

## **Billinge Medical Practice move to Garswood Health Centre**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

We have prepared this FAQ document in response to the questions and concerns patients have raised following the recent letter about the planned move to the First Floor in Garswood Health Centre and the invitation to the patient meeting. The questions included in this document have come directly from patient feedback and we have grouped them into key themes so we can provide clear and helpful information in one place.

As further questions are received, we will continue to review the themes and update this FAQ document, so that patients have access to the most up-to-date information available.

We understand that the planned move from Recreation Drive has caused worry and uncertainty for many patients. We are sorry that this has been unsettling. We are glad patients have contacted us with questions, as this helps us understand what information people need.

The most important points are these:

- **Billinge Medical Practice is not closing.**
- **You will remain registered with Billinge Medical Practice.**
- **You do not need to take any action.**

#### **What is happening?**

Billinge Medical Practice has to move from the current Recreation Drive building because the landlords have served notice requiring the practice to leave.

Following an options appraisal, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB), working with the GP Partners and NHS estates colleagues, has approved a move to:

#### **Garswood Health Centre**

**First Floor**

**Billinge Road**

**Garswood**

**WN4 0XD**

This will allow the practice to remain open and continue providing NHS GP services to patients.

#### **Is Billinge Medical Practice closing?**

No.

Billinge Medical Practice is not closing. The practice is relocating because it cannot remain in the current Recreation Drive building.

### **Do I need to re-register?**

No.

If you are already registered with Billinge Medical Practice, you will remain registered with Billinge Medical Practice.

You do not need to fill in any forms or re-register.

### **When will the move happen?**

The practice has to leave the Recreation Drive building by **4<sup>th</sup> September 2026**.

We are currently working to confirm the exact date that services will start to be delivered from the first floor in Garswood Health Centre.

Until patients are told otherwise, services will continue to be delivered from Recreation Drive.

We will write to patients again to confirm the date of the move before services start at Garswood Health Centre.

### **Is the move temporary or permanent?**

Because the practice was given six months' notice to leave the current building, the priority was to find a safe and suitable option within the time available.

An options appraisal took place. The first floor at Garswood Health Centre was identified as the most suitable option. Garswood Health Centre is a high-standard, purpose built facility, providing stability for Billinge Medical practice and its patients.

We are committed to ongoing assessment and evaluation of the relocation to ensure patient and practice needs are being met.

### **Further clarification regarding the changes and the reason for change**

#### **Why can't the practice stay at Recreation Drive?**

The practice cannot remain at Recreation Drive because notice has been served by the landlords.

The building also requires significant work. The practice, the ICB and NHS estates colleagues have had to consider what is safe, suitable and available within the required timescale.

The priority has been to keep Billinge Medical Practice open and avoid disruption to patient care.

### **Why was Garswood Health Centre chosen?**

Garswood Health Centre is a high-standard, purpose built facility, providing stability for Billinge Medical practice and its patients.

It was identified through the options appraisal as the most suitable option. It allows the practice to move and continue providing NHS GP services.

We are committed to ongoing assessment and evaluation of the relocation to ensure patient and practice needs are being met.

### **Were other sites considered?**

Yes. A number of options were considered as part of the options appraisal process.

For a site to be suitable, it needed to be available within the required timescale, safe for patients and staff, suitable for NHS clinical services, affordable, and able to support the number of appointments and services the practice provides.

Not every empty or available building can safely be used as a GP surgery. Some buildings would need significant work, approvals, funding, planning or adaptation before they could be used for clinical care.

### **Can the practice provide some services from another local site?**

The practice, the ICB and NHS colleagues will continue to review opportunities to deliver services in line with the wider neighbourhood approach.

At this stage, the confirmed relocation site is Garswood Health Centre.

### **Why can't the NHS or the current GP Partners buy the Recreation Drive building?**

We understand why patients have asked this question. GP surgery buildings are not always owned by the NHS. Many GP practices operate from buildings that are privately owned and leased to the practice. In this case, the Recreation Drive building is privately owned by former GP Partners.

The current GP Partners inherited a longstanding premises issue. Over the last two years significant work has taken place between the practice, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board, NHS estates colleagues and the landlords to try to secure a workable lease and find a solution that would allow services to continue from Recreation Drive.

Unfortunately, it has not been possible to reach a lease agreement that provides the long-term security needed for the practice to remain in the building.

Buying the building has also been considered, but this is not affordable or viable because of the purchase cost and the significant investment that would be needed to bring the building up to the standard required for modern NHS healthcare.

