

GP Practice Merger

Crook Log Surgery and Sidcup Medical Centre

Patient Questions & Answers (FAQ's)

The following questions and answers have been prepared to assist all patients of Crook Log Surgery and Sidcup Medical Centre who, subject to all regulatory approvals, intend to merge to form a single GP Practice – Sidcup Medical Centre.

Our Mission Statement

To provide our patient population with high quality, accessible care in a responsive and courteous manner in a way we wish our family and friends to be treated.

Our Values

- ▶ *Quality* – Ensure the highest quality of care is given to our patients within the framework of NHS Primary Care Services.
- ▶ *Respect* – Treat all our patients and staff equally with courtesy, dignity and respect at all times.
- ▶ *Support* – Support our patients in decisions about their healthcare.
- ▶ *Promote Best Practice* – Communicate with others to ensure our patients get the best possible care available.
- ▶ *Respond to Change* – Nurture a culture that is innovative, forward looking and responds to change.

Why merge the practices?

The NHS is changing rapidly and NHS England is encouraging practices to work much more collaboratively across larger patient populations. We want to ensure that the patients of both practices continue to receive high quality medical care. We are now looking after patients with complex medical problems; patients with more than one long term illness as well as increasing patient expectation. We want to continue to be able to offer a personal approach to those with long term health problems as well as being able to respond to those with more urgent health needs. We feel the best way to ensure this happens is to bring together both practices so that we can share our pool of knowledge and skills. Being a larger practice will put us in a better position to provide sufficient doctors and nurses to better meet demand. The workload of a current GP Practice has increased enormously in recent years and we want to make sure that time is used most effectively. At present both practices are duplicating many routine tasks and by coming together we hope to become more efficient which will free up staff to focus on improvements in our current services as well as responding to new initiatives.

When will the merge to the new Practice take place?

It is anticipated that the merge will take place on Wednesday 1 April 2020 following continued engagement with patients and all of the staff who are employed by each of the practices.

Is this merger just a way of saving money?

The merger will help us make the best use of our resources by putting our staff where they are most needed and it may offer us monetary savings, but this is NOT about saving money. It is to ensure that we work together to continue to offer Primary Care Services to you. All surgery buildings will remain open.

Will I still be able to make an appointment to see my usual doctor or nurse?

Yes. We very much value all of the one to one relationships our patients have with our doctors and nurses. It is therefore expected that merging practices will further increase our ability to provide you with continuity of care and access to your usual doctor and/or nurse. We also expect to be able to reduce the need for locum doctors and provide you with a greater number of highly skilled local doctors and nurses in the event that your usual doctor or nurse is absent from work.

Where are the four sites located?

The practices will run their clinics from their existing premises. Sidcup Medical Centre currently has one main surgery and two branch surgeries, Crook Log will become another branch surgery. Patients will be able to access services from all the sites as shown below.

Sidcup Medical Centre - Main Site	Branch Surgery	Branch Surgery	Branch Surgery
2 Church Avenue, Sidcup, Kent DA14 6BU	231 Burnt Oak Lane, Sidcup, Kent DA15 9BQ	63 Thanet Road, Bexley, Kent DA5 1AP	19 Crook Log, Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 8DZ
Core Opening Hours	Core Opening Hours	Core Opening Hours	Core Opening Hours
8 am to 6.30 pm Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays)	8 am to 6.30 pm Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays)	8 am to 6.30 pm Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays)	8 am to 6.30 pm Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays)
Extended Hours	Extended Hours	Extended Hours	Extended Hours
Alternate Mondays 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm Tuesday 7 am to 8 am Wednesday 7 am to 8 am	Alternate Mondays 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm		Mondays 6.30 pm to 8 pm

Are there good transport links between the sites?

Sidcup Medical Centre’s Church Avenue site is circa 3.5 miles from Crook Log Surgery. Burnt Oak Lane, Blackfen is circa 1.9 miles from Crook Log Surgery and Thanet Road, Bexley is circa 1.9 miles from Crook Log Surgery. A number of bus services run between or close to Crook Log Surgery and the other sites as listed below.

Bus Services	2 Church Avenue Sidcup Kent DA14 6BU	231 Burnt Oak Lane Sidcup Kent DA15 9BQ	63 Thanet Road Bexley Kent DA5 1AP
From Crook Log Surgery to	269, 229, B14	B13	269, 229

Will I still be able to make appointments at my usual doctor’s surgery?

