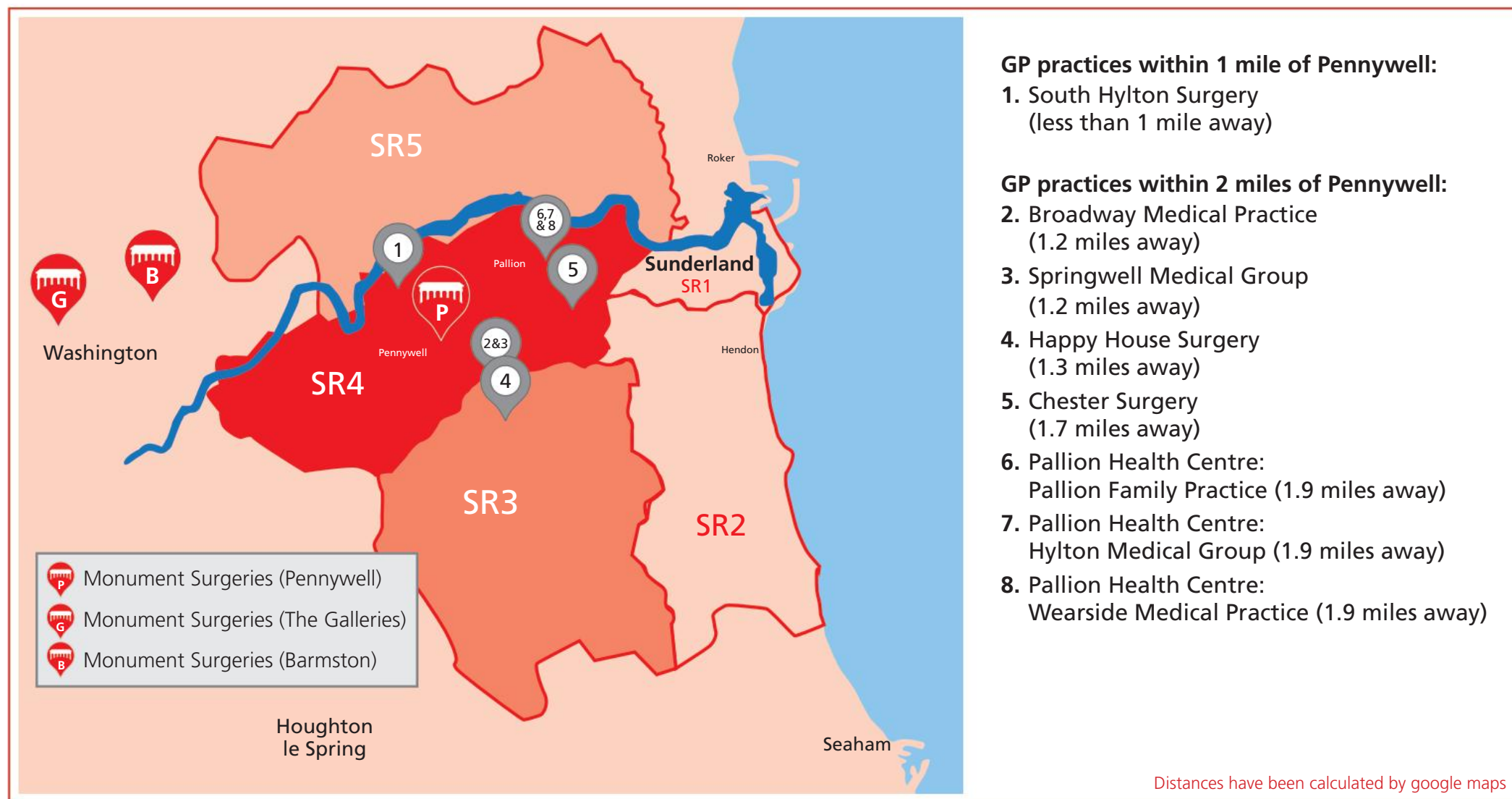
There are also eight other practices near to Pennywell which are accepting new patients.

By registering with one of these practices, you would have more choice of appointments and better access to care when you need it. It would mean greater continuity of care. You would see the same, permanent staff who would get to know you and your family.
























## Other practices

There are eight other practices near to Pennywell which are accepting new patients. This map shows the nearby GP practices you would be able to choose from.



## Bus travel information to alternative practices

<p><b>○ Pennywell to South Hylton Surgery</b></p> <p> Walk to stop</p> <p> Board 39 at Parkhurst Road</p> <p>» Get off at Hylton Road - Peasemoor Road</p> <p>  Walk to destination (13 mins - 1260 steps)</p>	<p><b>Approx travel times</b></p> <p> via bus 20 mins</p> <p> walking 17 mins</p> <p> by car 3 mins</p>
<p><b>○ Pennywell to Springwell Medical Group &amp; Broadway Medical Practice</b></p> <p> Walk to stop</p> <p> Board 39A at Presthope Road - Portslade Rd</p> <p>» Get off at Nookside-Holborn Road</p> <p>  Walk to destination (12 mins - 1190 steps)</p>	<p><b>Approx travel times</b></p> <p> via bus 24 mins</p> <p> walking 27 mins</p> <p> by car 4 mins</p>
<p><b>○ Pennywell to Pallion Health Centre, Hylton Medical Centre and Wearside Medical Practice</b></p> <p> Walk to stop</p> <p> Board 39A at Presthope Road - Portslade Rd</p> <p>» Get off at Chester Road - St Gabriels Avenue</p> <p>  Walk to destination (7mins - 680 steps)</p>	<p><b>Approx travel times</b></p> <p> via bus 20 mins</p> <p> walking 32 mins</p> <p> by car 6 mins</p>
<p><b>○ Pennywell to Chester Surgery</b></p> <p> Walk to stop</p> <p> Get on 29A at Presthope Rd - Portslade Rd</p> <p>» Get off at Sunderland Royal Hospital</p> <p>  Walk to destination (less that 1 min - 40 steps)</p>	<p><b>Approx travel times</b></p> <p> via bus 17 mins</p> <p> walking 32 mins</p> <p> by car 6 mins</p>

<p><b>○ Pennywell to Happy House</b></p> <p> Walk to stop</p> <p> Board 39A at Presthope Rd - Portslade Rd</p> <p>» Get off at Nookside-Holborn Road</p> <p>  Walk to destination (19 mins - 1840 steps)</p>	<p><b>Approx travel times</b></p> <p> via bus 30 mins</p> <p> walking 23 mins</p> <p> by car 6 mins</p>
<p><b>○ Pennywell to Barmston</b></p> <p> Walk to stop</p> <p> Board 2A at Grindon Mill Inn</p> <p>» Get off at Police Link Road - Leisure Centre</p> <p> Walk to stop (less than 1 min)</p> <p> Board 82 at Police Link Road - Leisure Centre</p> <p>» Get off at Glebe Crescent - Avebury Drive</p> <p>  Walk to destination (6 mins - 600 steps)</p>	<p><b>Approx travel times</b></p> <p> via bus 49 mins</p> <p> by car 10 mins</p>
<p><b>○ Pennywell to Washington Galleries</b></p> <p> Walk to stop</p> <p> Board 2A at Grindon Mill Inn</p> <p>» Get off at Washington Galleries (Stand B)</p> <p>  Walk to destination (3mins - 280 steps)</p>	<p><b>Approx travel times</b></p> <p> via bus 33 mins</p> <p> by car 11 mins</p>

Please note: approximate total travel times have been calculated via google maps and Go North East travel planner.

Visit the website for bus times, fares and frequency. As well as information on travel passes and discounts:

 [www.gonortheast.co.uk](http://www.gonortheast.co.uk)



North East






## What do I need to do?

We would like to hear your feedback about these plans. No decisions have yet been made. We want to listen to our patients first. You can get in touch in a number of ways:

**WE NEED  
YOUR  
VIEWS**

### » Complete our online survey

Visit:  <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Monument-Surgeries-Pennywell>

or

scan the QR code using the camera on your mobile phone to link straight to the survey.



### » Attend an online event

- Wednesday 27th October 2021 – 6.00pm until 7.00pm
- Friday 12th November 2021 – 1.30pm until 2.30pm

For access to the online events:

» Email us at [judith.taylor9@nhs.net](mailto:judith.taylor9@nhs.net)

» Telephone us at **0191 516 6076**

## What happens next?

We want to consult with patients about this proposed change. We have written to every household that we have registered at Pennywell.

We want to find out your views. Please respond by **Friday 26 November 2021**.

There will be a meeting in early 2022 to decide the next steps. We will write again directly to patients at this time to update you.





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SURGERIES**

T| 0191 516 6076

[www.sunderlandgpalliance.co.uk](http://www.sunderlandgpalliance.co.uk)

PATIENT ADDRESS  
ADDRESS LINE ONE  
ADDRESS LINE TWO  
POSTCODE  
**Date**

## **The future of Monument Surgeries in Pennywell**

Dear Household,

Our records show you are a registered patient at Monument Surgeries in Pennywell. Please share this letter with everyone in your house who is also registered at Monument Surgeries in Pennywell.

Due to ongoing staff shortages, we may need to close our branch site in Pennywell. We know this will be disappointing news. Before we do anything, we would like to know how this would affect you and your family.

Please read the information leaflet we have sent with this letter. We would like to hear your views. Please complete our survey and return this to us by **Friday 26 November 2021**. We have included a pre-paid return envelope to the survey.

If it's easier for you, please complete the survey online. Visit <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Monument-Surgeries-Pennywell> or scan the QR code below with your phone. If you need help completing this survey please call us on 0191 516 6076.



Your feedback will help us make the right decisions. We won't make any changes without letting you know first. We will write to you again to update you later this year.

Yours sincerely

Judith Taylor  
Head of General Practice  
Sunderland GP Alliance

Part of the  
Alliance Family Practices



## Proposed closure of Monument Surgeries in Pennywell

Monument Surgeries is considering applying to NHS Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to close its branch surgery in Pennywell. This is due to staff shortages.

Please help us understand how this would affect you and your family. We want to hear any thoughts or concerns. We would also like to know how you have used the Pennywell practice recently. This survey is open to anyone aged 16 and over to complete. The deadline for survey responses is **Friday 26 November 2021.**

If you need help to complete this survey, please telephone 0191 516 6076. You can also complete this survey online by going to <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Monument-Surgeries-Pennywell>. If you would like an additional paper survey posted out for another member of your household, please contact us on [judith.taylor9@nhs.net](mailto:judith.taylor9@nhs.net) or 0191 516 6076

Thank you for your time.

