

Cherrymead Surgery and Marlow Medical Group Merger

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) – Last updated November 2024

Q. Is Cherrymead Surgery closing?

A. No. The site is not closing and will continue to operate as a standalone site.

Q. Why are the Practices merging?

A. An issue of sustainability, Practices cannot operate with less than 2 Partners and if one of the Cherrymead Surgery Partners were permanently incapacitated the remaining Partner would be unable to continue to manage the Practice alone. This could result in an unplanned transfer of the ownership of the Practice to a third-party causing stress and lack of stability for both patients and staff. Therefore, the decision was made to approach Marlow Medical Group, a much larger Practice, to take over Cherrymead Surgery to safeguard delivering Primary Care to the community. We will work towards better continuity of services, access to additional roles and greater opportunities to enhance what the combined Practice can offer to its patients.

Q. Do I need to look for a new GP Practice or re-register?

A. No. You don't need to take any action. You will continue to receive care from your Practice as usual.

Q. Will I still be able to see the same GPs and other staff as I do now at Cherrymead Surgery?

A. Yes, as long as they remain in post. The employed staff will transfer to the larger combined group.

Q. If I can't get an appointment when I want one at Cherrymead Surgery, will I be able to ask for an appointment at one of the other sites?

A. The combined Practice will serve 39,000 patients across four sites and patients will benefit from additional service and greater flexibility when making appointments with clinicians. Usual appointments will continue to be offered to patients at the site where they are registered.

Q. Will the change mean it will be more difficult to get an appointment at Marlow because there will be more registered patients?

A. No. The Practices are already working together in a Primary Care Network, Arc Bucks PCN, which has drawn up an access improvement plan, taking into account current and future workforce proposals. The economies of scale enable us to do more for our patient population and better support you and the community, with the benefits of enhanced resilience and increased opportunity to work in more creative ways.

Q. Will requesting/booking an appointment change?

A. Patients will need to request appointments via Klinik, our online AI triage software. In line with NHS access to Primary Care we operate a total triage model. All submissions are reviewed by the clinical team and responded to within 2 working days. Klinik is available Monday to Friday 7am to 6pm. It is not available during weekends and Bank Holidays. Patients unable to use the Internet can have requests made on their behalf or they can telephone reception who can complete the online submission for them.

For more information, please see our Patient Guide to Klinik here:

<https://www.marlowdoctors.co.uk/help-support/patient-user-guides/klinik-patient-guide-and-faq/>

Q. Will there be a separate telephone number for Cherrymead Surgery?

A. Yes. As with our other Branch Sites at Lane End and Hambleton, patients can telephone directly to speak to the teams based there. We will offer the additional functionality of a 'call back' feature, so you will no longer have to wait on the line until your call is answered and we will call you back as soon as we can.

Q. Can I continue to use the Patient Access and Ask First apps?

A. We recommend that you download and register for the NHS App now, if you have not already done so. This is the only App supported by the NHS.

Q. What other changes can I expect to see?

A. We are working hard to minimise any disruption to service delivery; however, some changes are unavoidable and will naturally bring an adjustment period. Cherrymead Surgery will move clinical systems from EMIS Web to SystmOne as a Practice can only operate with one clinical system. This will mean online access registrations will have to be moved across and we are working hard to minimise the impact of this on patients.

As mentioned Cherrymead Surgery will benefit from using Klinik to request support from the Practice Klinik and will also move to a single telephone provider, with the additional benefit of the call back function. We also employ a Digital Support Champion, whose role is to support patients with any IT help they may need when navigating our systems and maintaining/improving our online offer and a Patient Services Officer.

Q. Will my medical records still be available?

A. Yes.

We are being supported by a dedicated team from the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire west (BOB) Integrated Care Board who have a wealth of experience in Practice Mergers.

Some questions cannot be answered fully at this stage as there is naturally much that needs to be considered as the process continues and final decisions are made. We will update these FAQs as soon as developments allow. Keeping our patients informed is one of our highest priorities. We will continue to engage with the Patient Participation Groups as your appointed representatives.

Partners and Senior Management Team

Cherrymead Surgery and Marlow Medical Group

Dr Penny Macdonald, Dr Stefan Kuetter, Dr Ross Hendry, Dr Avi Biswas, Dr Kristina King, Dr Kirsteen Fraser, Sarah Deeks—Practice Director, Victoria Spracklen— Practice Manager, AJ Baheerathan – Practice Manager and Verity Mundy – Transformation Project Manager