

Meadows Health Centre (Dr Rao) and Wilford Grove Surgery

Introduction:

The NHS England Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire Area Team has received an application proposing the merger two practices Dr Rao, Meadows Health Centre (1 Bridgeway Centre, The Meadows, Nottingham, NG2 2JG) and Wilford Grove Surgery (55 Wilford Grove, The Meadows, Nottingham, NG2 2DR). Both of these practices are constituents of Nottingham City Clinical Commissioning Group.

Dr Rao's practice operates from a health centre shared with another practice (Drs Larnar & Jadoon). The second practice, provided by Dr Larnar & Jadoon, is not included as a party to the proposed merger.

Dr Rao's practice, in the Meadows Health Centre, and Wilford Grove Surgery are located approximately 200 yards apart in The Meadows, a large estate with high deprivation, which is situated half a mile from the city centre of Nottingham. The Meadows Health Centre also accommodates Nottingham City Care services and is close to a parade of shops.

Dr Rao's practice in the Meadows Health Centre has approximately 2,800 patients. Dr Rao is senior partner of the practice following the retirement of Dr Shankar in March 2014; the practice has two doctors in total which provide 1.4 Whole Time Equivalent (WTE).

Wilford Grove Surgery has approximately 2,200 patients with one doctor. Dr Anandappa joined the practice in November 2013 and is the only doctor following the subsequent retirement of the previous doctor, Dr Hazarika.

Both practices have seen a decline in the size of their patient list size over the last few years. Within approximately half a mile of both practices is the Platform One practice, which opened in 2012. This has attracted many new patients and it is thought that many have been drawn from The Meadows area.

The premises currently utilised by Wilford Grove Surgery is an Edwardian converted house that is not expected to meet the full standards of the Care Quality Commission standards for the provision of primary medical services.

Proposal

The practices have jointly approached the NHS England Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire Area Team to seek permission to merge the practices. The proposal requests the continuation of the one consolidated practice within the Meadows Health Centre and the closure of the Wilford Grove premise.

The practices are currently considering what adjustments (if any) are required to the Meadows Health Centre to accommodate the patients and staff of Wilford Grove Surgery.

In making the application to merge, the practices have outlined plans for extending the services available in the Meadows Health Centre, the details of which are included below.

In considering this application, Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire Area Team has sought the view of Nottingham City Clinical Commissioning Group which is developing the Primary Care Strategy within the area. The Clinical Commissioning Group has indicated that this merger change would fit with the Primary Care Strategy as planned.

Impact/benefits for local population

One of the main benefits to patients will include a wider-range of clinicians available at the new merged practice; this includes a female GP for Wilford Grove patients. Increasing the overall number of clinicians available at one practice will also enable greater flexibility to provide appointments across a larger part of the day and to have arrangements in-house where unplanned cover is required.

The practices propose to offer a greater range of services to all patients of the new practice. These include phlebotomy, minor surgery, spirometry and nebulisation. Some of these services were previously provided at the practices however changes to the local commissioning arrangements mean the services are no longer provided. Following completion of the merger, the practice will look to re-establish these services.

In addition the patients of Wilford Grove Surgery will benefit from improved facilities in the health centre as well as access to designated parking which is not available at Wilford Grove Surgery.

The Meadows Health Centre is situated on the ground floor only which improves access for all patients particularly those with disabilities or mobility difficulties.

It is noted that the short distance between the practices (0.2 miles – 4 minute walk), will result in a minimal impact on travel for patients.

Under the terms of the application, NHS England has asked the new practice to put in place increased opening on a Thursday afternoon after the merger – currently practices are closed on Thursday afternoons.

The combined practice will also offer up to date access to services including online booking of appointments, online repeat prescriptions ordering and the Electronic Prescribing Service which will benefit patients interested in access through technology.

Wilford Grove Surgery recognises there may be an element of anxiety in some patients regarding the relocation of services. Both practices have endeavoured to listen to concerns and provide assurance to patients including providing information on the benefits of the merger.

Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire Area Team consideration:

The Area Team initially considered this application at the Primary Care Panel on 19 June 2014. The Area Team gave its support to this application subject to the following conditions:

- Both practices are expected to complete a period of engagement with patients and stakeholders on the future arrangements for patient services to ensure full awareness of the changes.
- The new practice opens for appointments on Thursday afternoons.
- The practices can secure capital funding arrangements for any required premises alterations within the Meadows Health Centre.

A verbal update was provided to the Primary Care Panel on 17 July 2014 to advise that the parties were working with NHS Property Services to determine any alterations required within the Meadows Health Centre to accommodate the additional patients.

A further update was provided to the Primary Care Panel on 21 August 2014. The panel considered the feedback regarding the closure of the Wilford Grove premise and the implementation of patient engagement by the practices.

The Panel decided that, although some elements of the implementations could have been improved, sufficient time and engagement had taken place and would continue to do so up until the date of the merger.

Following this, a further meeting with the practices, the chairs of the patient groups, the local councillor and representatives from the Area Team, the Clinical Commissioning Group and Local Medical Committee was scheduled to explain the reasons for the merger, the benefits and the opportunity it offers to patients. This meeting was held on 29 August 2014 – see Appendix 3 below.

At the meeting it was acknowledged that delayed posting and receipt of patient letters had made it difficult for patients to attend the open day. As part of the outcomes of the meeting, the practices have arranged for a 'frequently asked questions' document to be made available to patients and offered patients of Wilford Grove Surgery the opportunity to have guided tours of the Meadow Health Centre to patients as part of the transition process.

