

## **Merger Approval Announcement & what you need to know**

Dear Patient,

The partners are very pleased to announce that the merger of Churchwood Medical Practice, Hastings Old Town surgery and Warrior Square Surgery has been formally approved and we will become Hastings & Rother Healthcare from 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

We would like to thank all patients who took the time to respond to the engagement campaign earlier this year. We were very pleased to find that 86.18% of patients who responded said that they were happy with the proposal.

A full report on the survey which also contains some key questions that patients asked can be found in the news section on all three of our websites.

Please see below, for key information about the merger and how it may affect you:

### **Will there be any change to services during the merger?**

We are merging our computer systems starting on January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021, unfortunately this will lead to some disruption in our normal service. We hope to keep this to a minimum, but please bear with us during this period.

### **Hastings Old Town Surgery Patients**

You should see minimal disruption. There are no plans for the computer system to go down at this site, and your online access will continue.

### **Churchwood Medical Practice Patients**

The computer system is being merged between Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January and Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January. We will be operating a duty doctor service only for urgent medical requirements on the Friday afternoon and Monday.

We will not have access to your medical records during this time. We will only be able to offer a limited number of advance date pre-bookable appointments both pre and post computer system mergers. We expect to be able to offer a full range of services from Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> January.

Unfortunately, you will not be able to request prescriptions or book appointments online after Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January. Please note that prescription requests must be placed by Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January in order to avoid disruptions in your medication during this transition.

You will be required to re-register for online access as your unique patient number will change due to the computer system mergers.

### **Warrior Square Surgery Patients**

The computer system is being merged between Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February and Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February. We will be operating a duty doctor service only for urgent medical requirements on the Friday afternoon and Monday. We will not have access to your medical records during this time. We will only be able to offer a limited number of advance date pre-bookable appointments both pre and post computer system mergers. We expect to be able to offer a full range of services from Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February.

Unfortunately, you will not be able to request prescriptions or book appointments online after Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February. Please note that prescription requests must be placed by Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February in order to avoid disruptions in your medication during this transition.

You will be required to re-register for online access as your unique patient number will change due to the computer system mergers.

### **Partners & Patient General Meeting**

Following our successful virtual meeting during the proposal phase of the merger, we are inviting all patients to attend our second virtual meeting in order to deliver a post merge update and provide a platform for you to direct questions towards the partners and our senior operations team. We will send you a communication confirming the date/time of this meeting in the New Year.

### **FAQs**

#### **Will my practice still 'exist' and should I use the same methods to contact them?**

Yes, please contact the practice you are currently registered at. You can contact them in exactly the same way you currently do.

#### **Will I struggle to get through on the practice telephone once the practices have merged?**

The telephone systems will still remain site specific, however we are currently transitioning to a new system which will enable us to improve waiting times.

#### **How does your triage system work?**

Traditional general practice models require patients to call as soon as the telephone lines open in the morning, this results in patients having to call back the following day if they fail to make contact within the early stages of the morning.

In order to cease the “first-come-first served model” we introduced a ‘triage system in 2019. The triage model prioritises patients based on the severity of their condition. The flexibility of this system allows patients to contact us throughout the day and still receive the care they require within a suitable time frame, preventing the need to call as soon as the telephone lines open in the morning.

We are continually trying to find new ways to communicate and will be launching some videos very soon to show how some of our new processes work.

**As a result of the merger will I be required to travel to another practice?**

Patients will always be offered appointments at their registered practice, however if an earlier appointment is available at a different site, the patient will have a choice of which appointment they would like to accept. This allows us to expand our resources and provide more appointments, however, this will be a choice for the patient as opposed to a requirement.

**What changes will you be making?**

We will be making some internal changes to our systems, the way we work and process information. For example, some of our clinicians will be peripatetic, which will enable patients at other practices to access the expertise of our wider workforce. However, these changes should not cause any overt disruption to our patients and the services we offer.