



# High Oak Surgery Public Conversation Document



**NHS**  
Dudley Integrated  
Health and Care  
NHS Trust

# Introduction

Dudley Integrated Health and Care NHS Trust (DIHC) operates the High Oak Surgery. This document details a public conversation led by DIHC in collaboration with NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board (BCICB) about the proposals for the future location of High Oak Surgery.

Following a joint appraisal process, with involvement from your local ward councillors, your local MP, and Healthwatch Dudley, two viable options for the future location of the surgery have been identified:

- **Option 1A** – High Oak Surgery is retained at Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre as it is currently (a single-site solution).
- **Option 1B** – recognising that some patients have complex long term health conditions and may have mobility and transport issues the second option is Option 1a but with a hub and spoke arrangement for physically non-invasive care such as long-term conditions reviews, psychological therapies, health coaching, health and well-being, etc to be delivered in community sites within Pensnett.

The definition of a hub and spoke model is that Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre would be the hub and retain all services on a permanent basis. The spoke would be a community outreach in the Pensnett vicinity which could be an existing health facility or community space with services delivered as described above.

Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre is a purpose-built, state-of-the-art centre offering greater clinical space and modern facilities for primary care including access to wider services such as physiotherapy and podiatry. It is also co-located with the extended hour's access hub and the clinical hub as well as other health and care services.



The existing Pensnett portacabin site is unable to offer the same clinical space and services and nearing the end of its economic life. In addition, the lease is only available until May 2025 with no option to extend. Advice from NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board suggests that further investment in the site would not be affordable or indeed possible. The landlord is Dudley Council, and the council has earmarked this land for housing development. Given the current lease costs of the site and the short length of time for the lease to run, a return to the portacabin site is not an option. We recognise the needs and wishes of the local community, including the travel implications for accessing Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre; hence we wish to explore the provision of some services in Pensnett.

This document sets out the background for the surgery, the current situation, and the case for change. It explains how you can get involved and provides the opportunity for you to express your views on the proposals. At the end of the public conversation, NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board will consider any feedback received before a decision on the future location of the surgery is made.

This information is also available in alternative formats upon request including easy read, large print, audio, and different languages.

Further information can be found on the DIHC website [www.dihc.nhs.uk](http://www.dihc.nhs.uk) or by ringing the BCICB Time2Talk Team on 0121 612 4110.

# Background

DIHC was formed on 1 April 2020. Our focus is to support and develop primary care to deliver integrated health and care for the Dudley population.

We work with our partners across Dudley to reduce health inequalities and improve the health and well-being of local people.

High Oak Surgery is a general practice operated by DIHC. It is a contract operated under an Alternative Provider Medical Services Contract (APMS) which is time limited with a further seven years to run with an option to extend the contract for another five years. It moved from Pensnett in March 2020 to a temporary location at Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre, where it currently operates. The practice has 4,031 patients registered with them.

On 6 April 2020, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, a respiratory assessment centre was needed for people with suspected

COVID-19 symptoms. An options appraisal was undertaken by health and care partners in Dudley and the Pensnett site was chosen due to its proximity to Russells Hall Hospital and was deemed the best location to limit the spread of COVID-19. We needed to ensure that any patients who were suspected of having COVID-19 and needed access to a face-to-face appointment could be seen safely in an environment to reduce the transmission of the virus. Patients were able to be seen by clinicians wearing personal protective equipment and have the appropriate treatment that they needed.

The respiratory assessment centre closed on 30 June 2021, however, given the presence of the COVID-19 variants and the possibility that the Centre may need to resume if cases increased, it was agreed by partners across health and care across Dudley to defer any decision relating to the High Oak Surgery returning to its original site on Pensnett High Street.

## How has primary care delivery changed since the practice moved?

Since the onset of COVID-19, how primary care operates has changed across the country. All patient appointments are now assessed (triaged) so that the most appropriate type of appointment can be provided, this might be:

- To be seen in person (face to face)
- A phone consultation
- A video consultation
- Filling in an online consultation form
- Self-care or help from a community pharmacy or optician.