For the NHS to support the purchase of a building, it must represent value for money, be suitable for long-term healthcare use, and fit with wider NHS estates plans. Given the asking price, refurbishment costs and the need to use public money responsibly, purchasing the Recreation Drive building was not identified as a viable option.

The priority has therefore been to secure a safe and suitable location within the timescale available, so that Billinge Medical Practice can remain open and continue to provide care for patients.

### **Why was the decision made before the patient meeting?**

The practice has been given a fixed timescale to leave the Recreation Drive building.

Because of this, a decision had to be made quickly - to protect patient services and allow the practice to continue operating.

The patient meeting is an opportunity to explain the process, answer questions, listen to concerns and discuss the next steps.

### **Did an Equality Impact Assessment and Quality Impact Assessment take place?**

Yes. An **Equality Impact Assessment** and a **Quality Impact Assessment** were completed as part of the decision-making and planning process.

An Equality Impact Assessment looks at whether a change may affect some patients more than others, including older patients, disabled patients, carers, patients with mobility needs, patients who do not drive, patients with communication needs, and patients with other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. This helps the NHS and the practice consider their equality duties, including the need to reduce disadvantage and make reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

A Quality Impact Assessment looks at whether a proposed change could affect the quality of care, including patient safety, clinical effectiveness and patient experience. NHS England guidance says QIAs should be used as part of decision-making when planning, approving and implementing changes to health and care services.

The assessments considered the likely impact of the move, including travel, access to the building, mobility needs, parking, continuity of care, home visits, prescriptions, appointment access and the ability of the practice to keep services running safely.

The assessments do not mean that every concern can be fully removed. They do mean that the impact on patients has been considered, risks have been identified, and actions are being taken where possible to reduce the impact. This includes confirming lift access, accessible toilet facilities, baby changing facilities, prescription arrangements, continued home visits where medically required, and ongoing review of travel and access concerns with NHS and local partners.

The practice, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board and NHS colleagues will continue to review patient feedback as the move is planned and after services start from Garswood Health Centre.

These assessments will continue to inform the move planning and will be reviewed alongside patient feedback where further risks or concerns are identified.

## **Information about the Premises – First Floor at Garswood Health Centre**

### **Is there a lift at Garswood Health Centre?**

Yes.

There is a working lift to the first floor. The lift is maintained under a service contract.

If you have mobility needs, please tell the practice when booking or attending your appointment so we can support you where possible.

### **What happens if I cannot use stairs?**

Please tell the practice if you cannot use stairs or need support to access the building.

There is a lift to the first floor. Patients who are medically housebound will continue to be assessed for home visits where clinically appropriate.

### **Are there accessible toilets?**

Yes.

There are accessible toilet facilities on the first floor.

There are also baby changing facilities. Patients who need a private space for breastfeeding or personal care support should speak to a member of staff.

### **Is there parking at Garswood Health Centre?**

Yes. Garswood Health Centre has a designated car park. The car park is larger than the current parking facilities at Recreation Drive.

We recognise that parking is important for patients. We will work with the building managers and Garswood Surgery to monitor parking and respond to any issues where possible.

### **Will the building be ready before the move?**

Yes.

The first floor at Garswood Health Centre will be ready before services move from Recreation Drive.

The practice is working with NHS colleagues and building managers to make sure the site is prepared before the move takes place.

**Will there be someone to help me when I arrive?**

Yes. Billinge Medical Practice staff will be available to support patients attending appointments.

We understand that attending a new building may feel unfamiliar at first. We are reviewing the arrival process, signage and patient flow so patients know where to go when they arrive at Garswood Health Centre.

**Will there be clear signs at Garswood Health Centre?**

Yes. Clear signage will be part of the move planning.

We will provide further information before the move so patients know where to go when they arrive.

**Will my information remain confidential at the new site?**

Yes. Patient confidentiality will continue to apply in the same way.

Billinge Medical Practice will continue to follow NHS information governance, confidentiality and data protection requirements. Sharing a building with another practice does not mean patient records or confidential information are shared.

**Will Billinge Medical Practice and Garswood Surgery share the same waiting room?**

Billinge Medical Practice and Garswood Surgery will be based in the same health centre, but they will remain separate GP practices.

We are working through the practical arrangements for patient flow, reception, signage and waiting areas. Patients will be given clear information before the move so they know where to go when they arrive.

## Information regarding the future of Billinge Medical Practice

### **Will Billinge Medical Practice merge with Garswood Surgery?**

No.

Billinge Medical Practice will remain Billinge Medical Practice.

