

Oulton Medical Centre and Swillington Health Practice FAQ

We have produced a list of frequently asked questions that may help with any queries you may have.

Q What will this mean for me as a patient?

There will be no change to standard GP services. Over time, we aim to increase the services available to all patients in order to improve our patient's access to primary care services.

Q Why is this happening now?

The demands being placed on primary care services means that practices need to look at ways to sustain the services being offered. The practices want to take positive steps to come together in a planned way since we all expect that this will be happening more generally across the NHS in the future. This allows us to pass the full benefit of technological and medical service development to all our patients and improve the quality of care available at both locations.

Q Why is it that specifically Oulton Medical Centre is taking on Swillington Health Practice as a branch practice, rather than any of the other local practices.

The Partners and some staff at both practices have worked together on several successful projects over the last few years. We have found that the caring ethos of the practices, our vision for the future and fundamental beliefs about primary care were very similar. It is important to all the Partners that they build a strong local practice for our local community.

Q Will there be a reduction in local GP services?

No. Our intention is to initially sustain the services that we offer and to progressively work towards increasing the number of services available to our patients.

Q Will either of the practice sites close?

There is no current intention to alter the location of any of the practices.

Q Will staff be made redundant?

Staff will continue to be employed as they are at present. There are no plans for any staff to be made redundant. We envisage increased opportunities for our staff to develop, to enhance their skills and continually pursue the highest standards.

Q Will it be possible for patients from one surgery to visit one of the other surgeries in future?

In the future it is our hope is to make our system flexible to support patients choose either location. Further details will be provided to patients as these plans unfold.

Q Will patients have to wait longer for appointments?

No. On the contrary helping patients access services quicker and more locally is one of the reasons for the two practices coming together.

Q What do I do if I want more information?

Look out for further announcements through the practice websites and newsletters.

Q Will I still be able to see my own GP or Nurse and have continuity of care?

Continuity of care is important to us and you will still be able to see your own GP should you wish. But you will have the choice of seeing other clinicians who may specialise in a certain area. This will just give you more choice.

Q Will the Quality still be assured?

The practices are working hard to streamline processes and work closer together, the quality we have always offered as practices will be continued. The aim is that to be able to offer as one partnership even higher quality than we have offered previously

Q Will I still ring the same number I always have?

The telephone numbers will remain the same. We may look at the pros and cons of a single telephone system for both sites in the future. We are keen to keep any system simple to use for patients.

Q Can I order prescriptions in the same way?

Yes you will still order prescriptions in the same way as you do now, any changes in processes will be fully communicated to patients.

Q Will I still be registered at my practice?

Yes. Your registration will remain the same but we will still operate from the same buildings that we do now just offering you the choice of where you receive your care.

Q Will the opening hours and emergency appointment times change?

There will be no immediate change to opening hours, however as things progress we will look at opening hours to ensure that they reflect the needs of all of our patients. .

Q Will I be able to get an appointment easier than I can now or will it be harder with more patients?

There will be no change to the service you currently receive, we will be looking at the appointments offered across both sites and there will be more appointments and choice, the hope is that by having a varied workforce will enable us to make it easier to book an appointment with the best person to treat you.

Q. Will there be specialists at specific surgeries to deal with common medical conditions?

Working as a larger group means that we will be able to develop and invest in more specialist areas.

Q What will happen with our Patient Participation Groups?

The PPG members from both our practices have asked to meet to discuss what the options are for the PPGs going forward. We hope this may be the opportunity to strengthen the PPGs as often there are common themes raised in both our PPGs. We look forward to sharing the outcome of these meetings with our patients.

Q. If this didn't happen what would the future be like?

General practice is seeing a substantial increase in demand coupled with fewer doctors choosing a career in general practice. In order to ensure that we continue to provide a high standard of care that is sustainable for the future the current partners all believe that this partnership will put us in a strong position.