## Introduction

**Q1. I am completing this survey as...** (please select only one)

Myself (a registered patient at Monument Surgeries - Pennywell)	<input type="checkbox"/>
On behalf of a registered patient at Monument Surgeries - Pennywell (as a carer / relative / friend)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify_____)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q2. What is the first half of your postcode?** (For example – SR3, SR4)

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## Your views about Monument Surgeries in Pennywell

**Q3. Have you, or the person you care for, had an appointment at Monument Surgeries in Pennywell in the last six months?**

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q4. How would you rate the service you currently receive at Pennywell?**

(Please select one box only)

Very good	Good	Neither good nor poor	Poor	Very poor	Don't know / no opinion

**Q5. In the last 6 months have you had enough support to help you manage any long term health conditions?**

Yes, definitely	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
I haven't needed any support	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q6. Do you feel involved in decisions about your care and treatment?**

Yes, definitely	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes, sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q7. What is most important to you when accessing GP services? (Please select all that apply)**

That I can get an appointment when I need one	<input type="checkbox"/>
That I can see the same GP / healthcare professional	<input type="checkbox"/>
That the practice is easy to get to	<input type="checkbox"/>
That there is convenient / free parking	<input type="checkbox"/>
That there is a pharmacy nearby so I can pick up my prescription	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify_____)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q8. How do you usually get to your appointments in Pennywell?** (Please select all that apply)

Walk	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drive my own car / in my own car with my spouse or partner	<input type="checkbox"/>
Get a lift from a friend / relative (in their car)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taxi	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify_____)	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Other nearby practices and choices for patients

**Q9. Would you stay registered at Monument Surgeries and attend a different practice site?** (Please select only one answer from the list below)

Yes I would stay registered and attend Barmston in future 5 miles away)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes I would stay registered and attend The Galleries in future 6 miles away)	<input type="checkbox"/>
No I would not stay registered with Monument Surgeries)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q10. There are 8 other practices within 2 miles of Pennywell. All of these practices are accepting new patients. From the list of alternative nearby GP practices we have provided below, which one are you most likely to choose?**  
(Please select only one answer from the list below)

South Hylton Surgery (Less than 1 mile away)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broadway Medical Practice (1.2 miles away)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Springwell Medical Group (1.2 miles away)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Happy House Surgery (1.3 miles away)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chester Surgery (1.7 miles away)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hylton Medical Group (1.9 miles away)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pallion Family Practice (1.9 miles away)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wearside Medical Practice (1.9 miles away)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q11. What support would you need to help you register with another practice?**  
(Please select all that apply)

Clear information / instructions about how to register	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information in a different language or format	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't need any support	<input type="checkbox"/>
I care for someone who would need help to register with another practice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify_____)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q12. If you have any concerns about the potential closure of Pennywell surgery, please use the box below to tell us about them:**

## Section 5: About you

It would help us to understand your answers better if we knew a little bit about you. These questions are **completely optional**, but we hope you will complete them. The information is collected anonymously and cannot be used to identify you personally.

**How old are you?** (Please select only one)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16 – 17	18 – 24	25 – 34	35 – 44	45 - 54	55 – 64	65 – 74	75 or older	Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**What is your gender?** (Please select only one)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Male	Female	Other	Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Does your gender identity match your sex as registered at birth?** (Please select only one)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	No	Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Are you currently pregnant or have you been pregnant in the last year?** (Please select only one)

Yes	No	Prefer not to say	Not applicable

**Are you currently...?** (Please select only one)

Single (never married or in a civil partnership)	
Cohabiting	
Married	
In a civil partnership	
Separated (but still legally married or in a civil partnership)	
Divorced or civil partnership dissolved	
Widowed or a surviving partner from a civil partnership	
Prefer not to say	

**Do you have a disability, long-term illness, or health condition?** (Please select only one)

Yes	No	Prefer not to say

**Do you have any caring responsibilities?** (Please tick all that apply)

None	
Primary carer of a child or children (under 2 years)	
Primary carer of a child or children (between 2 and 18 years)	
Primary carer of a disabled child or children	
Primary carer or assistant for a disabled adult (18 years and over)	
Primary carer or assistant for an older person or people (65 years and over)	
Secondary carer (another person carries out main caring role)	
Prefer not to say	

**Which race or ethnicity best describes you?** (Please select only one)

Asian / British Asian (Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, or other)	<input type="text"/>
White (British, Irish, European, or other)	<input type="text"/>
Black / British Black (African, Caribbean, or other)	<input type="text"/>
Mixed race (Black & white, Asian & white, or other)	<input type="text"/>
Gypsy or traveller	<input type="text"/>
Rather not say	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>

**Which of the following terms best describes your sexual orientation?** (Please select only one)

Heterosexual or straight	<input type="text"/>	Asexual	<input type="text"/>
Gay man	<input type="text"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="text"/>
Gay woman or lesbian	<input type="text"/>	Other	<input type="text"/>
Bisexual	<input type="text"/>		

**What do you consider your religion to be?** (Please select only one)

No religion	<input type="text"/>	Muslim	<input type="text"/>
Christianity	<input type="text"/>	Sikh	<input type="text"/>
Buddhist	<input type="text"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="text"/>
Hindu	<input type="text"/>	Other religion	<input type="text"/>
Jewish	<input type="text"/>		

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey**

### **Personal and confidential information**

Your responses to this survey will be kept confidential and protected in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016 and The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018. You have the right to withdraw your survey responses any time. To do this please email [judith.taylor9@nhs.net](mailto:judith.taylor9@nhs.net) or call 0191 516 6076.



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[www.sunderlandgpalliance.co.uk](http://www.sunderlandgpalliance.co.uk)

**Thursday 30 September 2020**

**The future of Monument Surgeries in Pennywell**

Dear Partner,

We are writing to make you aware of a consultation we are currently undertaking with our registered patients in Pennywell.

Due to ongoing and severe staffing challenges and a lack of permanent GPs, we are now considering the long-term future of services in Pennywell. This could mean the closure of our branch site in Pennywell.

We understand this is a very difficult situation, however we want to give patients and stakeholders as much notice as possible about the challenges being faced in Pennywell and have an open and honest conversation about what this might mean for the future.

Since taking over the management of services in 2016, we have been unable to attract any permanent GPs in Pennywell. We also face challenges with our nursing workforce with a practice nurse only available two days a week. For patients, this means appointment availability often very restricted and the quality of service is not up to the high standards required.

We are now contacting 2,700 patients who are registered at Pennywell to seek their views and understand how they may be affected by any service changes before any decisions are made. The consultation period will run from **Monday 4 October to Friday 26 November** and there will be a meeting with NHS Sunderland CCG in early 2022 to decide the next steps.

We have enclosed a copy of the patient information with further details of how patients can feedback. As a key community partner, we would very much welcome your support in reaching as many patients as possible who are registered in Pennywell and encouraging them to give their views.

We would also like to hear from as many key stakeholders as possible. If you would like to arrange a meeting with us, or submit any questions or feedback, please email [judith.taylor9@nhs.net](mailto:judith.taylor9@nhs.net).

Your feedback is very much valued and will help us make the right decisions.

Yours sincerely

Judith Taylor  
Head of General Practice  
Sunderland GP Alliance

Part of the  
Alliance Family Practices





# **Monument Surgeries Pennywell**

## **Summary Report**

**December 2021**

Report produced by

# **RLM**

RLM Group Ltd



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# Executive Summary

## Background

Monument Surgeries are considering applying to NHS Sunderland CCG to close its branch site in Pennywell due to ongoing and severe staffing challenges which are impacting on service quality for patients and putting the long-term viability of the surgery at risk. Sunderland GP Alliance required a patient engagement exercise to understand any thoughts or concerns those registered with the practice may have with the potential closure of Monument Surgeries branch in Pennywell.

## Summary of findings

The summary of findings from the survey, interviews and additional correspondence can be found in the following themes below:

### Accessibility

#### Positive findings

- Pennywell Surgery is easy to get to, local, or centrally located, and most patients walk, or live within walking distance of the surgery, with a quarter of the patients in the survey suggesting they travel by car to the surgery. The surgery being easy to get to is important for most patients.
- Pennywell Surgery is a vital part of the community, and people felt there is a need for a surgery in Pennywell.

#### Improvements

- Getting appointments at Pennywell Surgery is difficult, due to the queue system. Although, a similar proportion of respondents indicated they could book an appointment without too much difficulty.
- Concerns were raised around the waiting times for appointments – up to two weeks.
- Most respondents indicated the importance of getting an appointment when they need one.
- Concerns were raised around access to alternative sites for elderly patients or people without transport. Poor public transport was also discussed as an accessibility issue.
- Some patients would struggle to travel further afield, and there would be additional cost or financial implications for patients.

## Service offering

### Positive findings

- Most patients rate the service they receive at Pennywell Surgery good or very good, or that they were happy with the service they received, however, a smaller proportion of patients suggested that the level of care has decreased.

### Improvements

- Respondents had mixed feelings around receiving support for long-term-health conditions, with some indicating they did receive enough support, others they did not receive enough support, whilst other patient suggested they did not need any support.
- Just short of half of respondents felt involved in decisions about their care.
- The vast majority of patients indicated they would not stay registered with Monument Surgeries should Pennywell Surgery close.
- For some patients, changing to another surgery would upset their ongoing treatment or illness, and they would require medicine or equipment to cover the transition period.

## Workforce

### Positive findings

- Respondents were happy with the staff at Pennywell Surgery.

### Improvements

- Concerns were raised around the lack of staff at Pennywell Surgery.

## Preference

### Positive findings

- Respondents were most likely to choose South Hylton Surgery, closely followed by Springwell Medical Group and Pallion Family Practice.

### Improvements

- Respondents would be disappointed, or saddened by the closure, or do not want it to close. In contrast, a small number suggested that the closure should have happened sooner.
- It was questioned why Monument Surgeries are closing Pennywell Surgery, when there are two surgeries within the alliance in Washington.
- Concerns were raised around the capacity at other surgeries should patients be transferred.

- Most respondents indicated that they would need clear information/instructions about how to register with another surgery.
- A small number of participants also indicated that they were informed they were not in the catchment area for Springwell Surgery.

### Continuity of care

#### Improvements

- Respondents indicated that seeing the same GP/ healthcare professional is important to them, with respondents also indicating they did not want to start again with a new surgery as their current doctor knows their medical history.

### Communication

#### Positive findings

- A small number of participants indicated that they were happy with the communication at Pennywell Surgery.

### Finance

#### Improvements

- A small number of participants suggested that the closure is a financial decision.



## Introduction

Analysis of a patient engagement exercise was conducted by RLM Group Ltd - associates are Members of the Market Research Society and have over 20 years' combined research experience as well as post graduate master's qualifications in Social Research.