This has resulted in a lower number of patients physically travelling to the Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre site. A recent review of appointments has shown that for those that do, the majority travel by car.

In addition, many patients can now benefit from seeing other members of the health and care team co-located at this site, which are wrapped around primary care. These include professionals such as health coaches, advanced nurse practitioners, physicians associates, physiotherapists, midwives, care coordinators, dieticians, pharmacists, practice nurses, health care assistants, and first contact podiatrists.

## About the Pensnett site

Before the move in March 2020, High Oak Surgery operated from the Pensnett site for 16 years. It is a four-room modular portacabin in the Brockmoor and Pensnett ward of the Dudley Borough. It is 149 square metres with limited staff administration and reception space and limited car parking, which is significantly affected at school drop-off and pick-up times. The services at High Oak Surgery at the Brierley Hill site currently occupies 297 square metres.

DIHC currently leases the Pensnett site from Dudley Council. The lease has under three years to run and there appears to be no possibility of renewing the lease. In these circumstances, there is no practical way of expanding the capacity of the accommodation on that site.

The portacabin site in Pensnett is close to the end of its economic life and needs modernisation.

### Services that were delivered from the Pensnett site included:

- GP appointments, working with one full-time GP and one part-time GP
- Practice nurse appointments (one practice nurse)
- Midwife appointments, one day per week
- Pharmacist, two days per week
- Phlebotomy, one day per week
- Abdominal aortic aneurysm screening (AAA) one evening per week.



Original portacabin at the Pensnett site

## About Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre

Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre opened in 2010. It is a purpose-built centre and offers high-quality clinical space. The Surgery within Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre is 297 square metres and has eight clinical rooms, including a minor injuries suite. This offers a spacious reception and waiting area and a larger administration space. The facility is also supported by two hours of free car parking at ASDA, which is situated directly opposite. The benefits of co-locating care mean that patients can access a wide range of care and support based on their needs.

Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre is 1.6 miles away from the Pensnett site.

### Services that are delivered from this site include:

- GP appointments – two GPs on site each day
- Advanced nurse practitioner appointments
- Physician's associate appointments
- Physiotherapist appointments
- Midwife appointments
- Dudley talking therapies appointments and groups
- Health and wellbeing coach appointments
- Care co-ordinator appointments
- Dietician appointments
- First contact podiatrist appointments
- Health care assistant appointments
- Practice nurse appointments
- Pharmacist appointments (three on-site over a week)
- Services can run seven days a week with security on site to support staff
- Plus, a significant range of other services and service providers from across the Dudley health economy.

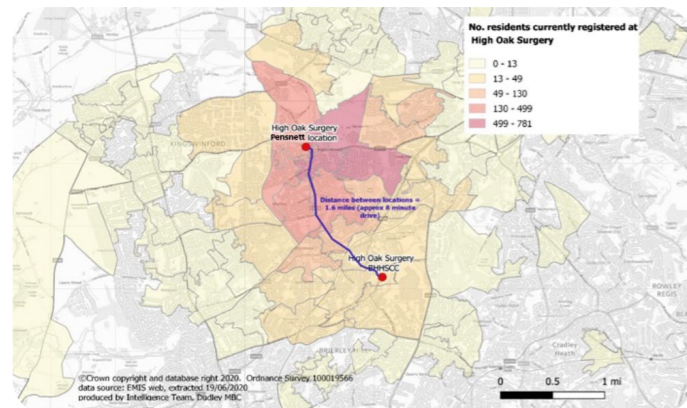


Entrance to Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre

# What do we know about the people who use High Oak Surgery?

High Oak Surgery must deliver for the people who use it, so whilst exploring the options for High Oak Surgery, we have analysed, and considered the needs of the population it serves.

## Location of residence of patients registered at High Oak Surgery – showing the location of Pensnett and Brierley Hill



Patients registered at the practice (from 2020 statistics) are mainly from the Pensnett, Brockmoor, Brierley Hill, and Bromley areas. However, there are also patients from Russells Hall estate, Holly Hall, Kingswinford, Wall Heath, Cradley, Netherton, Wordsley and Gornal.