Letter to patients:

01/08/14

Dear Patient

Joining together Wilford Grove Surgery (Dr Kiran Anandappa) and Meadows Health Centre(Dr Rao Rudrashetty & Dr Malathi Kiran)

We are writing to you as a patient registered with Wilford Grove Surgery to tell you about our plans to join together **Wilford Grove Surgery** and **Meadows Health Centre**.

We are proposing to join these two practices together to form a new merged practice from 1 October 2014. We want to share with you the reasons why we think these changes will benefit patients from both practices and are also keen to hear your views on this.

The context of this is:

The new practice believes in high quality primary care delivered by a team you can know and trust. General practice has changed so much in recent years and we hope this opportunity will allow us to give our patients and staff a bright and secured future. The practices regard this as a positive move and look forward to work together.

The merged practice will be based at Meadows Health Centre, 1 Bridge way Centre, Meadows, Nottingham, and NG22JG. We are hoping that the same staff at both the practices will continue to work in the merged practice.

As part of this process, we believe patients will benefit from...

- a. Improved access
- b. Increased appointments
- c. Facility for car parking
- d. Choice of seeing female doctor/nurse/HCA
- e. Improved services

We will be ensuring that all patients affected by the proposed changes have the chance to keep up to date with the latest news and have the opportunity to raise questions to share views with members of the practice teams. We will use the feedback we receive to consider how the new practice will work in the future. We believe it's important that everybody's views are considered, so please do take the time to let your practice team know your views.

We will be holding open sessions where you can come along and speak to members of both practices. These will take place on the following days:

- Event 1 (Wilford Grove Surgery- 14/08/14)
- Event 2 (Meadows Health Centre- 14/08/14)

To ensure we have adequate accommodation for you to attend, please confirm you are attending by contacting our practice manager-Shelly Taylor– 01159528200.

If you have any specific access requirement for these events please inform earlier so that necessary arrangements can be made. We would like to bring to your attention that we have easy access for the disabled people.

Information about the proposal will be on display in the practice waiting room and the practice team will also be able to help you with any queries.

You can have your say in a number of ways:

Write to the doctors at Dr Anandappa, Wilford Grove Surgery, 55 Wilford Grove, Meadows, Nottingham, NG22DR

Attend the open events: we are holding these events on the same day for your convenience.

- Event 1
- Event 2

Yours sincerely

Dr Kiran Anandappa

Appendix 3

Patient Engagement details:

1. Wilford Grove Surgery has a practice website and has included details regarding the merger on it from the first week in August.
2. Wilford Grove Surgery has displayed notices in the reception area.
3. Meadows Health Centre has an electronic notice board in the waiting area and has displayed information regarding the merger on it.
4. Both practices have added information regarding merger on the repeat prescription slips.
5. Both practices have written to all the patients informing them personally of the merger – see Appendix 2 above.
6. Both practices have met with their Patient Participation Groups(PPG) to inform them of the merger:
 - Dr Kiran Anandappa at Wilford Grove Surgery first met with their PPG on the 23 July 2014 and had further meetings on 30 July and 5 August.
 - Dr Rao Rudrashetty and Dr Malathi Kiran at Meadows Health Centre met with their PPG on the 21 July 2014.
7. Both practices held an open day meeting with their patients to address any questions regarding merger on 14 August from 11am to 4pm.
 - At Wilford Grove, representatives of the practice, NHS England, the Local Medical Committee and Nottingham City Clinical Commissioning Group were available to discuss the merger. Councillor Edwards was also in attendance.
 - Patients were in attendance during the day to air their views, though some complained that they had only received their letter the day before.
 - There was a full and frank discussion between all parties attending, with many questions being asked and responded to by the GP, NHS England and the Nottingham City Clinical Commissioning Group.
 - The PPG chair presented a petition, containing 351 signatures, objecting to the haste of the planning and stating they had no wish for Wilford Grove Surgery to close.
 - Subsequently signatures from 177 patients were submitted stating they had been informed and had no objections to the merger.

8. A meeting with the practices, the chairs of the patient representative groups, the local councillor and representatives from NHS England, Nottingham City Clinical Commissioning Group and Local Medical Committee was held on 29 August 2014, to give a wider context to the reasons for the merger and the benefits and the opportunity it offered to patients.

Following the statement of the rationale and benefits of moving, there was a full discussion of the issues with those attending. Actions following the meeting have included:

- A Frequently Asked Questions document has been made available to patients, answering many of their likely questions.
- Patients at Wilford Grove have been offered the opportunity to visit Meadows Health Centre to see the facilities for themselves.
- The practices have ensured feedback processes are set up within each practice to enable patients to share their concerns and give opportunity for the practice to respond appropriately.

Appendix 4

Staff Engagement details:

- Wilford Grove Surgery staff were informally advised of the intention to merge in last week in June, and this was formalised on 23 July. All staff have been offered the opportunity to re-locate to the Meadows Health Centre.
- Staff at the Meadows Health Centre were informed of the merger plans in the last week in July.

Appendix 5

Other stakeholders engaged - the following stakeholders have been written to make them aware of developments:

- a. Local Member of Parliament – the Practices wrote to Lilian Greenwood MP on 26 July to inform her, and the Area Team wrote on 8 August.
- b. Local Councillors – the Practices wrote to Councillor Edwards & Councillor Heaton on 29 July to inform them, and the Area Team also wrote on 8 August. The Area Team has had correspondence with Councillor Edwards and responded to his queries.
- c. Neighbouring practice have been informed.
- d. Local community pharmacies have been informed.
- e. Community service providers such as midwives, health visitors, community matron, and the district nursing team have been informed.
- f. Wilford Grove Surgery informed the landlord regarding closure of the practice on 23 July 2014.