## Background

Monument Surgeries is now considering applying to NHS Sunderland CCG to close its branch site in Pennywell due to ongoing and severe staffing challenges which are impacting on service quality for patients and putting the long-term viability of the surgery at risk. South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust required a patient and public engagement exercise to understand any thoughts or concerns people may have with the potential closure of Monument Surgeries branch in Pennywell.

### Surveys

Surveys were designed and shared with members of the public and patients. In total, Monument Surgeries Pennywell has approximately 2700 patients, the survey was posted out to all households with patients asking them to share the contents of the letter with all registered patients in that household – a link to complete the survey online was also provided. In total, 547 surveys were completed during a period of 8 weeks.

### Interviews

Short telephone interviews were conducted with patients. In total, 10 interviews were completed during a period of six weeks with four female, four male patients, one female carer and one male carer.

### Other engagement

In addition to the survey, further correspondence was also received. The surgery received three letters. Summaries of the letters can be found in the findings.

### Analysis

The data received was analysed by our experienced specialist team. The survey has been analysed as a whole and graphs or tables have been included for each question showing the percentage rounded up to one decimal place.



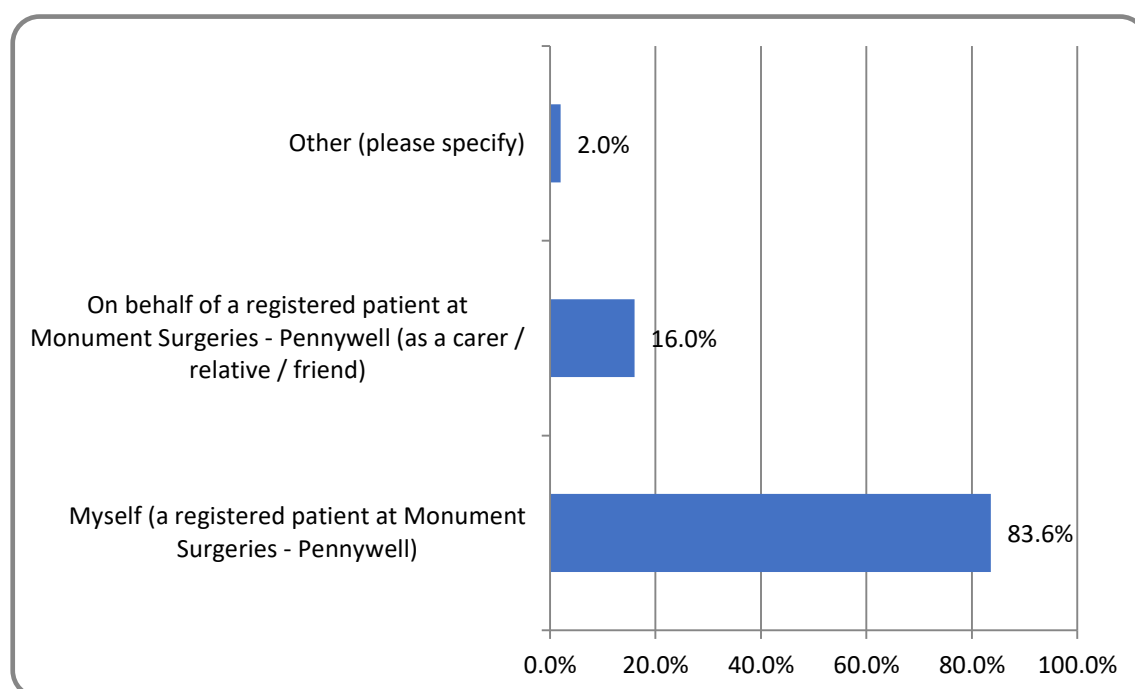
## Survey Findings

Surveys were designed and shared with members of the public and patients – in total 2700 surveys were distributed directly to everyone registered in Pennywell. Patients were also provided with a link to complete the survey online with further paper surveys posted out on request. In total, 547 surveys were completed during a period of 8 weeks from Monday 4 October to Friday 26 November 2021.

The average return rate for surveys is around 3-5% (in the NHS this tends to be higher at around 10% as people are more likely to respond to NHS bodies than commercial organisations.) The response rate for Monument Surgeries in Pennywell was just over 20% with 547 responses received. The calculated representative sample size from the 2,700 Pennywell practice population would be 336 responses in order to be statistically robust. This is in line with best practice quantitative market research methods and a 95% confidence level to ensure the right level of returns in order to provide enough data for analysis and actionable insight to inform a business decision.

### I am completing this survey as...(N=543)

The vast majority of respondents indicated they were completing the survey on behalf of themselves, the patient (83.6%).



Respondents were also given the opportunity to specify an 'other' category with which they were completing the survey. In total, 11 respondents provided 11 comments:

Theme	Comments
Family member	6
Other	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>

Six comments suggested that they were completing the survey as a family member. Below are comments that could not be themed and were therefore grouped together as other:

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**Other**

"Galleries patient"

"I was not aware I was at this practice as I visit Washington surgery"

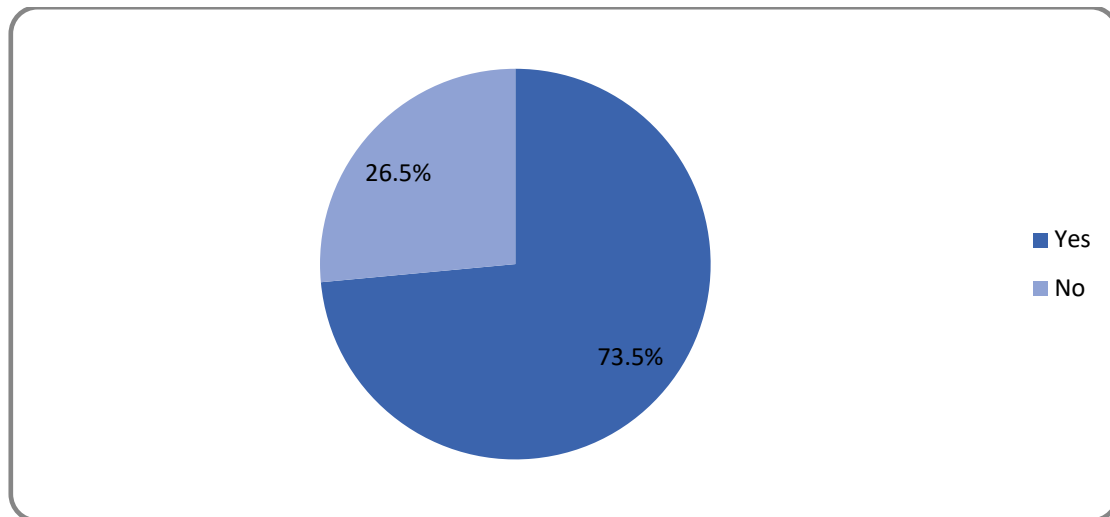
"South Hylton [sic]"

"Stakeholder – landlord"

"none"

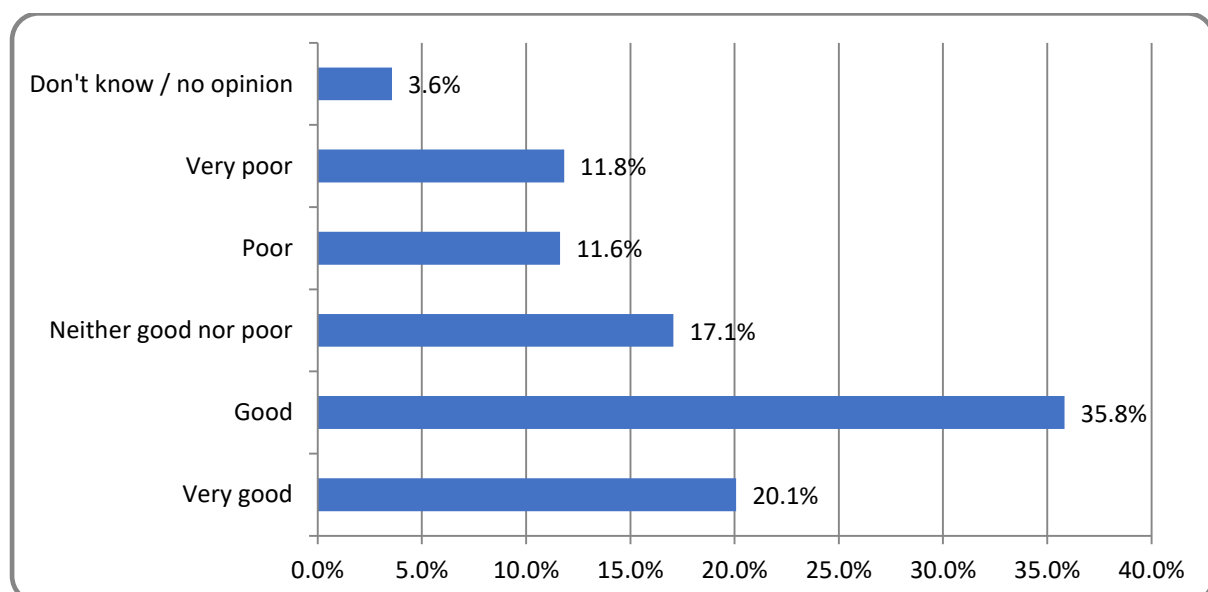
## Have you, or the person you care for, had an appointment at Monument Surgeries in Pennywell in the last six months? (N=540)

Nearly three-quarters indicated that they had an appointment at Monument Surgeries in Pennywell within the last six months (73.5%).