A recent health needs analysis of the area has told us that:

- Access to a car is low for High Oak Surgery patients
- Life expectancy for residents of Brockmoor and Pensnett is three years lower than the general Dudley population
- High Oak Surgery has a younger patient population when compared to other GP surgeries in the Dudley Borough and the average in England
- It appears that most patients identify as White British
- Childhood obesity is significantly higher in Brockmoor and Pensnett compared to Dudley and England
- There is a high prevalence of long-term conditions, including depression, smoking, and chronic kidney disease
- In addition we know that for some who do not have access to a car, find using the bus and the subsequent walk to Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre sometimes difficult.



High Oak site at Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre

# Engagement that has taken place so far

Since 2020, several engagement activities have taken place with registered patients and local stakeholders about the proposal to relocate High Oak Surgery. The activities were an opportunity for people to feedback to us about High Oak Surgery service following the relocation. They included:

- Appreciative inquiry with six patients registered at the surgery
- Letter to each household registered with the surgery asking for experiences of accessing the surgery during the height of the Covid pandemic
- Listening exercise with patients registered at the surgery and wider stakeholders facilitated by local councillors, the practice, and digital channels with paper surveys available
- Regular meetings with local ward councillors and Mike Wood, MP
- A meeting with West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)
- A meeting with the Leader of the Council
- Regular attendance and updates at the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Meetings with representatives of a local pharmacy
- Healthwatch engagement with twelve patients who were known to have difficulties such as mobility, digital, carers, etc.



# What have we heard?

Since High Oak Surgery relocated in 2020, there have been two national GP Patient surveys. In 2021 80% of patients reported a good overall experience with the practice, and in 2022, 75% of patients reported a good overall experience with the practice with feedback such as: “got an appointment when I wanted it”. Both of these surveys took place after the move to Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre.

In addition, the engagement that has taken place previously has enabled us to hear varied views from patients and stakeholders.

Views on the existing portacabin Pensnett site from the 2021 listening exercise:

Positives	Negatives
<p><b>Good location:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close to the local school</li> <li>• Close to pharmacy</li> <li>• Within walking distance for many in the local community.</li> </ul>	<p><b>The building is old and not fit for purpose:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old</li> <li>• Small</li> <li>• Lack of space for wheelchair access as well as pushchairs (narrow corridors)</li> <li>• Lack of adequate facilities (i.e., toilets, baby changing)</li> <li>• Lack of privacy/confidentiality in the reception / waiting areas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Facilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Car park</li> <li>• Services are situated on one level (no-step access) so helpful for people with access issues.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Aesthetics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building does not look inviting from the outside</li> <li>• Bars on the windows are unpleasant</li> <li>• Unprofessional look inside.</li> </ul>
Local and easily accessible on foot, via car, and bus route	Car park being used for school drop-off / pick-up
Overall, the site met the needs of local patients	Not enough facilities to carry out all aspects of health care, e.g., no base for health visitors, physiotherapists, podiatrists

*“It was terrible to access at the entrance. The parking was taken up sometimes by school parents. The main road was constantly blocked up with traffic”*

*“It was a good central location for all who used it. The building had seen better days, but it was somewhere that most people could access easy enough”*

*“I did want the surgery back in Pensnett but now I think it is much better to park at Venture Way. I don’t mind if you stop at Venture Way”*

*“The previous Surgery wasn’t suitable. It isn’t big enough; it’s not fit for purpose. I can understand some patients can’t travel to Brierley Hill but if you move back, you need bigger and fit-for-purpose place”*

*“Although it was small it was convenient for travel and time. There’s lots of older people around here who would only have to walk, but now have to ride a bus for their appointments”*

## Conclusions from the Healthwatch report:

People are concerned about how they get access to the surgery and GP services. The emergence of a digital divide might further disadvantage those who are not able to get online or who lack the skills needed to get the most from the internet and digital services.