The practice will be based at Garswood Health Centre, but Billinge patients will remain registered with Billinge Medical Practice. You will continue to contact Billinge Medical Practice in the usual way and you will continue to be cared for by the Billinge Medical Practice team.

### **Will Garswood patients get priority over Billinge patients?**

No.

Billinge Medical Practice and Garswood Surgery are separate GP practices.

Billinge patients will continue to access Billinge Medical Practice appointments. Garswood Surgery patients will continue to access Garswood Surgery appointments.

The practices will share the building, but they will remain separate practices with separate patient lists.

### **Will the practice name change?**

No.

The practice will continue to be called **Billinge Medical Practice**.

The practice is moving location, but it is not changing its name, patient list or practice team.

## Accessing the practice and the clinical team

### **Will I still use the same telephone number?**

Yes.

You will continue to contact Billing Medical Practice using the same telephone number:

**01744 892205**

You will also continue to be able to use online services and the NHS App where available.

### **How will I book appointments?**

You will book appointments in the same way as you do now:

<b>Telephone:</b>	01744 892205
<b>Online access:</b>	billingmedicalpractice.org
<b>NHS App:</b>	where available

### **Will home visits still be available?**

Yes.

Home visits will continue to be available where they are medically required.

As now, a GP or clinician will assess whether a home visit is clinically needed.

### **Will I still see the same doctors and nurses?**

Yes.

The same doctors, nurses and practice team will continue to provide care.

As now, if you want to see a specific clinician, you may need to wait longer for an appointment with that person.

### **Will opening times change?**

No.

The practice opening times will remain:

**Monday to Friday, 8.00am to 6.30pm, excluding bank holidays.**

Enhanced access appointments will continue to be available and can be booked through the practice in the usual way.

**Will there be fewer appointments?**

The practice plans to continue providing the same GP services.

The move is being planned so that patients can continue to access doctors, nurses, healthcare assistants and support services.

**What happens if I already have an appointment booked around the move date?**

Appointments will be managed carefully during the move.

The practice has to leave the Recreation Drive building by **4<sup>th</sup> September 2026**, but we are still working to confirm the exact date that services will start from Garswood Health Centre.

Until patients are told otherwise, services will continue to be delivered from Recreation Drive.

If your appointment is affected by the move, the practice will contact you directly. We will also write to patients again to confirm the date services will start from Garswood Health Centre.

**Will blood tests, reviews, injections, smears and other clinics continue?**

Yes.

Billinge Medical Practice will continue to provide GP services, including routine appointments, urgent appointments, long-term condition reviews, nursing appointments, immunisations, cervical screening, injections and other services currently provided by the practice.

If any individual appointment needs to change because of the move, the practice will contact the patient directly.

**Will urgent appointments still be available?**

Yes.

Urgent appointment arrangements will continue.

Patients should contact the practice in the usual way if they need medical help. The practice team will assess requests and arrange the most appropriate care.

**Can I ask for reasonable adjustments?**

Yes.

Please tell the practice if you need reasonable adjustments or communication support.

This may include support because of a disability, mobility difficulty, sensory impairment, communication need or another health-related need.

We will consider individual needs and make reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

### **Can I still drop off forms, letters or samples?**

Yes. Patients will still be able to provide forms, letters or samples where this is needed.

More detailed information about how to do this at Garswood Health Centre will be provided before the move.

### **I do not drive. How will I get to Garswood?**

We understand this is one of the biggest concerns raised by patients, especially for patients in Orrell, Longshaw and Billinge Higher End.

We know there is not a direct bus route from some areas to Garswood Health Centre.

Travel and access were considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment.

Patients who are medically housebound will continue to be considered for home visits where clinically appropriate.

We will continue to update patients as more information is available.

### **What support is available for carers or patients who may struggle to attend?**

Please tell the practice if you are a carer or if the person you support may find the move difficult.

We cannot remove every difficulty, but we can record relevant needs, consider reasonable adjustments where appropriate and help patients understand the options available.

Travel, access and mobility needs have been considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment, and patient feedback will continue to be reviewed as the move is planned.

### **Will home visits increase because some patients cannot travel?**

Home visits will continue where they are medically required.

A home visit is based on clinical need. Difficulty with transport alone does not automatically mean a home visit is clinically appropriate, but we understand that travel is a concern and this has been considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment.

Patients who are housebound or medically unable to attend the surgery will continue to be assessed for home visits in the usual way.

### **What if I cannot afford a taxi to Garswood?**

We understand that travel costs are a real concern for some patients.