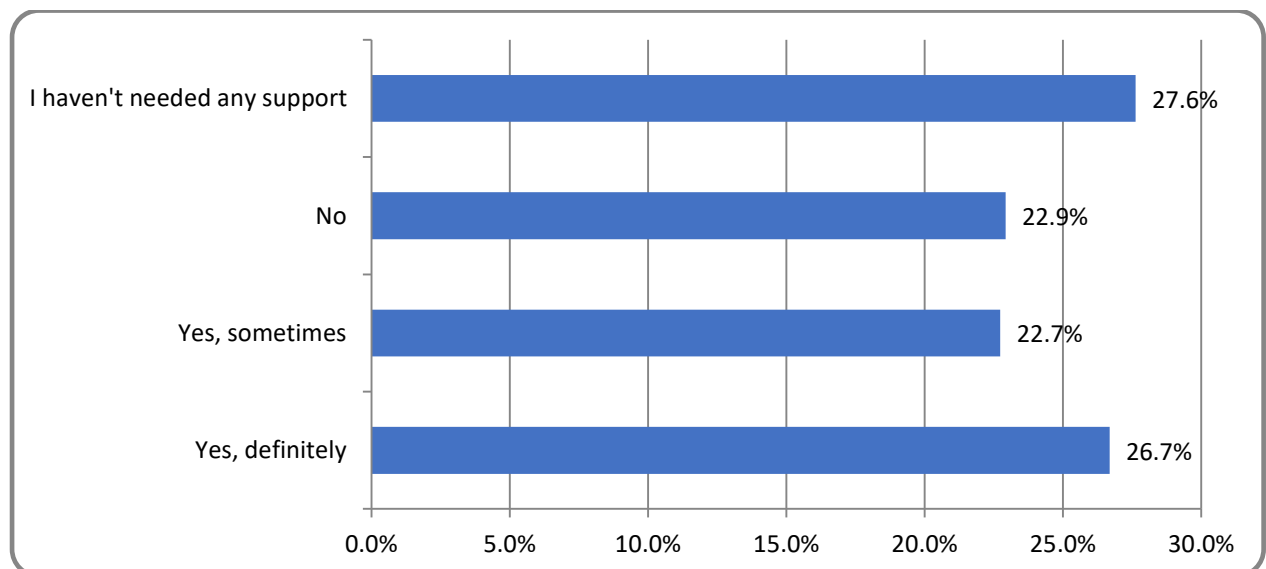
## How would you rate the service you currently receive at Monument Surgeries in Pennywell? (N=533)

Respondents were asked to rate the service they currently receive at Monument Surgeries at Pennywell, they were asked to select only one option. Over half of the respondents to this question, rate the service they currently receive at Monument Surgeries Pennywell as either good or very good, with just short of one-quarter rating the service as poor or very poor (56.9%, 23.4% respectively).



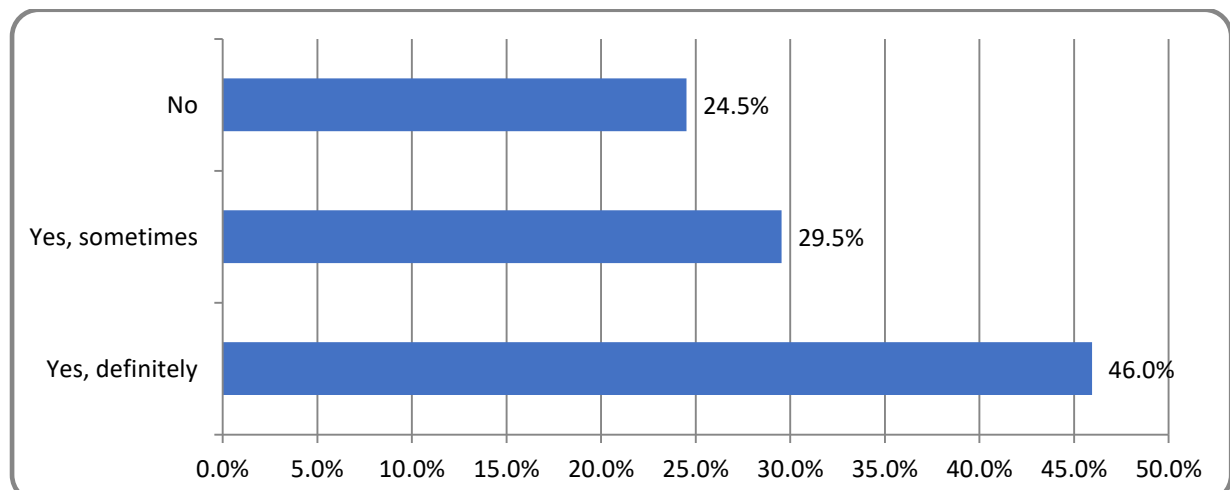
## In the last 6 months have you had enough support to help you manage any long-term health conditions? (N=532)

A mixed response was received to this question, with over one-quarter of respondents either suggesting that they have definitely had enough support to help manage any long-term health conditions, or that they've not needed any support (26.7%, 27.6% respectively). A similar proportion of respondents also indicated that they sometimes received enough support to help them manage any long-term health conditions, or that they have not had enough support (22.7%, 22.9% respectively).



## Do you feel involved in decisions about your care and treatment? (N=518)

Just short of half of the respondents suggested that they definitely felt involved in decisions about their care and treatment, with over one-quarter indicating they sometimes felt involved in their care or treatment (46.0% 29.5% respectively).

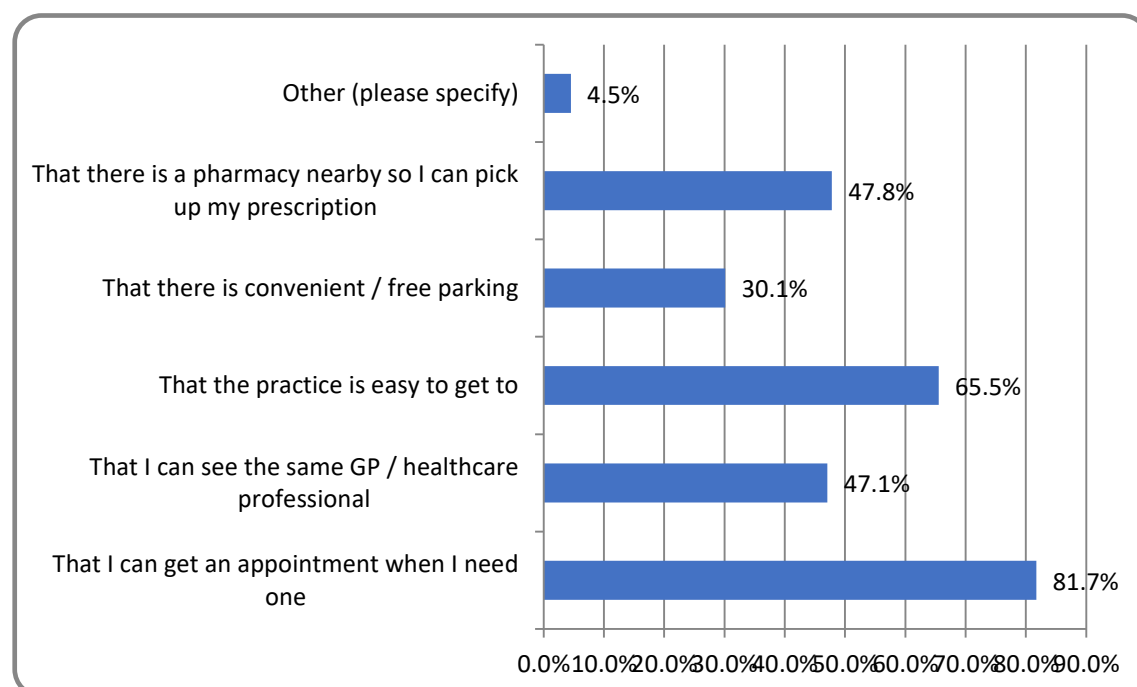


## What is most important to you when accessing GP services? (N=531)

Respondents were asked to select from a list what was important to them when accessing GP services – they were able to select more than one option.

Four-fifths of respondents suggested the importance of getting an appointment when they need one, with over three-fifths indicating the importance of an easy to get to practice (81.7%, 65.5% respectively).

Just short of half of the respondents felt that having a pharmacy nearby, or that they can see the same GP/healthcare professional was important (47.8%, 47.1% respectively).



Respondents were also given the opportunity to specify an 'other' category that they feel is important when accessing GP services. In total, 24 respondents provided 28 comments. These comments have been grouped into the following themes:

Theme	Comments
Appointment availability	6
Local / within walking distance	3
Pharmacy delivery	3
Disability access	2

See same GP	2
Other	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>

Six respondents suggested the importance of available appointments when accessing GP Surgeries.

*“Getting to see a GP impossible!”*

Below are the comments that could not be themed and were therefore grouped together as other:

---

#### Other

“Home visit...”

“staff friendly and helpful”

“preferably all”

“that repeat prescriptions are easy to order”

“Contact via telephone person to person rather than e-mail etc”

“to be treat fairly”

“on bus route”

“Being able to get to talk on the phone without waiting over 30 minutes hanging on the line.”

“Staff know who you are!”

“That it is there to use”

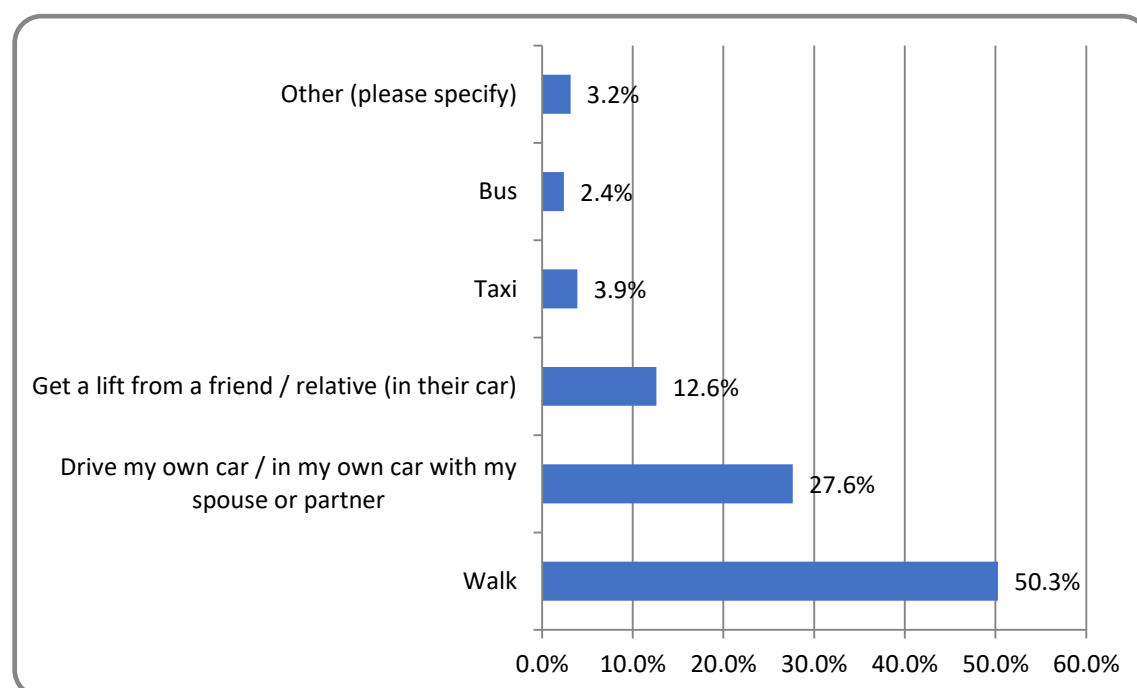
“a good GP whether locum or not”

“That my daughter is not left 2 years untreated by incompetent members of this practice it's a disgrace I urge the closing”

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## How do you usually get to your appointments in Pennywell? (N=539)

Over half of respondents indicated they usually walk to their appointments at Pennywell (50.3%). Over one-quarter suggested that they either drive in their own car or go in their own car with their spouse or partner (27.6%).



