

STATION ROAD SURGERY

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Dear Station Road Surgery Patients

Proposed contractual merger between Station Road Surgery and Sidcup Medical Centre

I am writing to seek your views, as a patient of Station Road Surgery, on a proposal to contractually merge Station Road Surgery with the neighbouring Sidcup Medical Centre.

This proposal means that the contracts that both practices hold with NHS South East London Integrated Care Board (the commissioner of NHS medical services in SE London) would be merged, and the GP partners at both practices would become a single partnership. By pooling staff and resources, this would mean you would have better access to clinicians and improved availability of appointments.

The GP Partners at both Practices are confident that patients would **not** be negatively impacted in any way by this merger, but are keen to gather feedback from patients.

What would a contractual merger mean for you as a patient?

If this contractual merger goes ahead:

- You would become a patient of Sidcup Medical Centre **BUT there would be NO CHANGE to the way you access services at Station Road Surgery i.e. you would still be able to attend GP appointments and services at Station Road with your usual clinicians as you do now.**
- You would also have the option to access appointments at any of Sidcup Medical Centre's practice sites and see their clinicians, if you wish.
- **There is no intention to close or relocate Station Road Surgery or Sidcup Medical Centre.**
- **There would be no reduction in opening hours or appointments at Station Road or Sidcup Medical Centre.**

More information

Please do not call the practice reception for further information on this proposal: our receptionists are extremely busy dealing with appointments. You can find out more about this proposal, including why it is being considered, in the following ways:

- The Question & Answer sheet attached to this letter (which will also be available at the practice reception)
- A Question & Answer presentation by myself and Dr Deshmukh, who is the Senior Partner at Sidcup Medical Centre, will be held at **Sidcup Rugby Club, 49 Sydney Road Sidcup DA14 6RA**, on **4th December 2024 at 6.30 pm**, which you are invited to

attend. A recording of the presentation will be available on the practice website from 5th December.

We will also be inviting patients to complete a [short survey](#) to offer their views. Copies of this survey will be available on 4th December, on the practice website or at Station Road Surgery reception from 5th December 2024. You can also provide feedback by emailing us at sidcupmerger.feedback@nhs.net.

I believe that this proposal is in the long-term interest of our patients, our incredibly hard-working staff, and our practice, and I hope you will support the proposal.

Kind regards
Dr Knigge

Station Road Surgery Merger Question and Answers

Please see below detailed information on this proposal.

1. Would Station Road Surgery close or be relocated?

NO. There is **absolutely no intention** to close or relocate either Station Road Surgery or any of the Sidcup Medical Centre sites.

2. What is a contractual merger?

Every NHS GP practice is required to hold a contract with its local commissioner of services, which, in this case, is South East London Integrated Care Board. In some cases, a GP practice contract covers a main site and multiple 'branch' sites (e.g. Sidcup Medical Centre's contract currently has four practice sites). This means that the staff working at each one of those locations are under a single contract, which creates greater ability to share staff across the practice sites. Under this proposal, Station Road Surgery's contract would simply be merged with Sidcup Medical Centre's existing contract. A contractual merger should not negatively impact patients in any way.

Sidcup Medical Centre has four sites across the borough: Church Avenue Sidcup, Burnt Oak Lane Sidcup, Thanet Road Bexley and Crook Log Bexleyheath. By merging its contract with Station Road, you would be able to access appointments at any of those sites, should that be more convenient to you.

3. How would this affect my registration as a patient of Station Road Surgery?

As a result of the contractual merger, Station Road patients would become patients of Sidcup Medical Centre **BUT there would be no change to the way you access services at Station Road Surgery i.e. you would still be able to attend GP appointments and services at Station Road with your usual clinicians as you do now.**

4. Would I still be able to see my usual GP or nurse at Station Road Surgery?

Yes. The relationship our patients have with Station Road Surgery's GPs and nurses is very important. and you would still be able to see your normal GPs and nurses at Station Road.

The merged practice would improve your continuity of care and access to your usual GP and/or nurse. You would also have access to a greater number of highly skilled GPs and nurses at Sidcup Medical Centre in the event that your usual GP/nurse is absent from work.

5. Would I still be able to make appointments at Station Road Surgery?

Yes. Our GPs and nurses would continue to be based at Station Road, for the vast majority of their face to face consultations. You would also be able to request appointments with any GP and/or nurse at any of the Sidcup Medical Centre sites, if you wished, therefore providing you with greater access to a wider range of services and appointments.

