

## Consultation Looks at Patients' Choice of Surgery

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Consultation looks at patient's choice of GP surgery

People in Plymouth are being encouraged to take part in a consultation. Through the national consultation, the Department of Health wants to hear whether patients want to see the current system of GP practice boundaries abolished in favour of allowing patients to register with whichever GP practice they choose.

The national consultation, entitled Your choice of GP practice, has been created to enable people across the country to provide their views and NHS Plymouth wants local people to take part.

At the moment, people are encouraged to choose a GP practice that's close to them and GPs can choose not to register people who do not live within the practice's catchment area. But the Government is looking at options to change this, so people can choose a GP practice that best suits their needs. For many patients it is important to be registered with a local GP so it is more convenient and so their GP can visit them at home and help co-ordinate care with local health professionals. Others want to register with a practice closer to where they work, or one closer to home that is open longer or offers more services. Other patients have said they'd like to be able to stay registered with their current practice when they move house.

The consultation will also invite views on home visits, co-ordination of community based services, safeguarding access for local residents, and access to hospital and specialist treatment.

Nicola Jones, Deputy Director of Primary Care with NHS Plymouth said: "It is important that we hear the views of local people. The NHS is striving to improve patient choice, at the same time as providing really high quality services, and this is a good opportunity for the public to let us know what is most important when choosing a GP practice. Patients in Plymouth already have a good choice of GP practice. Removing practice boundaries (otherwise known as catchment areas) would increase that choice though with some other questions to ask about home visits and access to other local services."

The closing date for this consultation has been extended. The new closing date is 2 July 2010. To find out more and to take part: <http://www.gpchoice.dh.gov.uk/respond-online/>