Respondents were also given the opportunity to specify an 'other' category for travelling to their appointment. In total, 17 respondents provided 17 comments. These comments were grouped into the following themes:

Theme	Comments
Home visits	3
Wheelchair	3
Walk	2
Mobility scooter	2
Drive own car	2
Other	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>



Below are the comments that could not be themed and were therefore grouped together as other:

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**Other**

“never offered a face to face [sic] appointment only phone”

“Don’t usually use Pennywell”

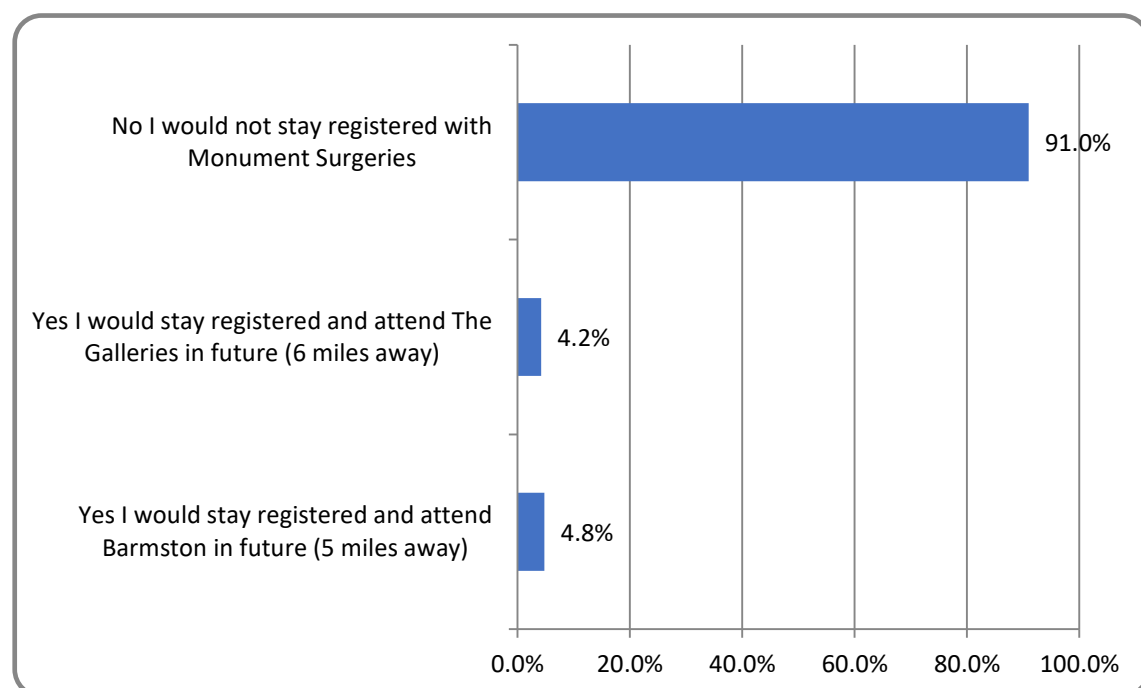
“I ride my bike”

“works car drove by support worker”

“Not applicable”

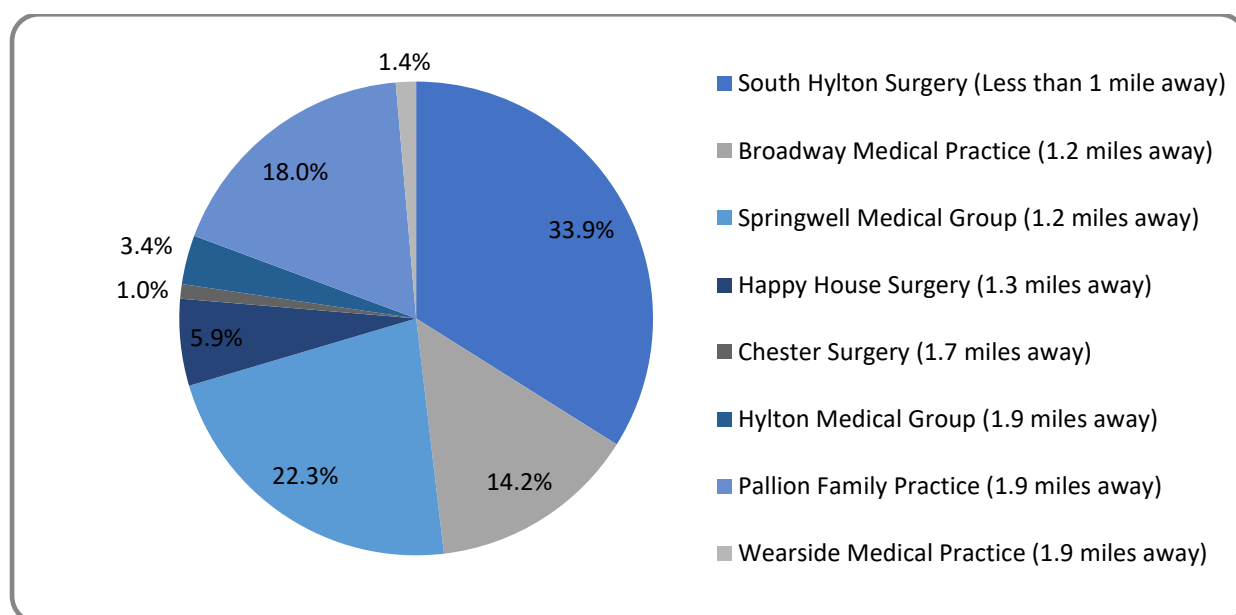
## **Would you stay registered at Monument Surgeries and attend a different practice site? (N=497)**

The vast majority of respondents indicated that they would not stay registered with Monument Surgeries (91.0%).



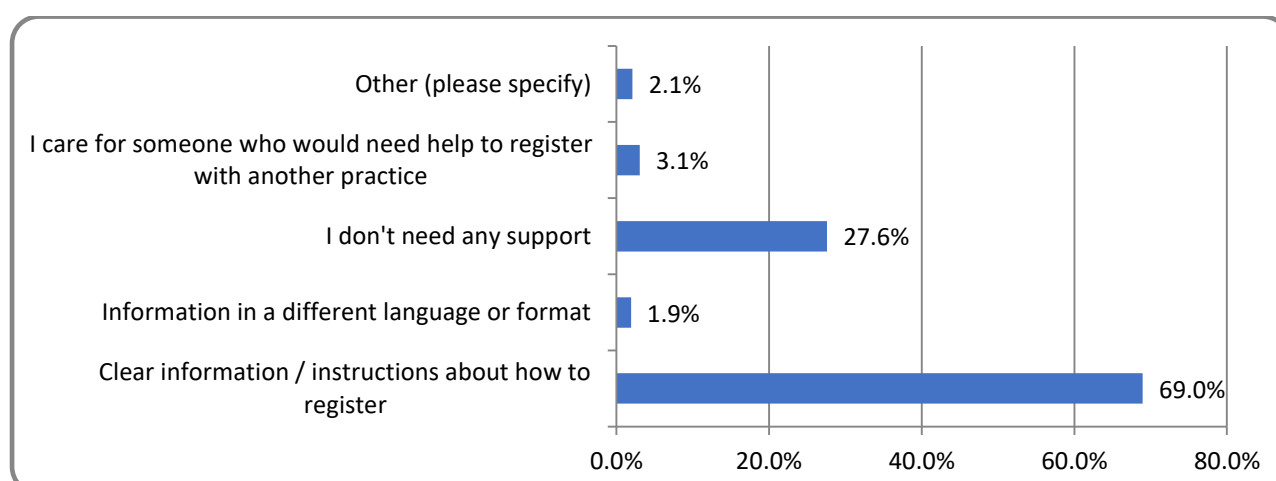
**There are 8 other practices within 2 miles of Pennywell. All of these practices are accepting new patients. From the list of alternative nearby GP practices, we have produced below, which one are you most likely to choose? (N=507)**

Respondents were most likely to indicate that they would choose South Hylton Surgery, closely followed by Springwell Medical Group and Pallion Family Practice, (33.9%, 22.3%, 18.0% respectively).



**What support would you need to help you register with another practice? (N=522)**

Over three-fifths of respondent indicated that they would need clear information/instructions about how to register with another practice (69.0%). Whilst over one-quarter indicated they wouldn't need any support (27.6%).



Respondents were also given the opportunity to specify an 'other' category for any support they may require. In total, 11 respondents provided 11 comments. These comments were grouped into the following themes:

Theme	Comments
Family would support/help	4
Other	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>

Below are comments that could not be themed and were therefore grouped together as other:

#### Other

"Bigger print please as got dry eyes"

"I wouldn't trust you to do it right."

"I live in supported living"

"I need a one with no steps or a long walk"

"info how good the practice is."

"?"

"?"

**If you have any concerns about the potential closure of Monument Surgeries - Pennywell, please use the box below to tell us about them:**

Respondents were given the opportunity to tell us if they had any concerns about the potential closure of Monument Surgeries in Pennywell. In total, 187 respondents provided 273 comments. The themes that appeared more often are discussed below, followed by a table outlining all themes.

## Accessibility

In total, 125 comments were received regarding accessibility. These comments have been grouped into the following themes.

Theme	Comments
Pennywell Surgery is easy to get to	23
Pennywell Surgery is local / centrally located	18
Struggle to travel further afield	17
Pennywell Surgery is a vital part of the community	14
Pennywell Surgery is within walking distance	10
Concern for elderly patients	8
Closure is inconvenient	7
Lack of appointments at Pennywell Surgery	6
Need a surgery in Pennywell Surgery	5
Need a doctor who is near	5
Pennywell Surgery is near the pharmacy	2
In a poor/vulnerable area	2
Poor public transport to other sites	2
Concern for people without transport	2
Other	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>

23 comments indicated that Pennywell Surgery is easy to get to, with a further 18 comments indicating that Pennywell Surgery is local or centrally located.

*“Pennywell is close to my home is easy to get to for myself. Closure will affect older people without transport who live close by.”*

17 comments indicated that they would struggle to travel further afield.

*“I’ve a lot of issues going on and Pennywell is my lifeline, I will struggle especially in winter to go further afield.”*

It was also stated that Pennywell Surgery is a vital part of the community (14 comments).

*“The surgery is very important to us as a community.”*

Pennywell Surgery is within walking distance (10 comments).