6. Would Station Road Surgery opening times stay the same?

Yes. Station Road Surgery would continue to be open from 8am – 6.30pm Monday-Friday and would continue to hold extended access clinics, so there would be **no changes to opening times**.

7. Would there be changes to the way I book appointments?

No. You would be able to book appointments in the same way. The contractual merger would allow you to book an appointment either at Station Road Surgery, or any of the four Sidcup Medical Centre sites, whichever is more convenient for you.

We would also continue to contact all of our patients who require scheduled vaccinations, chronic disease reviews or routine screening e.g. cervical screening tests, etc.

8. Would I have to go to one of the Sidcup Medical Centre sites for consultations and/or treatments?

Only if you wish. If you have a particular condition – for example COPD or diabetes – your clinician may suggest that you make an appointment at one of the Sidcup Medical Centre sites, if that site has a clinician that specialises in your condition. However, this would be your choice.

We may hold certain clinics – e.g. vaccinations – at one of the Sidcup Medical Centre sites, but you would be advised if this is the case.

Sidcup Medical Centre also run clinics for joint injections and contraceptive services, including the coil and implants, which you would be able to access.

9. Would any service currently offered by Station Road Surgery be removed or stopped?

No. We do not anticipate any of Station Road Surgery's services being removed or stopped.

10. What would happen to my medical records?

GP practices hold their patients on a 'list'. In a contractual merger, the lists of both practices are merged into a single list. Our list of patients would automatically merge into a single list with the Sidcup Medical Centre list. Your medical records would consequently reside in a single patient database. This means that, whether you have an appointment at Station Road Surgery or at one of the Sidcup Medical Centre sites, your GP/nurse would be able to access your medical record, as is normally done during a consultation.

The NHS safeguards in relation to patient confidentiality would of course remain in place.

11. Would my current arrangements for getting my medicines stay the same?

Yes. There would be no change to the way you get your medicines.

12. Would the proposed merger affect the GP care provided by Sidcup Medical Centre to care homes?

No. As some patients of Station Road Surgery may be a relative/carer of a patient in a care home to which Sidcup Medical Centre provides GP care, please be assured that there would be **no change** to the continuity of care for care home residents.

13. Would there be any changes to how I access the GP out of hours service?

No. In order to access a GP when the practice is closed, you could still call the NHS 111 service and they would either signpost you to the most appropriate service or arrange for you to access a GP.

14. Why is this contractual merger being considered?

You will be no doubt be aware that Station Road Surgery has faced significant challenges over the last 2 years, not least the death of Dr Money. The intense workload on Dr Knigge and the management team is not sustainable. Dr Siddharth Deshmukh, the lead GP and senior partner of Sidcup Medical Centre, joined Station Road in December 2023 as a managing partner with responsibility for strategy, planning and finances, and whilst this has been beneficial, there still remains significant challenges to the day-to-day operation of Station Road Surgery.

A significant advantage of a contractual merger is the 'pooling' of staff. This means greater ability for staff to provide cover for unexpected absences (something that is currently a challenge), and would mean that Station Road patients could access a greater pool of clinicians with specialist knowledge or an interest in a particular condition; for example, one of the Sidcup Medical Centre clinicians has a particular interest in Minor Surgery (Joint Injections), and therefore Station Road patients would be able to have a consultation with that clinician, if they wished.

Currently we only have a small reception team to answer the phone at Station Road, and any unplanned absence causes significant issues. The merged practice would be able to use a larger reception team to answer the phones across all its sites, which would make covering any unplanned absences significantly easier, improving the service we provide to patients.

We believe that this proposal would ensure higher quality of care and convenience for Station Road patients, and would benefit both the patients and practice staff.

15. Who is responsible for making the decision as to whether this contractual merger goes ahead?

Ultimately, the decision whether to proceed with the merger is the responsibility of South East London Integrated Care Board, the commissioner of the current contracts held by the two practices. Responsibility for the commissioning of Primary Care services (including GP Practices) is delegated to 'Place' teams, operating within individual borough boundaries. In Bexley 'Place', the Bexley Wellbeing Partnership (BWP) brings together the NHS, local authority, service providers, charities and voluntary sector organisations to design health and care services around the needs of residents. The BWP will be responsible for considering any recommendation of commissioners at a future meeting held in public. You will be able to find further information about future meetings at [Bexley Wellbeing Partnership](#).

16. If I want to register at a different practice, how do I do this?

We hope that you will be happy to remain a patient, but if you wish or need to change GP practice at any time, you should contact the new practice of your choice and ask them to register you. Once the new practice has registered you, you will automatically be deregistered from your existing one.

You can find a practice near you at www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp