

Northbourne Medical Centre
193A Upper Shoreham Road
Shoreham-by-Sea
BN43 6BT

Shoreham Health Centre
& Downsway Southwick
Shoreham-by-Sea
BN43 5US

The Manor Practice
Southwick Street
Southwick
BN42 4WA

Dear Patient,

Proposed merger of Northbourne Medical Centre, Shoreham Health Centre and The Manor Practice

We will all have become aware that the population in the Adur District is growing and has done so at some pace. During a public event at the end of January, we alluded to our intention to merge the three practices in Shoreham-by-Sea and Southwick, Harbour View Healthcare, Northbourne Medical Practice and Manor Practice. This is to take effect from 1 January 2021, to form the Adur Health Partnership.

Why are GP Practices merging? In April 2016, NHS England published the General Practice Forward View. In the introduction Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of NHS England states:

“There is arguably no more important job in modern Britain than that of the family doctor. GP’s are by far the largest branch of British medicine. A growing and ageing population, with complex multiple health conditions, means that personal and population-oriented primary care is central to any country’s health system – ‘if general practice fails, the whole NHS fails’.”

Over the last few years, the NHS and GP Practices in particular, has come under increasing pressure with the role of the family doctor seeing many changes. GP Practices are being asked to provide better access with improved opening times whilst the system is living through a national recruitment and retention crisis and stretched social care and community support. Our local population is not only growing but is also increasingly an ageing / elderly one with more complex health needs requiring more time and continuity.

The practices have worked hard to counter-act pressures on this trend by increasing their staff bases and introduce new staff care roles to broaden access. Information on self-care is made available to patients and our staff routinely signpost to alternative services available in the District, such as Pharmacies and Physio Therapists, who no longer require a GP referral.

We have only just managed to maintain the status quo up to now as comfort is taken from a system that is generally understood by patients. Meeting future demand and challenges through individual practices, however, will become unsustainable.

A Patient-Centred Service

At the heart of this merger, change is ensuring we continue to provide a patient-centred service over the three sites you are familiar with. The practices already work closely as a Primary Care Network, and this is a natural next step towards even closer and aligned services availability. It provides increased stability, a broader range of internal skills and being able to adapt to change.

This, in turn, becomes more attractive to the multi-disciplinary teams as a place to work, helping us to mitigate the recruitment crisis and provide timely access. The aim is to bring together a range of care professionals, pooling expertise to work together to not only raise skills levels and have better backup services but also provide enhanced personalised and preventative care, which we feel better fits our patients' needs.

A larger practice means sustainability but also different working patterns. This provides more flexible access but often influences perceived continuity. Behind the scenes, we have established systems whereby GPs are constantly communicating with each other about patient concerns, progress, improvement or deterioration and patient care plans and notes are routinely reviewed.

Every patient still has a single named GP who has overarching knowledge and understanding but they may lead a team that provides your ongoing care and who will help you manage your health.

We believe very strongly that this merger will not only provide long-term sustainability for all three practices but will allow us to look at how we offer our services and the way we care for you. A list of benefits is included in the FAQs that accompany this letter. In summary, these are moving forward will be more flexible, timely access, stability in services delivery, more professionals to consult with a broader range of services and shorter waiting times due to a larger team. Attached is a comprehensive Frequently Asked Questions leaflet that you may find useful.

We must adapt to the changing needs of our patients, national policy and resource availability and therefore wish to move the practices forward as one, to what we believe it can become.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Simon Howard
Dr Howard Bentley
Dr Mark Halloran

Dr Keith Thomas
Dr Gillian McIlroy
Dr Charlotte Hoey

Dr Joana Monjardino
Dr Christopher Huckstep
Dr Victoria Figueira

Dr Anna Cressey
Dr Aran Vazquez
Dr Victoria Collins