*“...I am just over the road to the surgery I can walk there, don't want to travel elsewhere.”*

Below are comments that could not be themed and were therefore grouped as other:

#### Other

“[name removed] is blind and would need help from carer”

“The residents of Pennywell had to wait 40 year [sic] for a GP Practice to open. I find it utterly unacceptable that the ??? of the estate will be without a GP.”

“...if I need a appointment I call in no good phoning you can wait a long time to be answered.”

“I am 85 years old if I have to go to another practice I would need home visits...”

## Preference

In total, there were 55 comments regarding preference, these comments were grouped into the following themes:

Theme	Comments
Don't want it to close / need the surgery	19
Disappointed / sad if it closes	13
Capacity in other surgeries	5
Change causes anxiety / struggles with change	4
There are two surgeries in Washington but they're closing Pennywell?	4
Pennywell should have a few surgeries - as there are lots of patients	2
Surgery will close regardless of survey	2
Not in catchment area for Springwell Surgery	2

Other	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>

19 comments indicated that they did not want Pennywell Surgery to close.

*“This should stay open I have been here for years and don't want to change.”*

With a further 13 comments indicated that they would be disappointed, or sad if the surgery closed.

*“Yes, it would be a pity to close Pennywell am 12 years with Pennywell.”*

Five comments suggested that there may be capacity issues at alternative surgeries.

*“The impact this closure will have on other surgeries on the list will be massive. I don't think there is enough capacity to take on more patients; everywhere is overstretched...”*

Below are comments that could not be themed and were therefore grouped together as other:

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#### Other

“Finding time to complete the full process of joining a new practice.”

“I can confidently say that none of the Pennywell patients would stay with Monument...”

“...If you close Barmston instead, the majority would use the Galleries Surgery.”

“Availability to register at South Hylton.”

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## Service offering

In total, there were 41 comments regarding the service offering, these comments were themed and categorised as positives and concerns.

### Positive comments

In total, there were 14 positive comments, and these were grouped into the following positive themes:



Theme	Comments
Happy with service at Pennywell Surgery	13
Other	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>

Respondents indicated that they were happy with the service they received at Pennywell Surgery (13 comments).

*“I am really sorry that P/well practice may close. It has been a very good practice for many years...”*

Below are comments that could not be themed and were therefore grouped together as other:

#### Other

“...I know I can get an appointment if needed and have always had positive experience from the practice...”

#### Improvements

In total, 35 comments addressed improvements with the service offering and these were grouped into the following themes:

Theme	Comments
Low level of care at Pennywell Surgery	6
Long overdue / should have happened sooner	3
Another practice would upset ongoing treatment / illnesses	3
Surgery has gone downhill since Monument / Allied Health	3
Will the pharmacy stay the same?	3
Will medical records gets transferred?	3
Would need medicine/equipment to cover transition	2
Other	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>

Six comments indicated that there was a poor level of care at Pennywell Surgery.

*“Difficult to have concerns when the level of care is so poor to begin with.”*

Three comments indicated that the closure was overdue or should have happened sooner.

*“The only concern is why it did not happen sooner.”*

Changing to another practice would upset ongoing treatment or illnesses was also addressed (3 comments).

*“...moving to a new practice could/would exacerbate my long term [sic] illnesses.”*

Below are comments that could not be themed and were therefore grouped together as other:

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#### Other

“The appointments were for nurses, not doctors. Doctors by phone call only.”

“I’ve been expecting this for some time. Whenever I went to the surgery, before the pandemic, it was nearly empty of patients. Very strange.”

“Not being able to get the medication I or my family need.”

“Yes, it stinks.”

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## Workforce

In total, there were 20 comments regarding workforce, these comments were grouped into the following themes:

Theme	Comments
Great staff – Doctors / nurses	10
Lack of staff	6
Will miss staff	2
Other	2



<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>
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10 comments indicated that the staff are great at Pennywell - including doctors and nurses.

*“...have always had positive experience from the practice and the staff who work there.”*

Six comments addressed a lack of staff at Pennywell Surgery.

*“Staff levels could be improved to provide a better service.”*

Below are comments that could not be themed and were therefore grouped together as other:

#### Other

“...What will happen to the current staff? Will they still have jobs?...”

“Stop paying drs [sic] so much money for just been there put money towards staff to keep it open”

## Finance

In total, there were six comments regarding finance, these comments were grouped into the following themes:

Theme	Comments
Cost/financial implications for patients	4
Closure is a financial decision	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>

Four comments indicated that there would be added costs or financial implications for patients if the surgery were to close.

*“Concern that taxi fares would be costly if I was not allocated a GP that is nearest to me...”*

Two comments suggested that they felt the closure of Pennywell Surgery was a financial decision.



*“Feel this is a financial decision not for the benefit of the patients but of the group profits.”*

## Continuity of care

In total there were five comments regarding continuity of care, these comments were grouped into the following theme:

Theme	Comments
Don't want to start again - doctor knows my medical history	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>

Five comments indicated that respondents didn't not want to start again at a new surgery as their current doctor is aware of their medical history.

*“I have several different long term health conditions that I feel would definitely be hindered /effected by having to start again with new doctors somewhere else.”*

## Communication

In total, three comments were received regarding communication, these could not be themed and were therefore grouped as other:

### Other

“I get regular telephone calls from this practice to help control my COPD and diabetes checks”

“Been here with my whole family for over ten years now. Hate the new telephone system ...”

“...be able to phone surgery for repeat prescriptions”

### Other

In total, there were 18 comments that couldn't be themed:

Theme	Comments
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No	11
N/A	3
Other	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>

The remainder of the comments could not be themed and were therefore grouped together as other:

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#### Other

"I am mainly housebound, my daughter arranged house visits and district nurses to take blood regular"

"ridiculous"

"Disgusting dropping lots of people down"

" "

---

## Interview Findings

In total, 10 interviews were conducted with patients and/or carers for patients from Monument Surgeries Pennywell. Four female patients, four male patients, a female carer and a male carer were interviewed.

Three patient lists were proactively contacted to take part in an interview ensuring inclusion from hard-to-reach groups. The patient lists contacted were those with registered reasonable adjustments (17), BAME patients (35) and housebound patients (21). In total, two patient with reasonable adjustments, three BAME patients and five housebound patients took part in an interview.

### Accessibility

Accessibility was addressed during all of the interviews. Below we will address the positive comments, neutral comments and potential improvement comments.

#### Positive comments

In total, six interview participants addressed accessibility positively, this consisted of three female patients, one male patient, a female carer and a male carer.

Four interview participants indicated that they were able to book an appointment without too much difficulty (two female patients, two male patients).

Linked to the above, one male carer indicated that when they personally developed a blood clot, they were able to get an appointment straight away, and were referred straight to hospital (male carer).

A female patient also indicated that Pennywell Surgery is all on one level, so it is easy to access in their wheelchair.

#### Neutral comments

In total, nine interview participants addressed accessibility neutrally, this consisted of four female patients, three male patients, a female carer and a male carer.

During five interviews, participants commented they either walk to Pennywell Surgery or live within walking distance, but they can either no longer walk or the patient can no longer walk for medical reasons (two female patients, male patient, female carer, male carer).

Three patients indicated they normally drive to the surgery and another patient, and a carer indicated they have home visits (two male patients, female patient female patient, female carer respectively). A male patient indicated they get a taxi to the surgery.

One patient indicated that they were given a telephone appointment at Barmston or the Galleries rather than with Pennywell Surgery.

Two female patients suggested they would prefer to visit a surgery that is close or not too far away, with one suggesting this was to reduce the time in the taxi or on the bus.

*“Closer it is the better it is, less time on a bus or taxi which causes anxiety.”*

[Female patient, 39 years]

If Pennywell Surgery did close, one interview participant addressed their requirements for home visits from doctors and nurses for their family member (female carer), with a further interview participant indicating that if the surgery closed, they would probably just call an ambulance if they required support (male patient).

*“Don’t know what I’m going to do if it closes. I’ll just probably just end up calling an ambulance.”*

[Male patient, 58 years]

### Improvements

In total, nine interview participants addressed improvements with accessibility, this consisted of three female patients, four male patients, a female carer and a male carer.

Four interview participants discussed the queue they were placed in when phoning the surgery (two female patients, male patient, female carer). Two interview participants also addressed how they often get cut off when calling the surgery, with one female patient adding that if they are 20<sup>th</sup> in the queue, they are unlikely to get an appointment (female patient, male patient).

Furthermore, one male patient indicated that they do find it hard to get through on the phone, but once they do the experience is good.

One female patient indicated that since June 2021 all calls to Pennywell Surgery go to a centralised hub shared with 3-4 other surgeries.

Linked to this, four interview participants addressed how difficult it is to get an appointment at Pennywell Surgery (three male patients, male carer). An additional interview participant, a female patient commented that they had to call at 8am to get an appointment the same day.

Three interview participants indicated that the waiting time for appointments is poor, with patients suggesting waiting times from 4-14 days (two female patients, male patient).

A female patient also indicated that they were unable to book an appointment in advance online and a male patient suggested it was “*pure luck*” as to whether they would be able to book an appointment.

Face-to-face appointments were also discussed in two interviews, with one participant suggesting that after attending a telephone appointment, if they required a face-to-face appointment, they need to call the next day to book another appointment and another participant suggesting the need to make it easier to get a face-to-face appointment (female patient, male patient respectively).

*“Make it easier for people to see a doctor face to face.”*

[Male patient, 50 years]

A female patient discussed their own difficulty getting a home visit with a doctor, suggesting they usually get an appointment with a nurse.

Attending the Emergency Department due to not receiving a telephone appointment at a specified time was discussed by another female patient.

*“One time I had an appointment with [name removed] and ended up not waiting and took daughter to A&E instead as it was too late. He still tried to continue the call when I was in A&E. Subsequently she ended up in hospital for 3 days.”*

[Female patient, 39 years]

During one interview, parking and the need for a surgery with better parking was addressed (Male patient).

Their Inability to travel to a surgery in Washington was also discussed by a male patient.

## Communication

Communication was discussed during all of the interviews. Below we will address the positive and potential improvement comments.

### Positive comments

In total, communication was discussed positively in five interviews, this consisted of three female patients and two male patients.

Two patients suggested that they found the communication from Pennywell Surgery good (female patient, male patient).

One patient indicated that they were given leaflets and phone numbers about their long-term-health condition, with another indicating there was lots of information on the walls of the surgery (female patient, female patient respectively).

During another interview, one patient indicated that the doctor gave their daughter plenty of options to choose from to relieve their symptoms (female patient).

