

# Ringmead Medical Practice and Sandhurst Group Practice Merger

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### 1. Why are the practices merging?

The demands and pressures on GP practices are increasing and we need to change and adapt to meet these needs. Having two practices working as one will help us to achieve this. We believe that the most effective way to develop our patient services and care for our communities is to merge. The merger gives patients access to a wider range of services and a larger team of clinicians.

### 2. What is the anticipated timescale for the merger?

We will be merging the practices on 1 July 2023. We do however request that you be patient and allow us to align with our vision to provide high-quality, personalised care for the following few months after this date.

### 3. What will the merged practice be called?

The merged practice will be called Ringmead Medical Group.

### 4. What will each location be called after the merger?

We will continue to operate from both practices' current locations and aim to offer patients a choice to attend any of our sites. This hopefully will make it easier for you to select a time and location that best suits you. The names of the combined practice sites will be as follows:

- Ringmead Medical Group (Birch Hill)
- Ringmead Medical Group (Great Hollands)
- Ringmead Medical Group (Crowthorne)
- Ringmead Medical Group (Yorktown)
- Ringmead Medical Group (Owlsmoor).

### 5. Will the surgery telephone number change?

Yes. There will be a new single number to contact all 5 sites. To ensure that you can continue to access the practice, the old number will be diverted to the new number for a period of time.

The new telephone system will have sufficient capacity to ensure patients can appropriately contact the combined practice. From Monday 4 July the new single number will be **0333 332 0008**.

### 6. Will I need to re-register to become a patient on the combined patient list? What will happen to my health records?

No, you will not need to re-register. All the Sandhurst Group Practice patients will be automatically merged into the Ringmead list of registered patients. All patients' electronic records will be accessible to the healthcare team at all sites following the merger, which means that you will have access to appointments and services at all our sites.

### 7. Will I still be able to make an appointment to see my usual GP or Nurse?

Yes. We value the one-to-one relationships our patients have with our clinicians. We expect that the merger will increase our ability to provide our patients with access to additional highly skilled doctors and nurses as well as other clinicians such as paramedics. We also aim to reduce the use of locum

GPs to provide patients with continuity of care. However, for any urgent medical or minor illness advice, you may have to see the most appropriate clinician available who may not be your usual GP or nurse.

**8. Can patients request an appointment at the other practice?**

Yes, patients will have access to book an appointment with any doctor or nurse at all of our sites including Birch Hill, Great Hollands and Crowthorne. Our aim is to provide better access to appointments and services and to provide greater choice of when and where to see a GP and other health professionals. We believe that this will make it easier for you to select a time and location which best suits you.

**9. Will my usual surgery opening times stay the same?**

Yes, we are not currently anticipating any changes to our core opening times. We also expect to be able to improve and extend our opening times for all our patients.

**10. Will the merger affect any treatment or medication I am currently receiving?**

No. Any current treatments, medications, investigations and/or referrals will not be affected by our intentions to merge.

**11. Will I still be able to use my usual pharmacy for my prescriptions.**

Prescriptions will continue to be managed in the same way and you will still be able to use your preferred pharmacy or dispensary service.

**12. Will there be any change to how I access the GP out of hours service?**

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

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

Our team will all have access to a wider pool of clinical knowledge and expertise to draw upon for support and supervision. There will also be more opportunities for enhanced training and career development for staff including medical students, trainee GPs, paramedics, nurses, allied health professionals and administrative and managerial staff. We will also be able to provide better cover for any planned or unplanned absences which we hope will alleviate the pressures felt by remaining staff.

**14. Will any staff be made redundant?**

The staff at our surgeries are our most valuable asset and we are not anticipating any redundancies.

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

No. We anticipate that this merger will bring about greater choice and better access to appointments and services and a greater choice of when and where to see a GP and other health professionals.

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

No. However, if we feel that one of the sites provides a better, more timely or appropriate service for specific patients, you may be asked if you would like to attend there in order to access the specialised care. For example, a particular doctor or nurse at one site may specialise in diabetes or respiratory conditions such as Asthma and we may recommend that they see you.

**17. What additional benefits will there be to the merger?**

The larger practice would offer a wider range of clinicians to see and therefore more appointments. Additionally, there will be more specialised expert clinicians available to consult patients at the practices. The times of appointments may also be more convenient for some patients. We aim to share resources across all sites, be more resilient to the challenges all practices face, and hopefully expand the services that we can provide.

**18. Do I have to stay with the merged practice?**

We very much hope that all our patients will continue to use our merged practice for their healthcare in the future. However, patients are free to choose to register with another GP practice if they wish. By visiting <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp> and entering your postcode, you can find other practices local to you.

**19. Will the practice continue to have a Patient Participation Group (PPG)?**

We will work with PPG members from both practices to agree the future of the Sandhurst and Ringmead PPGs. We would encourage any patient who would be interested to join the PPG.

**20. Will the practice website change?**

Yes. We will be merging the current practice websites into one combined site in due course. However, in the meantime you will be able to access your usual practice website. We will notify patients once we are planning to merge the two websites.

**21. If the practices do not merge, what would the future look like?**

General Practice is seeing a substantial increase in demand coupled with fewer doctors choosing a career in primary care. In order to ensure we can continue to provide a high standard of care that is sustainable for the future, the partners at both practices believe this merger needs to take place.

**22. If I have further questions or I have comments to make, how do I do this?**

You can put these in writing for the attention of the Practice Business Manager, Diana Lock by email at [ringmeadmedicalpractice@nhs.net](mailto:ringmeadmedicalpractice@nhs.net). We will aim to respond to any questions/comments within 10 working days of receipt.

We will also be holding a public patient engagement event on:

**Monday 10 July at 7pm**  
**Edgbarrow School, Grant Rd, Crowthorne RG45 7HZ**

**23. Will my feedback be listened to?**

Yes. We really value the input our patients and stakeholders can contribute to this process. We are trying to provide the best possible service to meet our patients and community needs so your views and feedback are important to us.

Please contact Practice Business Manager, Diana Lock by email at [ringmeadmedicalpractice@nhs.net](mailto:ringmeadmedicalpractice@nhs.net).

You can also let us have your views by completing our patient survey using the link below:  
<https://mysay.is/RingmeadMedical>