

Merger Between York Medical Group and Minster Health

Introduction:

York Medical Group (YMG) is a multi-sited practice, with sites based at Acomb, Woodthorpe, Monkgate, and York St John University.

Our current list size is 18,500.

Minster Health has a current list size of 6,250.

As a merged unit with Minster Health (MH), the list will be @ 25,000 patients.

Background

York Medical Group and Minster Health both co – habit premises based in the Monkgate suite of buildings on site.

The buildings are mainly a pre fab construction – built @ the 1960's era.

Both York Medical and Minster Health have been occupants on site in excess of 20 years each.

There are 13 clinical rooms between both Practices, nine at Minster and four at York Medical Group. There are two reception desks, two kitchens, staff and patient WCs.

We are proposing to convert the use of one reception area to be that of a call handling room, so that all incoming calls can be handled more efficiently thus freeing up the reception desks to improve face to face patient care, and also converting the use of one kitchen area to that of a storage room for consumables.

We have approximately 11 GPs working from the Monkgate site, plus six nurses, eight Receptionists, and four Admin team members.

Minster Health has recently had two Partners retire from the Practice, and will lose a further Partner this summer 2014.

Minster Health has recently had a retirement from their Practice Manager in January 2014.

Method

The Partners from both York Medical Group and Minster Health, inclusive of the Practice Manager, met at various times to discuss the option of merging, and the potential benefits thereof.

The initial steps that we took on the process for the Merger, were that of contacting Geoff Day (NHS England), and had a meeting to put our intention forward, and from that meeting took advice from Geoff and his team of how to go about this process.

Patient consultation

The first step was to contact both Patient Participation Groups (York Medical and Minster Health).

All members were initially written to and emailed, informing them of the potential that the two practices could be merging, and were subsequently invited to attend separate meetings to discuss this.

We asked them to come with any queries or concerns that they might have, and any wider patient issues that they could think of.

We held the meetings, and the responses that both Minster and York Medical Group received were very positive, in that they endorsed the merger.

We respectfully asked that the Patient Participation Group members went away, and gave further thought to our meeting and to report back on an individual basis if they felt that they didn't have the opportunity to voice their concerns. Any subsequent feedback was answered to the group as a whole, of which there were no reluctances to merge.

Communication to our patients has been a key theme throughout – we have used our website to inform patients what is happening and when. Information in the patient newsletter about the merger has been included, and a survey has been completed to gauge the views of a wider audience.

Staff consultation

The next step was to discuss the merger with all of our staff members.

We held meetings at both sites initially, and had representation from York Medical Group at the Minster health staff meetings and vice versa, to put all of our staff members in the picture, and to reiterate that there would not be any redundancies throughout this process.

We gave all staff the rationale behind the reasoning of the necessity to merge, and again asked them for their thoughts and comments.

We set a further date for them to come back to us with any concerns that they might have and we held an externally facilitated meeting inviting ALL staff members from both practices to attend to discuss and air their views. This meeting was absent of any Partners and senior management as we were conscious that we wanted to allow frank and open discussion.

The outcomes of this meeting were formalised, and information fed back to the sites. Again the response from staff was very positive.

Throughout this process we have been constantly informing our staff what is happening.

This has been done via newsletters internally, information going out with wage slips, team catch up meetings, and as before invites requesting anyone to come forward with concerns or queries.

Stakeholder consultation

As a practice, we felt that it was important to inform all of the relevant bodies locally that we are planning on a Merger. The relevant associations and organisations that have been written to include the Local Medical Committee, Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS England, GP Federation, and all of the ancillary staff such as counsellors etc.

We asked for feedback and as such have not had any negative responses, just confirmation letters and confirmation of receipts.

Consultation outcomes

The Patient Participation Group members have been entirely supportive of our intention to merge.

All of our staff members have also been supportive of our intention to merge.

Stakeholders have not voiced any concerns, but have confirmed that they are in receipt of our letter, and intention to merge.

The Partners from both York Medical Group and Minster Health have committed their intent to the merger.

There will be no redundancies throughout this merger process, in fact we are recruiting new team members into the group.

Benefits of Merging

York Medical Group and Minster Health have proposed merging practices for several reasons:

- York Medical Group at present runs a branch site based next to the Minster Health practice, merging will lead to more effective staff cover at Monkgate providing better support for clinicians and customer service for patients.
- The development of similarly sized clinical units on either side of the river Ouse provides a more balanced care provision allowing patients to more easily remain registered with the same practice despite moving residence within the York area.
- Enlarging the practice will improve stability of service provision as it will provide a bigger pool of both clinical and administrative staff to cover holiday and sickness leave.
- Greater cost efficient provision of support administrative services will release resources to enable further development of practice services.
- A similar rationalisation of clinical staff will improve the level of resourcing in direct work with patients in addressing their health problems.
- A larger practice will be more able to resource the provision of representation to the Clinical Commissioning Group and other bodies in order to adequately represent local views.

Summary

There are no changes to make to the existing fabric of the building at the affected merge site (Monkgate).

The two merging sites share a common building, and are only separated by a corridor, so in essence are neighbours.

Plans are proposed to make the operation of the merged site better for the patient experience, these being:

- Proposal of a call centre on site,
- Better patient access,
- Patient focussed opening hours
- Consistency of same GP
- Single reception desk
- Greater skill mix of clinical staff
- Greater patient choice for GP and Nurse availability
- Informatics screens
- Self-check in screens
- Uniformity of staff
- Holistic approach to patient care

Formal Request

York Medical Group and Minster Health would like to formally request the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to agree and endorse the merging of our two practices for the above reasons explained in the report and representatives will attend the April meeting to answer any questions and discuss any of the points included in the report.

Dr. Astrid Henckel, Mr. Barnaby Roe