There is a strong preference for a surgery in the Pensnett area and reference was made to High Oak surgery and previous plans for the development of improved healthcare facilities on the site. The desire is for convenient and easy access to local healthcare services on foot or using local bus services, especially for older people or those with mobility problems or chronic conditions.

People expressed strong feelings regarding the local location of a surgery and its connection with the communities and individuals it serves. They elaborate on it being an integral and valued part of the community and their well-established and trusting relations with GPs and other staff at the surgery.

# What options have we considered and what has been discounted?

DIHC has listened to your feedback and thought about the possibilities of where services could be delivered from. DIHC has worked with the NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board to explore the options that may be available for the future operation of this site. The following site options were identified:

- **Option 1A** – High Oak Surgery is retained at Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre as it is currently (single site solution)
- **Option 1B** – As per Option 1A but with a hub and spoke arrangement for physically non-invasive care
- **Option 1C** – Branch location at existing Pensnett portacabin and main site at Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre (hub and spoke model)
- **Option 2A** – Return the Surgery to the original Pensnett site as previous
- **Option 2B** – New facility at Pensnett: Relocate High Oak Surgery back into a new facility at the existing Pensnett site (single site solution)
- **Option 2C** – Branch location at an improved Pensnett facility, providing a small branch site (149 square metres) and a main site at Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre
- **Option 3A** – Expansion of Galleria Pharmacy – Relocate High Oak Surgery into a new facility at an expanded Galleria pharmacy (280 square metres) as a single-site solution
- **Option 3B** – Expansion of Galleria Pharmacy – Branch location at an expanded Galleria pharmacy site, (149 square metres) and retaining the main site at Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre
- **Option 4A** – Ridge Hill LD Centre – Relocate High Oak Surgery into a new facility at Ridge Hill (280 square metres) as a single-site solution
- **Option 4B** – Ridge Hill LD Centre – Branch location at Ridge Hill (149 square metres) and retaining the main site at Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre
- **Option 5a** – Relocate High Oak Surgery into a vacant retail unit / facility on Pensnett High Street (single site solution)
- **Option 5b** – Branch location at a vacant retail unit / facility on Pensnett High Street (hub and spoke model)

The options were appraised against the following criteria by our reference group and by DIHC and NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board:

- Clinically appropriate and safe
- Aligned with estates principles
- Deliverable between 12 and 18 months
- Affordable\*
- Travel time and distance
- Access and location (parking and bus stops)
- Range of services available.

\*The High Oak Surgery practice has an Alternative Provider Medical Services (APMS) contract which is time limited (less than ten years). This means that it does not provide the longevity that a third-party developer, private developer, or council would seek to justify investment in new premises, (which would usually be a 20 to 30-year period).

# The outcome following the appraisal was that there was one single viable option:

- **Option 1A** – High Oak Surgery is retained at Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre as it is currently (single site solution) We considered this option further, and, drawing on the feedback we had received through engagement activities and discussions with local councillors, your local MP, and Healthwatch Dudley, we identified an additional option, which was:
- **Option 1B** – As per Option 1A but with a hub and spoke arrangement for physically non-invasive care such as long-term conditions reviews, psychological therapies, health coaching, health and well-being, etc to be delivered in community sites within Pensnett (such as the community centre). This option is not a “branch surgery” but suggests ways of embedding specific services within other community premises in an “outreach” model. The permanent location of services at Brierley Hill also creates substantial permanent car parking and 24/7 access. No other options other than 1A and 1B create this opportunity.