Yes. We will continue to provide daily appointments to see doctors and nurses at your regular surgery. We have no plans to close any of our sites.

Will my usual surgery opening times stay the same?

Yes. We are not currently anticipating any changes to our core opening times or the extended hours (early morning or late evening clinics).

Will there be changes made to the way I book appointments?

No. We are not currently anticipating any changes to the way you book routine appointments and you will therefore continue to be able to book these in the same way as you do now with your current practice i.e. via the telephone, at your surgery or via online services. Subject to approval of our merger plans, we expect to be able to move to a single telephone number for all of our sites. However, in the short-term, you should continue to ring your usual surgery to make an appointment and for any other queries you may have. We will continue to contact all of our patients who require scheduled vaccinations, chronic disease reviews or routine screening e.g. cervical screening tests, etc.

Will I be able to make an appointment to see a doctor and/or nurse at another GP practice site?

As our plans fully develop, we expect that you will be able to request appointments with any doctor and/or nurse from any of our four practice sites, therefore providing you with greater access to a wider range of services and availability. We expect this facility to be available from Monday 18 May 2020 when our clinical systems merge.

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

No. However, if in the future we feel that one of the other sites provides a better or more appropriate service for specific patients – for example a particular doctor at one site may specialise in COPD or diabetes – you may be asked if you would like to attend there in order to access more specialised care if this is appropriate and you choose this option.

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

No. We do not anticipate services being removed or stopped. If anything, we anticipate that this merger will bring about a greater choice of services.

How will you make sure there is no reduction in the quality of services that are provided?

The quality of our services will continue to remain our number one priority and will continue to be monitored on a site-by-site basis in the same way as they are now. We will continue to benchmark all of our services against both national and local targets to ensure that we are flexible in our response to meet our patients' needs within local neighbourhoods.

Will there be any changes to how I access the GP out of hours service?

No. In order to access a GP out of hours you will still 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.

Will the current arrangements that I have in place for getting my medicines stay the same?

Yes. However, if you have signed up for online services at Crook Log Surgery this will be temporarily unavailable from Friday 15 May 2020 whilst the clinical system merge. An email will be sent to affected patients around this date to advise them of any steps they need to take to reactivate or re-link their accounts.

Will the intended merge affect any treatment or medication I am currently receiving either at my usual surgery or any hospital?

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

Will I need to re-register to become a patient of the single GP Practice? What will happen to my health records?

No, you will not need to re-register and we also anticipate that you will remain registered with the same GP as you are now. All of our patients will automatically be merged into a single GP Practice and your health records will reside within a single patient database. The NHS safeguards in relation to patient confidentiality of information will continue to remain in place throughout the transition.

Will the single GP Practice be able to provide new services to patients?

One of the main reasons to merge and form a larger practice, is for us to be able to expand the services that we are able to provide locally. For example, we hope to be able to improve online access via eConsult to our patients at the Crook Log site.

What if I do not wish to remain registered with the new practice?

Firstly, if you have any particular concerns that could be answered without the need for you to change, do speak to us first. If you still feel that for some reason you do not wish to be a patient at the new partnership, you are free to register with another practice that covers your area.

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

Our GPs and Nurses will all have access to a wider pool of clinical knowledge and expertise to draw upon and we will have far greater opportunities to specialise in areas such as diabetes, care of the elderly, palliative care and urgent care access. We also anticipate that the current level of administrative tasks that our clinical staff perform will be dramatically reduced, therefore allowing them more time to spend on responding to and delivering the clinical care our patients need. We will also be able to better cover any planned or unplanned absences which we hope will alleviate the resulting pressures felt by remaining staff. In addition, we should also be able to reduce our reliance on expensive locum and bank staff. We also anticipate that all of our staff will be provided with greater opportunities for enhanced training and career development.

What about the Patient Participation Groups?

Both practices have a Patient Participation Group. Our expectation is that both groups will join together to form one entity. If you are interested in finding out more about the patient participation group please leave your details at Reception and you will be contacted by us.

How will you keep me informed about any developments in this process?

We will post information on our website, www.sidcupmedicalcentre.co.uk and in our waiting areas.

I have further questions I would like to ask and/or comments I would like to make. How do I do this?

You can put these in writing for the attention of the Practice Manager at your usual surgery or you can call your usual surgery to leave your details with our reception staff and you will receive a call back.

We will aim to respond to any questions/comments within 10 working days of receipt.