

Responses to Patient Enquiries About the Merger

When we announced the general practice merger in August, patients from both practices were invited to send in comments, concerns, ideas etc. These enquiries have now been reviewed and fully discussed with members of the Patient Participation Groups from both practices which really helps us to see things from the patient perspective. This session developed into a lively discussion with all members being keen to understand more about the reason for the merger, the process and what the new organisation might look like. The enquiries received were grouped into categories and our responses are below.

Why does there need to be a merger?

Taurus currently holds the contract to run Market Surgery which ends on 31st March 2020. Herefordshire CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) will not renew the contract so the only options are for Market surgery to close or for St Katherines to go into partnership with Taurus and merge the two practices to ensure Ledbury retains a strong primary care provision that is sustainable for a long time to come. The merger is now planned for 1st April 2020.

The new organisation will still be a traditional general practice partnership made up of 5 GP Partners with Taurus Healthcare being a 6th partner. As it has always been, it is our intention to provide the highest standard of healthcare within the resources available to all patients. By working together we can support our teams with the necessary services and technology systems to continue delivering high quality patient care.

Increased patient numbers due to new housing developments

We are concerned about how we will manage the increase in patient numbers and are already working with Herefordshire CCG and the Town Council with a view to building new premises, but this will take a long time to come to fruition. We do believe that as one practice we will be more efficient and increase our resilience to such changes.

Appointments

When the practices merge, the two patient lists will be joined together, the staff will come together as one team to provide care to all patients and one new practice will be formed. This means that appointments with all doctors and the wider healthcare team such as pharmacists, paramedics, advanced nurse practitioners etc will be available to all patients at both Market and St Katherines sites, regardless of which practice you were previously registered with. You will of course still be able to see your preferred GP, though as now, this will be dependent upon availability.

Evening and weekend appointments have been available to patients of both practices for a few years now. We appreciate they are currently located in Ross, Hereford and Leominster and you have always been able to utilise these. We are working with Taurus to bring a hub to Ledbury in the near future and will of course keep you updated on our progress.

Ledbury Hospital

We have received several comments about the services at Ledbury Community Health and Care Centre (Ledbury Hospital) that require some clarification.

Neither practice is responsible for providing the x-ray service in Ledbury. We benefitted from this service one day each week until April, when Wye Valley Trust, who provided the service, withdrew from their contract with Herefordshire CCG. The practices would like it to re-open, so please tell the CCG if you want this to happen.

<https://www.herefordshireccg.nhs.uk/contact-us>

The Intermediate Care Unit (ward) has been closed since the end of June. However Wye Valley Trust has now been commissioned to provide medical cover and the ward has re-opened.

Summary

We are all working really hard to ensure the merger is a smooth transition for our staff and patients. We welcome your comments, suggestions and questions and will keep you updated as things progress. The staff are currently voting on a new name for the new organisation and we will announce this in a few weeks' time.

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