The practice cannot reimburse travel costs for GP appointments, but travel and access concerns have been raised through the Equality Impact Assessment and are being reviewed with NHS and local partners.

Patients who are medically housebound will continue to be assessed for home visits where clinically appropriate.

### **Will my prescriptions change?**

No.

Prescription arrangements will continue as they do now.

You can continue to request prescriptions using:

- NHS App
- FootFall
- Telephone
- In person at the practice
- Paper request, where this is your usual method

Most prescriptions are sent electronically to your nominated pharmacy. You can choose the pharmacy that is most convenient for you.

### **Will the pharmacy next to Recreation Drive remain open?**

Yes, our understanding is that the pharmacy next to Recreation Drive will remain open.

The pharmacy is separate from Billinge Medical Practice, but patients can continue to use it as their nominated pharmacy if they wish.

### **Can I still use Orrell Pharmacy for paper prescription requests?**

Yes.

For Orrell patients, Well Pharmacy has a prescription request drop-off box. Patients who prefer to request prescriptions on paper can continue to use this arrangement.

This is an ongoing arrangement and will continue.

**Do I have to use a pharmacy in Garswood?**

No.

You do not have to use a pharmacy in Garswood.

You can choose the pharmacy that is most convenient for you.

**How do I change my nominated pharmacy?**

You can ask the practice or your chosen pharmacy to update your nominated pharmacy.

You can also manage this through the NHS App if you use it.

**Will my hospital appointments, referrals or test results be affected?**

No.

The move should not affect hospital appointments, referrals, investigations, test results or current treatment plans.

**Will my medical records move?**

Your electronic health record will remain available to Billinge Medical Practice.

If you choose to register with another GP practice, your records will transfer to that new practice.

**Will the practice still provide training for GP trainees?**

Yes.

Billinge Medical Practice remains committed to training future GPs.

The move is being planned so the practice can continue to provide safe care and maintain its role as a training practice.

**Can I stay registered if I live in Orrell, Longshaw or Billinge Higher End?**

Yes.

If you are currently registered with Billinge Medical Practice and your address has not changed, you can remain registered with the practice.

### **Patient Meeting and ongoing communication**

#### **Can I ask questions or give feedback?**

Yes.

You can email questions or feedback to:

**billinge.surgery@nhs.net**

Please include your name and contact details so we can respond where appropriate.

#### **Is there a patient meeting?**

Yes.

A patient meeting has been arranged:

**Date:** Tuesday 14 July 2026

**Time:** 5.30pm

**Venue:** St Aidan's Church, Main Street, Billinge, WN5 7HD

The meeting will explain the process, the reasons for the decision, what happens next, and give patients the opportunity to ask questions.

#### **Do I need to book a place at the meeting?**

Yes.

The venue has a maximum capacity, so patients need to register in advance.

To register, please telephone:

**01744 624 429**

#### **How will patients be updated after the meeting?**

We will continue to update patients in writing and through practice communication channels.

We will also update this FAQ document as further questions are received and as more information is confirmed.

### **How will patient feedback be used?**

Patient feedback is being reviewed to identify common themes and concerns.

The main themes raised so far include transport, parking, lift access, prescriptions, the move date, whether the move is temporary or permanent, and why other sites were not chosen.

This feedback helps us understand what patients are worried about, what information needs to be clearer and what issues need to be raised with NHS colleagues involved in the move planning.

### **Can patient feedback change the decision?**

The practice cannot remain in the Recreation Drive building because notice has been served requiring the practice to leave.

The decision to relocate to Garswood Health Centre was made following an options appraisal and within the timescale available.

Patient feedback remains important. It helps us understand what patients are most worried about and what practical issues need further attention. Feedback can help shape the move planning, including communication, access information, signage, prescription arrangements, reasonable adjustments, parking monitoring and travel concerns that need to be raised with NHS and local partners.

## Accessible Information

### **Can I have this information in another format?**

Yes.

Please tell us if you need this information in another format, for example large print, easy read, another language, or communication support.

You can contact the practice by telephone or email:

**Telephone:** 01744 892205

**Email:** [billinge.surgery@nhs.net](mailto:billinge.surgery@nhs.net)

### **What happens next?**

We will continue to update patients as the move planning progresses.

The most important points are:

- **Billinge Medical Practice is not closing.**
- **You remain registered with the practice.**
- **You do not need to take any action.**
- **The same practice team will continue to provide your care.**
- **Home visits will continue where medically required.**
- **We are listening to patient concerns, especially about transport, access and parking.**