The remaining long list options were considered but ruled out because they were not viable:

- **Option 1C** – Branch location at existing Pensnett portacabin and main site at Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre **This is not a viable option. The ambition for the NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board and DIHC would be to invest in options that improve service resilience delivered through purpose built facilities to support integrated working at scale and provide value for money. In addition, the lease is only available until May 2025 with no option to extend. Advice from NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board suggests that further investment in the site would not be affordable or indeed possible. The landlord is Dudley Council, and the council has earmarked**

**this land for housing development. Given the current lease costs of the site and the short length of time for the lease to run, further, development makes this an ineffective suggestion.**

- **Option 2A** – Return the surgery to the original Pensnett site as previous. **This is not a viable option. The original services did not fit and the more substantial range currently on offer at the Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre site (Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre) would not fit back into the Pensnett site for the reasons stated in Option 1c above. The current total cost for the Pensnett site to NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board is approximately £85/90k per year and the recommended rent for an estate of this type in the area is £27k per year**
- **Option 2B** – New facility at Pensnett: Relocate High Oak Surgery back into a new facility at the existing Pensnett site (single site solution) **This is not a viable option as there are no suitable facilities and/or sites in Pensnett. There is no provision for the capital costs that this would incur.**

- **Option 2C** – Branch location at an improved Pensnett facility, providing a small branch site (149 square metres) and the main site at Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre  
**This is not a viable option. The ambition for the NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board and DIHC would be to invest in options that improve service resilience delivered through purpose built facilities to support integrated working at scale and provide value for money. There are no suitable premises in Pensnett (see above).**
- **Option 3A** – Expansion of Galleria Pharmacy – Relocate High Oak Surgery into a new facility at an expanded Galleria pharmacy as a single-site solution.  
**The APMS contract will not provide security for funding, and lacks the space for further services to be wrapped around the practice. It lacks the resilience of other facilities such as Brierley Hill, which also contains a community pharmacy and a broader range of collocated services. Although local politicians have lobbied for this suggestion, as yet no business case has been put forward to consider the procurement of this as an option by the property operators. Some preliminary drawings have been shown to us, but these would require significant investigation of the design to ensure they suit the requirements of the services given the expansion of the scope since the move to Brierley Hill. Finally, the planned removal of the existing car park would need to be considered in terms of planning, and as far as we are aware no outline planning permission has been sought.**
- **Option 3B** – Expansion of Galleria Pharmacy – Branch location at an expanded Galleria pharmacy site, (149 square metres) and retaining the main site at BHH&SCC.  
**As above, does not provide the range of services that are being provided**

**elsewhere and the ambition for the NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board and DIHC would be to invest in options that improve service resilience delivered through purpose built facilities to support integrated working at scale and provide value for money.**

- **Option 4A** – Ridge Hill LD Centre – Relocate High Oak Surgery into a new facility at Ridge Hill (280 square metres) as a single-site solution.  
**This is not a viable option. During our engagement process with local politicians and others, it was deemed too far to travel by personal transport or public transport.**
- **Option 4B** – Ridge Hill LD Centre – Branch location at Ridge Hill (149 square metres) and retaining the main site at Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre.  
**This is not a viable option for the reasons listed in 4a the ambition for the NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board and DIHC would be to invest in options that improve service resilience delivered through purpose built facilities to support integrated working at scale and provide value for money.**
- **Option 5a – Relocate High Oak Surgery into** a vacant retail unit / facility on Pensnett High Street (single site solution).  
**This is not a viable option as there are no suitable affordable premises in Pensnett following a search conducted by DIHC and NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board.**
- **Option 5b** – Branch location at a vacant retail unit / facility on Pensnett High Street (hub and spoke model).  
**This is not a viable option for the reasons listed in 5a and the ambition for the NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board and DIHC would be to invest in options that improve service resilience delivered through purpose built facilities to support integrated working at scale and provide value for money.**

## What are the options we need your views on?

- **Option 1A** – High Oak Surgery is retained at Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre as it is currently (a single-site solution).
- **Option 1B** – recognising that some patients have complex Long Term Health Conditions and may have mobility and transport issues the second option is Option 1A but with a hub and spoke arrangement for physically non-invasive care such as long-term conditions reviews, psychological therapies, health coaching, health and well-being, etc to be delivered in community sites within Pensnett

## How can you get involved?

We would like you to consider the options and share your views with us to help shape the future of the surgery.

