

THE WHIPTON SURGERY AND THE FOXHAYES PRACTICE

Patient Information

February 2022

Dear Patient,

The Whipton Surgery and The Foxhayes Practice have been working together since July 2021 and this has allowed us to improve the services that our patients receive. Reflecting on the work we already do together, we are planning a merger of the two practices to a single practice.

After careful consideration, we agree that a merged partnership gives us the absolute best opportunity to give you high quality care and develop services for you locally into the future. It will also attract more great medical professionals and support staff which are so vital to general practice. The change will improve patients' ability to see their usual doctor and help us to provide additional services to our community.

Should the merge proceed [we need to get regulatory approval for this], we anticipate that our patients would see no change to how they currently access appointments, clinical staff and services at The Whipton Surgery and The Foxhayes Practice. However, the merge would provide additional options for sites where our patients can be seen, which we believe will allow greater flexibility and enhance patient choice.

Central to our approach is continuity of care for you, our patients – you will still be able to see the same doctors and nurses, but you will have the added benefit of being able to see or speak with doctors and nurses at the other site covered by our new partnership.

Remember: You will be able to book appointments with your usual GP, but you will also have access to full services at both sites.

Benefits of a merger:

- **Better services for patients across both practices:**
 - Increased access to both male and female GPs
 - Greater choice of when and where to see a GP, Nurse, or Healthcare Support Worker
 - Improved quality of services we deliver
 - A more resilient and consistent service because we can share staff and resources across both practices
 - A single way to access services at both practices
- **Opportunities for partnership working and innovation:**
 - Chance for GPs to develop their skills within the wider community
 - Staff experience and knowledge to be shared across both practices
 - Improved training opportunities
 - Wider community engagement

The Whipton Surgery and The Foxhayes Practice

GP Practice Merger – Patient Questions & Answers

The following questions and answers have been prepared to assist the patients of both The Whipton Surgery and The Foxhayes Practice.

As our plans develop, and following feedback from our patients, we will refresh, update, and add to these.

1. When will the merge take place?

It is anticipated that the merge will take place by 1st July 2022, subject to all regulatory approvals, and following a period of engagement with patients and all of the staff who are employed by both of the GP Practices.

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

Yes. We value all of the one-to-one relationships our patients have with our doctors and nurses. It is therefore expected that merging practices will further increase our ability to provide you with continuity of care and access to your usual doctor and/or nurse

3. Will I still be able to make appointments at my usual doctor's surgery?

Yes. We will continue to provide daily appointments to see doctors, nurses and healthcare support workers.

In addition to these appointments, we will also continue to offer the eConsult service, which is a convenient way to communicate with a GP 24 hours a day via the practice website. This is a popular service where you are asked the same questions that a GP would ask in a face-to-face appointment. Your answers are then reviewed by a GP and you will receive a response from the practice by the end of the next working day, with advice about what needs to happen next. This could be a phone call, a face-to-face appointment, a prescription or a referral to another service.

4. Will my usual surgery opening times stay the same?

Yes. Both surgeries will continue to be opened as they are now, so there will be no changes to our core opening times. We will also continue to offer pre-booked early morning, evening and weekend appointments as part of the NHS Extended Access service.

5. Will there be changes to the way I book appointments?

No. We do not anticipate any changes to the way you book appointments, and you will continue to be able to book these in the same way as you do now.

As now, we will continue to contact patients who require scheduled vaccinations, chronic disease reviews or routine screening, e.g. cervical screening tests.

6. Will I be able to make an appointment to see a doctor and/or nurse at another GP practice site within the partnership?

From July 2022, once we have merged our computer systems, you will be able to request appointments with any doctor and/or nurse at all practice sites, providing you with greater access to a wider range of services and availability.

7. Will I have to go to another GP practice site for consultations and/or treatments?

No. However, if in the future we feel that being seen at the other site provides better or more appropriate service for specific patients, for example a particular clinician at one site may specialise in COPD or diabetes, you may be asked if you would like to attend that site in order to access more specialised care.

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

No. We do not plan to remove or stop any services. If anything, we anticipate that this merger will bring about a greater choice of services for our patients.

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

No. In order to access a GP when the practice is closed, you will continue to telephone NHS 111 service and they will either signpost you to the most appropriate service or arrange for you to access a GP

10. Will the current arrangements that I have in place for getting my medicines stay the same?

Yes, this will remain the same as it is currently.

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

No. Any current treatments, medications or investigations will not be affected by our intention to merge.

12. Will I need to re-register to become a patient of the single GP practice? What will happen to my health records?

No, you do not need to take any action. You will not need to re-register and we anticipate that you will remain registered with the same GP as you are now.

All of our patient list will automatically be merged into a single GP Practice and your health records will reside within a single patient database. The NHS safeguards, in relation to patient confidentiality or information, will continue to remain in place throughout the transition and afterward.

13. Will the single GP Practice be able to provide new services to patients?

One of the main reasons to merge, and form a larger practice, is for us to be able to expand the services that we can provide locally. For example, in time we hope to be able to include access to see other professionals, e.g. pharmacists for medication reviews.

14. How will the new arrangement benefit GPs and Nurses at the practice?

Our GPs, Nurses and Healthcare Support Workers will have far greater opportunities to specialise in areas such as diabetes, care of the elderly, palliative care and urgent care access.

We also anticipate that the current level of administrative tasks that our clinical staff perform will be dramatically reduced, therefore allowing them more time to spend responding to, and delivering, the clinical care our patients need.

We anticipate being better able to cover planned or unplanned absences, which we hope will alleviate the resulting pressures felt by the remaining staff. In addition, we should be able to reduce our reliance on expensive locum and bank staff.

15. I have further questions I would like to ask and/or comments I would like to make. How do I do this?

You can put these in writing for the attention of the Strategic Business Manager at your usual surgery.

Alternatively, you can submit any questions and/or comments by email to:

Whipton.surgery@nhs.net

Or

Foxhayes.prescriptions@nhs.net

Please submit your comments by Friday 8th April 2022

Yours sincerely,

For The Whipton Surgery

Dr Saskia Stanford

Dr Georgina Benzimra

For The Foxhayes Practice

Dr Carl Bracey

Patient Survey – Have Your Say...

We want to know what you think about our proposed merger. We hope you will support us with what we think is a great opportunity and would welcome your feedback on the merger by 8th April 2022.

You can either complete the form below and send it or hand it back into the practice or, if you prefer, you can send it to us by email at whipton.surgery@nhs.net or foxhayes.prescriptions@nhs.net

You can also find this on our websites:

www.thewhiptonsurgery.co.uk or www.foxhayespractice.nhs.uk

1. How do you feel about the proposed merger?

- a) I understand why the practices might wish to merge and I do not have any concerns
- b) I do not have any positive or negative feelings about the merger
- c) I have some concerns about the proposed merger and would like to discuss these with someone

Comments:

2. Do you have any other comments, concerns or suggestions about merging the two practices?

Comments:

3. Please indicate your current GP practice:

- The Whipton Surgery
- The Foxhayes Practice
- It other, please say which practice you are registered with:

4. If you are happy to do so, please provide your name and contact details:

Thank you for your help and cooperation.