A male patient commented on an email he sent to Pennywell Surgery, suggesting he received a prompt reply. This patient compared correspondence from Pennywell with Monument Surgeries at Washington suggesting that he still hasn't received a response from Washington having sent them three emails.

*"Three emails sent to Washington not one answered. Email to Pennywell answered straight away."*

[Male patient, 58 years]

### Improvements

In total, three interview participants discussed potential improvements they would like to see with regards to communication, this consisted of two female patients and one male patient.

Improvements discussed, include the lack of correspondence such as letters or emails received from Pennywell Surgery, the lack of communication between their doctor and the hospital and the receipt of contradictory information regarding medicine (female patient, female patient, male patient respectively).

*“...think that was lack of communication between hospital and the doctors.”*

[Female patient, 62 years]

## Continuity of care

Continuity of care was discussed during six of the interviews. Below we will address the positive comments, neutral comments and potential improvement comments.

### Positive comments

During one interview continuity of care was discussed positively. A female patient discussed their relationship with their doctor, how their doctor knows them and explains everything to them.

*“Doctor knows what I’m like so he explains everything to me, he knows me. That’s what’s good.”*

[Female patient, 62 years]

### Neutral comments

Continuity of care was addressed in a neutral capacity in one of the interviews.

A female carer indicated that they were happy as long as they were able to see someone - they weren’t concerned who they saw.

### Improvements

Improvements to continuity of care were discussed in six of the interviews, these consisted of three female patients, a male patient, a female carer and a male carer.

Participants addressed the lack of consistency with regards to their inability to see the same doctor each time they visit (three female patients, male patient, female carer, male carer). Three of these interview participants suggested they would like to see the same doctor (female patient, female carer, male carer).

*“They just get locums in all of the time so don’t form any continuity with any doctor so makes it difficult to diagnose what you’ve got.”*



[Male patient, 50 years]

Linked to this, it was indicated during one interview that the participant must explain their medical history each time they see a doctor, suggesting that the doctor should read their notes prior to their appointment (female patient).

## Finance

Finance was discussed during one of the interviews, providing a neutral comment.

### Neutral comments

One male patient felt that the reason for the closure was because the surgery costs too much money to run, and that fewer patients means less profit.

*“Being cynical, less patients means less profit, and it’s the easiest one to cut, it’s not a money maker for them. The cost of locums is really expensive, if it costs too much money to run, they’re going to cut it loose.”*

[Male patient, 50 years]

## Preference

Interview participants’ preferences for alternative surgeries were discussed during all the interviews. Below we will address neutral comments and potential improvement comments.

### Neutral comments

Neutral comments with regards to participants preferences were received in all the interviews.

Three interview participants indicated a preference towards Springwell Surgery, with one patient indicating it is nearer than Pennywell Surgery (female patient, male patient, female carer).

A preference towards Pallion Surgery was commented on in three of the interviews (female patient, male patient, male carer). During one of the interviews a participant suggested that Pallion Surgery was an easy bus ride, and they hadn’t heard anything

bad about the surgery, whilst another participant suggested the surgery was the next closest to him (female patient, male patient respectively).

Interview participants also either didn't specify a preference but indicated they would stay within the alliance, that they would prefer Millfield Surgery, but it isn't an option or that there were no other surgeries near and therefore wouldn't choose anywhere else (female patient, male patient, female patient respectively).

Three participants expressed their disappointment that Pennywell Surgery would be closing, or indicated that they didn't want it to close, (2 female patients, male patient respectively).

### Improvements

Improvements with regards to preferences were discussed in two of the interviews, consisting of two male patients.

One participant indicated that Pennywell Surgery should be independent, and not part of a group, whilst another participant suggested that all other surgeries have a poor reputation or are too far away (male patient, male patient respectively).

One patient indicated that when they tried to change surgery, they couldn't register with South Hylton Surgery despite it being closer to them than Washington Surgery (male patient).

## **Service offering**

Service offering was discussed during all the interviews. Below we will address positive comments, neutral comments and improvements.

### Positive comments

Positive comments regarding service offering were discussed during all the interviews.

Participants indicated that they either think Pennywell Surgery is outstanding, the face-to-face appointments are really good, they have no complaints, there is nothing they can do better with home visits, or that they are happy overall (male patient, female patient, male carer, female carer and female patient, male patient respectively)

*“Overall impression. I was happy with it.”*



[Male patient, 43 years]

Another interview participant suggested that Pennywell Surgery do well with the limited amount of time they have, and that they can only do so much (female patient).

Other positive comments addressed the ability to walk-in and get help there and then, receiving better support from a female doctor who understood her condition better, they like their doctor as they *“tell it to you straight,”* telephone screening means sometimes they don’t need to attend physically, and that their experience of accessing medication at Pennywell Surgery has been easier in comparison to dealing with Monument Surgeries at Washington (female patient, female patient, female patient, female patient, male patient respectively).

*“Sometimes I don’t need to go to the surgery, the telephone screening making a difference”*

[Female patient, 32 years]

One participant suggested that due to COVID 19 the waiting time in the Surgery is now shorter as not many people are allowed into the building (female patient).

### Neutral

Neutral comments regarding the service offering were discussed in five of the interviews, consisting of three female patients and two male patients.

Participants in three interviews indicated that the service they receive is good once they are able to speak to someone (2 female patients, male patient)

*“The doctors and staff, once you get to speak to them or be seen – the experience is absolutely outstanding.”*

[Female patient, 32 years]

### Improvements

Improvements to service offering were discussed in five of the interviews, consisting of three female patients, a male patient and a male carer.

Participants addressed a reduced service at Pennywell Surgery due to COVID 19, suggesting they no longer offer blood pressure checks or ear syringing (female patient, male patient respectively). The male patient suggested that they had to

access ear syringing privately and that this can be disadvantageous for poorer patients.

Timely telephone appointments were also addressed, with one participant suggesting that they can sometimes be an hour late (female patient).

The long waiting time for referrals was also discussed by a female patient.

*“It’s out of their hands because they’ve made referrals, but taking ages to go through.”*

[Female patient, 32 years]

During one interview, a male patient suggested that Pennywell Surgery don’t do anything well, suggesting that the Surgery would struggle to pick up a life-threatening condition.

Another participant addressed the limited access to home visits, that they are only available after 5pm as the doctors attend their other appointments first. This participant suggested that it is important for the person they care for to be seen earlier in the day (male carer).

During another interview a female patient discussed how a nurse was arranged to visit her once she left hospital – unfortunately, this didn’t happen, and she had to manage on her own.

## **Workforce**

Workforce was discussed during seven of the interviews. Below we will address positive comments, neutral comments and improvements.

### Positive comments

Positive comments regarding the workforce were discussed in six of the interviews, consisting of four female patients, a male patient and a female carer.

Six participants indicated that the staff are nice, friendly, or helpful (four female patients, male patient, female carer).

*“I phone up once a month for her inhalers, speak to the same girl always really good really pleasant.”*

[Female carer, 86 years]

During one of the interviews, a male patient also suggested that they have a good relationship with staff at Pennywell Surgery (male patient).

### Neutral comments

One neutral comment discussing workforce was received from a female patient, stating that they feel staff are doing the best they can to overcome the staffing issues.

### Improvements

Workforce improvements were discussed in three of the interviews, consisting of two female patients and a male patient.

Three participants suggested that staffing levels at Pennywell Surgery require improvement (two female patients, male patient). During two of these interviews, it was suggested that there are days when there are no doctors available at all at Pennywell Surgery (female patient, male patient).

*“Pennywelll often days there’s no drs there at all.”*

[Male patient, 50 years]

Linked to this, a female patient stated that they had their appointment cancelled twice as a doctor was not available.

The requirement for more admin staff to answer the phones was also recommended (male patient).

## Further correspondence

Further correspondence was received concerning Monument Surgeries in Pennywell. In total, three letters were received (see appendices), and summaries are below.

### Letter 1

Monument Surgeries in Pennywell is short staffed, but other surgeries in Pennywell do have capacity, therefore close Monument Surgeries in Pennywell.

### Letter 2

Surmising that Monument Surgeries in Pennywell is not financially viable and doesn't have enough patients.

The performance of Monument Surgeries in Pennywell is terrible and currently is the worst it has been. Accessing the surgery by phone is extremely difficult and if you do access the surgery, you then can't get suitable appointments. The surgery is rarely open outside of working hours. The community deserve a better service.

### Letter 3

Respondent completed the survey and indicated their preference towards Springwell Health Centre. However, they previously contacted Springwell Health Centre to register and were informed they were out of the catchment area.

## Conclusion

This conclusion will give a summary of how patients have used their surgery recently, as well as focusing on the main themes that have emerged from the survey, interviews and further correspondence.

When thinking about accessing Pennywell Surgery respondents to the survey implied it was easy to get to or it was local or centrally located (23 comments, 18 comments respectively). Both respondents to the survey and participants in the interviews indicated it was within walking distance (10 comments, 5 interviews). Over half of survey respondents indicated they usually walk to their appointments at Pennywell Surgery, with over one-quarter suggesting they either drive in their own car or go to the surgery in their own car with their spouse or partner (50.3%, 27.6% respectively). Additionally, over three-fifths indicated that the surgery being easy to get to is important (65.5%).

Survey respondents and interview participants both indicated that they were happy with the service they received at Pennywell Surgery and the staff at Pennywell Surgery (13 comments and 6 interviews, 10 comments and 4 interviews respectively). Supporting this, over half of survey respondents rate the service they currently receive at Pennywell Surgery as either good or very good (56.9%).

However, concerns were raised over the lack of staff at Pennywell Surgery, the difficulty getting appointments, as well as the capacity in other surgeries should patients be transferred (6 comments, 3 interviews and 1 letter, 6 comments and 4 interviews, 5 comments, 1 letter respectively). Though it was suggested that there is capacity at other surgeries in Pennywell (1 letter).

Survey respondents had a mixed response when asked if they received enough support for their long-term-health condition, with over one-quarter either suggesting that they have definitely had enough support to help manage any long-term-health condition, or that they've not needed any support (26.7%, 27.6% respectively). A similar proportion of respondents also indicated that they sometimes received enough support to help them manage any long-term-health condition, or that they have not had enough support (22.7%, 22.9% respectively).

The difficulty getting an appointment due to the phone queue was also addressed, with a couple suggesting their phone call is often cut off (4 interviews and 1 letter, 2 interviews respectively).

Findings from the interviews, also revealed that waiting times for appointments is currently poor and that continuity of care needs improvement, suggesting that they should be able to see the same doctor (3 interviews, 5 interviews respectively).

Although, respondents to four interviews indicated that they were able to book an appointment without too much difficulty.