We have set out below how people can get involved. Additionally, from Monday 17 October, DIHC will be sending each household registered with the practice a letter over the course of the week to let them know about the conversation and how they can get involved.

We will also be sharing information on social media and on our website and with wider stakeholders.

You can share your views any time between Monday 17 October and Monday 5 December 2022. There are several ways that you can get involved, this includes:

- Visit our website for more information [www.dihc.nhs.uk](http://www.dihc.nhs.uk)
- Filling in an online survey at [www.dihc.nhs.uk](http://www.dihc.nhs.uk)
- Call the Time2Talk team at NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board on 0121 612 4110 to receive your copy of the conversation document, a hard copy of the survey, and a Freepost envelope
- Pick up a hard copy survey at High Oak Surgery, Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre, and hand it in at reception
- Join one of our public meetings to express your views and collect and fill in a hard copy survey
- Brockmoor Community Centre 9 November at 6:30 pm
- Brockmoor Community Centre 23 November 10:30 am
- We will be hosting some friendly drop-in sessions for people who may be struggling to fill in the survey or need a bit more information. There will be a couple of team members available to help and they will speak with people on a one-to-one basis, so please be patient if there is a queue. These drop-in sessions will be as follows:

## Informal drop-in sessions:

Date	Time	Location
Thursday 20 October 2022	17:00 - 18:30	120 High St, Pensnett, Brierley Hill DY5 4DS
Monday 24 October 2022	17:00 - 18:30	Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre
Wednesday 26 October 2022	10:30 - 12:00	120 High St, Pensnett, Brierley Hill DY5 4DS
Tuesday 1 November 2022	17:00 - 18:30	Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre
Friday 4 November 2022	10:30 - 12:00	Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre
Monday 7 November 2022	17:00 - 18:30	120 High St, Pensnett, Brierley Hill DY5 4DS
Thursday 10 November 2022	10:30 - 12:00	Brierley Hill Health and Social Care Centre

DIHC is also working with Healthwatch to provide two workshops; one with patients who have a learning disability and one with younger people, to ensure we hear wider views. The surgery will be contacting registered patients who have said they have a learning disability and sharing the information on behalf of Healthwatch Dudley.

The workshop with younger people will link in with existing young people forums but if you would like further information, please call the Time2Talk team on 0121 612 4110.

We will be attending the Council's Your Home Your Forum in Brierley Hill on 31 October at Brierley Hill Methodist Church, Bank Street, Brierley Hill, DY5 3DA at 6:30 pm

## What happens at the end of the public conversation?

This is an opportunity for you to consider our proposal for the future of High Oak Surgery and have your say on it. A report will be produced and analysed by an impartial third party – NHS Arden and Greater East Midlands and NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit. They are experts in research analysis.

After considering all your views, Dudley Integrated Health and Care NHS Trust will then decide whether to apply to the NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board regarding the Surgery's future location. If an application is submitted, then NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board will also consider the views expressed by members of the public before deciding on whether they approve any application.

### The timeline looks like this

Start of public conversation	17 October
End of public conversation	5 December
Independent report completed	January 2023
Report and findings considered at DIHC Board	7 February 2023
Single scrutiny to Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (HASC)	Early March 2023
NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board Primary Care Sub Commissioning Committee	23 March 2023 (if DIHC decide to make an application)

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact the Time2Talk team on 0121 612 4110.

## Useful numbers and contact details:

Time2Talk Team 0121 612 4110

DIHC website [www.dihc.nhs.uk](http://www.dihc.nhs.uk)

Email: [dihc.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:dihc.contactus@nhs.net)

Tweet @IHCDudley

Or find Dudley Integrated Health and Care on Facebook



If you would like to share your views and experiences with a local, independent service about the proposed changes to High Oak Surgery, please contact Healthwatch Dudley on 03000 111001 (local rate number), email: [hello@healthwatchdudley.co.uk](mailto:hello@healthwatchdudley.co.uk), Tweet @HWDudley or find Healthwatch Dudley on Facebook.”