

Twenty frequently asked questions & answers in respect of the forthcoming merger between Bute House and Newlands General Practices, Sherborne

General Questions about the merger:

1. Do I need to do anything now?

Patients do not need to do anything with regard to their registration as they will automatically be transferred from their current practice to the new one.

2. Is there another option- Do I have to stay with the merged practice?

If as a patient you do not wish to transfer to the new practice you are able to register with any other GP practice that covers the area you live. For information on alternative doctors surgeries, you can look on the NHS Choices website. www.nhschoices.uk

3. Will any of the practice buildings close and will I still be able to see the GP or nurse I am used to?

The two sides of The Grove Medical Centre site at present will become one building so staff and patients will go between the two sides. Further details of the changes will be published once we've finalised them. We will ensure you know where you are going and who you are seeing.

You will still be able to book in advance to see the GP or nurse of your choice. We will still have GPs and nurses available to book for patients wanting to be seen on the same day. Your preferred GP or nurse may not always be available in this case.

4. Will the opening times of the merged practice be different?

No, the practice will be open from 08:00 to 18:30 on Monday to Friday as at present. We are awaiting information regarding funding for any additional opening hours but you can already see a GP (not from our practice) on a Saturday afternoon clinic run at the Yeatman Hospital if you find it difficult to get to the surgery during the week. Ask at reception to book.

5. Will administrative processes be compromised during the merger of the practice staff?

No, we are told as we are both on the same clinical system already, then the transfer to the new system is easy and straightforward. We are already aligning our back office administration processes prior to the merger date. Hopefully this will mean that there will be no impact on patient facing services.

6. How will we be kept informed of any changes?

We will issue information via our current practice websites, the local media and via handouts in our waiting room. We will also send out information via email to patients whose email address we already have. If you would like to be included, then please ensure you update us with your current email.

7. Are all the doctors in each of the practices in agreement?

Yes, all the partners are in absolute agreement that this is the best way forward to sustain and grow our services to our patients. We are all very excited about what the future holds and the options open to us as a bigger practice.

8. Who will be in charge?

All the partners of the current practices will be partners of The Grove Medical Centre. The Senior Partner and registered manager for our CQC registration is Dr Rob Childs. Our Managing Partner is Mrs Alexandra Kimber and is responsible for the management of the business.

All GP Partners also have their own individual clinical or business leads and interests.

9. Will my confidentiality be safe?

We take patient confidentiality very seriously. If you have any concerns, please talk to our information governance lead, Mrs Alex Kimber, our data protection officer, Mrs Jane Crocker or our Caldicott Guardian, Dr Liz Long.

10. Will I remain registered with the same doctor?

Everyone will be moving to be registered with The Grove Medical Centre rather than a specific GP however, this is for administration purposes. You will still have your same 'usual GP' and this named GP will be responsible for overseeing your care as now. More information on the 'named GP' responsibilities can be found on the website.

11. Will I still be able to make an appointment to see my usual doctor or nurse?

Yes, you will still be able to book to see a GP or nurse of your choice up to 3 months in advance. We hold back a portion of appointments for those requiring same day access where you will be able to see any of the duty doctors and advanced nurse practitioners.

12. Will any service that is currently offered by my usual surgery be removed or stopped?

We aren't planning to remove or stop any service. Our services are contract based and funded by Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS England and Dorset Public Health. At the time of writing we are not aware of any of our commissioners withdrawing any service provision we offer.

13. Will there be annual health checks by GP/nurse/HV?

Those patients on repeat medication or having a long term condition such as diabetes or asthma will be asked to come in at least annually to have a review as is the case now.

If you have a specific health concern you should make an appointment to see your GP.

Dorset Public Health run a contract to offer a basic health check to those between the ages of 40 and 75 who don't have a long term condition. This contract currently sits with Boots plc. Ask at their pharmacy counter for more information. We hope to be able to offer this service in future.

14. Will the intended merge affect any treatment or medication I am currently receiving either at my usual surgery or any hospital?

No it won't. Your care will carry on as it currently is.

15. Will this affect my referrals to hospital?

No. All of your records and referrals will transfer over, and the secretaries will ensure there are no issues.

16. Can I still order my prescriptions as I currently do?

Yes, we will still have a prescription telephone line for orders or you can continue to order using the online portal or you can drop your request into the box outside the dispensary or ask in person at the desk.

17. Will it be harder to get an appointment?

The aim of the merger is to make us more resilient to be able to continue to serve our growing population with the limited resource we have. Our aim is to ensure that we are still able to offer the same good service as we currently do.

18. Will there be any changes to how I access the GP out of hours service?

No, this will stay the same as at present. When the surgery is closed, please phone 111 to access the out of hours GP team, or 999 if it is a life threatening emergency

19. How will I benefit from this arrangement?

By merging we are ensuring your GP surgery is able to continue to run to serve the population of Sherborne and surrounding areas in the future. As a larger practice we will have a larger group of GPs and nurses that you can see and we will potentially be able to attract funding to employ other clinicians such as a pharmacist or paramedic who can also see and support patients.

20. Are there any negative effects for patients?

We cannot envisage any negative effects for patients. Change is always unsettling and there will be a bedding in period while the staff adapt to the new team and ways of working but we are working on any back office changes now so hopefully this will be less obvious to patients when we merge on 1st July.