Four-fifths of survey respondents indicated the importance of getting an appointment when they need one (81.7%), commenting the same. Similarly, just short of half of survey respondents feel that seeing the same GP/healthcare professional is important (47.1%).

Linked to the above, interview participants discussed a reduced service due to COVID-19 at Pennywell Surgery, with some services such as blood pressure checks and ear syringing no longer being offered (2 interviews).

Respondents to the survey and during additional correspondence also indicated that the level of care at Pennywell Surgery is poor, or that it has gone down-hill since it became part of the alliance with Monument/Allied Health (6 comments and 1 letter, 3 comments respectively). The vast majority of respondents indicating that they would not stay registered with Monument Surgeries (91.0%).

In contrast, participants in the interviews indicated that they were happy with the communication they have received from Pennywell Surgery (2 interviews). Similarly, just short of half of the respondents to the survey suggested they definitely felt involved in decisions about their care and treatment (46.0%).

Survey participants indicated they do not want the surgery to close / they need the surgery, that Pennywell Surgery is a vital part of the community and/or there is a need for a surgery in Pennywell (19 comments, 14 comments, 5 comments respectively)

Survey respondents also specified that Pennywell needs a local doctor or there should be a few surgeries in Pennywell as there are lot of patients living in Pennywell (5 comments, 2 comments respectively).

Concerns were raised by respondents to the survey over access for elderly patients, people without transport, as well as the poor public transport available to get to other sites (8 comments, 2 comments, 2 comments respectively). Some survey respondents revealed that they would struggle to travel further afield to get to another surgery, or they were concerned over any additional cost or financial implication for patients (17 comments, 4 comments respectively). Supporting this, patients during two interviews stated they would prefer to visit a surgery that is close to where they live or not too far away (2 interviews).

Survey respondents questioned why Monument Surgeries are closing Pennywell, when there are two surgeries within the alliance in Washington, with other comments



suggesting the surgery will close regardless of the results of these findings (4 comments, 2 comments respectively).

Comments from the survey, as well as the findings from a couple of the interviews showed a disappointment or sadness towards the surgery closing, suggesting the closure would be inconvenient (7 comments, 2 interviews). Similarly, respondents to the survey stated they did not want to start again with a new surgery as their current doctor knows their medical history, with some also questioning whether their medical records will be transferred (5 comments, 3 comments respectively).

When respondents were asked if they required any support to access another surgery over three-fifths indicated that they would need clear information/instructions about how to register with another surgery, whilst over one-quarter indicated they wouldn't need any support (69.0%, 27.6% respectively).

Some survey respondents indicated that changing to another surgery would upset their ongoing treatment or illness, or that they would require medicine or equipment to cover the transition period (3 comments, 2 comments respectively). Some respondents to the survey also indicated the change would cause them anxiety or that they struggle with change (4 comments).

Finance was addressed in both the survey, an interview and additional correspondence, suggesting the closure is a financial decision (2 comments, 1 interview, 1 letter).

When thinking specifically about preferences, respondents to the survey were most likely to indicate that they would choose South Hylton Surgery, closely followed by Springwell Medical Group and Pallion Family Practice (33.9%, 22.3%, 18.0% respectively). However, a small number of participants also indicated that they were informed they were not in the catchment area for Springwell Surgery (2 comments, 1 letter).

Finally, a small number of respondents indicated that the closure is long overdue or should have happened sooner (3 comments).

## Survey Demographics

### Postcode (N=544)

Postcode	% of responses	Number of responses	Postcode	% of responses	Number of responses
NE38	0.2%	1	SR3	4.4%	24
SR1	0.2%	1	SR4	93.9%	511
SR2	0.9%	5	SR5	0.4%	2

### Age (N=502)

Age	% of responses	Number of responses	Age	% of responses	Number of responses
Under 18	3.2%	16	55-64	20.1%	101
18-24	4.6%	23	65-74	16.5%	83
25-34	9.8%	49	75+	13.9%	70
35-44	12.6%	63	Prefer not to say	2.8%	14
45-54	16.5%	83			

### Gender (N=521)

Gender	% of responses	Number of responses	Gender	% of responses	Number of responses
Male	43.2%	225	Other	0.0%	0
Female	56.2%	293	Prefer not to say	0.6%	3

### Additional gender question (N=518)

Does your gender match your sex as registered at birth?	% of responses	Number of responses	Does your gender match your sex as registered at birth?	% of responses	Number of responses
Yes	97.5%	505	Prefer not to say	0.8%	4

No	1.7%	9
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### Pregnancy question (N=511)

Are you currently pregnant or have you been pregnant in the last year?	% of responses	Number of responses	Are you currently pregnant or have you been pregnant in the last year?	% of responses	Number of responses
Yes	1.4%	7	Prefer not to say	0.2%	1
No	77.1%	394	Not applicable	21.3%	109

### Civil status (N=514)

	% of responses	Number of responses		% of responses	Number of responses
Single	32.1%	165	Separated	1.6%	8
Cohabiting	9.1%	47	Divorced or civil partnership dissolved	8.8%	45
Married	34.1%	175	Widowed or a surviving partner from a civil partnership	9.7%	50
In a civil partnership	1.8%	9	Prefer not to say	2.9%	15

### Disability (N=520)

Disability	% of responses	Number of responses	Disability	% of responses	Number of responses
Yes	56.9%	296	Prefer not to say	3.5%	18
No	39.6%	206			

### Caring responsibilities(N=503)

Caring responsibility	% of responses	Number of responses
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		responses
None	73.0%	367
Primary carer of a child or children (under 2 years)	1.2%	6
Primary carer of a child or children (between 2 and 18 years)	11.5%	58
Primary carer of a disabled child or children	1.2%	6
Primary carer or assistant for a disabled adult (18 years and over)	4.6%	23
Primary carer or assistant for an older person or people (65 years and over)	5.0%	25
Secondary carer (another person carries out main caring role)	3.0%	15
Prefer not to say	4.0%	20

## Race or ethnicity (N=524)

Race or ethnicity	% of responses	Number of responses
Asian / British Asian (Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, or other)	2.1%	11
White (British, Irish, European, or other)	95.2%	499
Black / British Black (African, Caribbean, or other)	1.0%	5
Mixed race (Black & white, Asian & white, or other)	0.0%	0
Gypsy or traveller	0.2%	1
Rather not say	1.0%	5
Other	0.6%	3

## Sexual orientation (N=508)

Sexual orientation	% of responses	Number of responses	Sexual orientation	% of responses	Number of responses
Heterosexual or straight	92.5%	470	Asexual	0.0%	0
Gay man	0.4%	2	Prefer not to say	3.9%	20
Gay woman or lesbian	0.2%	1	Other	1.8%	9

Bisexual	1.2%	6
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## Religion (N=520)

Religion	% of responses	Number of responses	Religion	% of responses	Number of responses
No religion	41.9%	218	Hindu	0.0%	0
Christianity	50.4%	262	Jewish	0.0%	0
Muslim	0.6%	3	Prefer not to say	1.7%	9
Sikh	0.2%	1	Other religion	5.0%	26
Buddhist	0.2%	1			

## Appendices

### Letter 1

31 OCTOBER 2021

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

DEAR SIR,

FUTURE OF MONUMENT SURGERIES IN PENNYWELL.

I HAVE RECEIVED A TEXT MESSAGE  
ASKING FOR MY OPINION REGARDING THE PROBLEM  
BEING EXPERIENCED BY THE MONUMENT SURGERIES  
IN PENNYWELL.

PLEASE <sup>SEE</sup> MY THOUGHTS BELOW:-

AS THERE IS AN INABILITY TO OBTAIN  
DOCTORS OR A DOCTOR AND SUPPORTING STAFF  
SIMILAR ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY. HOWEVER,  
OTHER SURGERIES IN PENNYWELL HAVE SPARE  
CAPACITY. TAKING THIS INTO CONSIDERATION I  
THINK THE COMMON SENSE ACTION WOULD


BE AS SUGGESTED CLOSE THE PENNYWELL  
MONUMENT SURGERY, DOWN.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



## Letter 2

  
Dear sir or madam ,

thank you for your correspondence notifying me of the closure of Monument Surgeries in Pennywell . May I just say , I am amazed that it's taken this long . I would imagine the fact that your closing means that you no longer have enough patients on your books to make the surgery financially viable. This I think should tell you everything you need to know about the service , or lack of, that you have provided the people of Pennywell and those , like myself , from the outlying area .

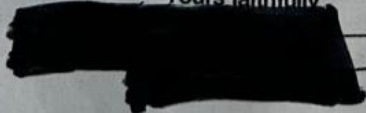
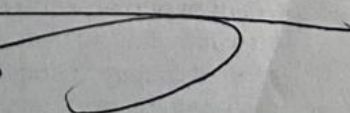
Your overall performance has been absolutely terrible , in the many years Ive been a patient I've never known it be as bad as it is now ! To anyone that works , you don't really offer a service at all because I've found many, many times that IF you can get through on the telephone ( something that is remarkably difficult and time consuming ) you then can't get an appointment that you can fit around your job or within a timeframe of less than two weeks . It would seem that you cater solely for the unemployed , who have no problem attending because they don't have to work to make a living .

For the last year I've been getting treatment for mental health problems and suicidal tendencies from a team of Doctors at Teleport House , Oxford park , so luckily I've not had to use your surgery but recently I've been having agonising stomach pains and bowel problems , which may or may not , be due to the various antidepressants that I take . I was told to get blood and stool tests from my GP and after eventually getting through to your switchboard , I got an appointment for over three weeks . I did pick up a stool sample kit from the receptionist but couldn't return it immediately due to working but couldn't return it immediately due to working in Newcastle and the fact that your surgery is rarely open outside of working hours . ( On a side note , I am still waiting the results of the test after more than a week . )

Having depression often means the smallest thing can set you off , sending you into a spiral of anxiety and stress - Imagine then the stress of not knowing whats causing you incredible pain because you cant get an appointment for over three weeks !!!!

I am sure Monument don't care because you're only in the 'Health business ' to make money , but people deserve better . Your 'service' has been nothing short of abysmal and you should be stripped of your licence so that an alternative can be found who genuinely want to help.

Personally , I am glad you're closing because you're not fit for purpose , like the rest of the god forsaken NHSS .

Yours faithfully  
  




### Letter 3

I completed this survey on line, but would like to bring your attention to an error @ question 9.

I telephoned Springwell Health Centre to register there as a new/transferring patient from Monument and was told I was NOT able to as Pennywell is not within their patient area.

I mentioned this correspondence to them and they categorically explained that I would NOT be able to register with them but could try Broadway Medical Practice.

Springwell Health Centre would have been my preferred choice.

Can you explain why your letter gives this Practice info that is obviously clearly incorrect

[REDACTED]