GP Practice Merger Patient Questions & Answers

The following questions and answers have been prepared to assist all patients of Charmouth Medical Practice and Lyme Bay Medical Practice who intend to merge to form a single GP Practice:

* Charmouth Medical Practice, Charmouth
* Lyme Bay Medical Practice, Lyme Regis
* Lyme Bay Medical practice (branch), Lyme Regis Medical Centre, Lyme Regis

As our plans develop further and following a programme of patient engagement, we will continually refresh, update and add to these.

Q1  When will the merge to the new Practice take place?

The merge will take place in April 2021.

Q2  Will I still be able to make an appointment to see my usual doctor or nurse?

Yes.

Q3  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.

Q4  Will my usual surgery opening times stay the same?

All practices are required to offer services from 8am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday. There is also a nurse-led service at Lyme Regis Medical Centre on a Saturday morning between 9am and 12 noon.

Q5  Will there be changes made to the way I book appointments?

No. We are not currently anticipating any changes to the way you book appointments and you will therefore continue to be able to book these in the same way as you do now.

Q6  Will I have to go to another GP Practice site for consultations and/or treatments?

No. However , however, we anticipate that you will have wider choice of clinicians with particular skills which you may be able to access.

Q7  Will any service that is currently offered by my usual surgery be removed or stopped?

No. We do not anticipate services being removed or stopped. Rather, we anticipate that this merger will bring about a greater choice of services.

In the event that the contracts against which we deliver are changed by NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group, we would be unable to influence these changes.

Q8  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 the NHS 111 service as you do now.

Q9  Will the current arrangements that I have in place for getting my medicines stay the same?

Yes.

Q10  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 the merge.

Q11  Will I need to re-register to become a patient of the single GP Practice?

No, you will not need to re-register. Your registration will automatically be transferred to the single practice system.

Q12 What will happen to my medical records?

When practices merge, the clinical systems in each practice will also merge into a single system. This is an automated process and patient information will be transferred automatically. The new single system will allow the merged practice to work as a single organisation, providing you with safe and effective care, as we do currently.

Q13   What would happen if the practices didn’t merge?

Charmouth Medical Practice would be at risk of closure as the contract will terminate when the current partners retire. It has not been possible to recruit new partners to the Charmouth practice, to carry on holding the contract. Small practices nationally find it extremely difficult to attract new partners and several Dorset practices have closed down following the retirement of the contractor.

Q14  How will the new arrangement benefit GPs and Nurses at the practice?

As a combined clinical team our GPs, Nurses and Healthcare Support Workers will have access to a wider pool of clinical knowledge and expertise to draw upon.

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

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

We also anticipate that all of our staff will be provided with greater opportunities for enhanced training and career development.

Q15 I am concerned that the practices will be taken over by a private provider

The decision to commission GP services from a particular contractor lies with NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group under strict governance. Therefore the partners of Charmouth and Lyme Bay are not in a position to make such a decision. On the contrary, we are joining forces to sustain and preserve local provision of local healthcare for the foreseeable future.

Q16 If nothing is changing for patients, what are the benefits of merging?

Patients will benefit from continuing to have access to local GP services, a stable workforce and access to the wider skills and knowledge of the combined teams.

Q17 I am concerned that my local practice will lose its identity as part of a bigger organisation.

We are keen to preserve the local flavour of each practice under the umbrella of the newly merged contract, retaining their individuality where practicable, sharing the resources of the combined team to establish a stable workforce in each site. All practices are important to the merging organisation, being part of a bigger organisation will give them a stronger voice in the community and the wider Primary Care Network (PCN).

Q18 How can I be involved?

You are invited to join the Patient Participation Group (PPG). PPGs can bring significant benefits to a GP practice: improving services, allowing resources to be used more efficiently and, most importantly, developing mutually supportive networks. You would be most welcome to join, please contact the practice manager for more information.

Q19 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 Practice Manager at your usual surgery, or email Charmouth.surgery@dorsetgp,nhs.uk or administrator.lyme@dorsetgp.nhs.uk ensuring ‘Charmouth & Lyme Bay Merger’ is in the subject heading

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