

April 2019

Dear All

As you may know, Nidderdale Group Practice is having to make changes in response to the various national and local challenges:

Nationally

- Increasing demand (due to expectations, people living longer, more long term conditions, more complex work being managed in primary care),
- Falling resources, especially for rural practices.
- Difficulty recruiting GPs. Most GPs do not want to work full-time, and fewer want to become partners.
- Difficulty recruiting Nurse Practitioners and Nurses.

Locally

- The national strategies don't always help Nidderdale, (e.g. merging, upscaling, pooled "extended access" appointments)
- Recruitment increasingly challenging
- Cover is difficult across 3 sites, highlighted by recent sickness absences
- Communication difficult across 3 sites
- Efficiencies difficult across 3 sites; not ideal having team being "spread thinly"

For some years we have been advised that it is not sustainable to run three separate buildings for our size of practice population (10 400). Since our boundary reaches up to Scar and as far east as Nidd village, we cannot realistically manage without our Birstwith and Pateley buildings so have reluctantly had to consider how long we can continue to staff the Grange at Dacre.

We have done well to delay this so far, (e.g. by deducting hundreds of patients from our list who were living outside of Nidderdale, getting the 3 sites to work more efficiently as one practice), but we are reaching a point where the service to patients would be better if we were not spread so thinly. Indeed, we have heard from patients living in Dacre that they would sooner travel to Pateley or Birstwith than have a deteriorating service. We are therefore starting to make plans to stop seeing patients at The Grange from 2021.

This change will need careful planning with involvement of our Patient Reference Group, and will be undertaken in small steps to minimise any negative impacts. We realise the change has potential disadvantages for those who live in Dacre Banks, and especially for those who usually come to the Grange on foot. Over all, we feel the downsides are convincingly outweighed by the benefits, and we will make every effort to ameliorate the negatives. It is likely that more people might require home visits, and we are hoping to be able to offer delivery of repeat prescriptions in some cases. We envisage that the reconfiguration will allow us to improve services to all patients; something which could not be guaranteed if we had to sell the practice to an alternative provider. We expect to have longer opening hours and better access times.

Reconfiguring over two sites will facilitate continuity of care for patients, reduce problems with cover for staff leave, and improve communication with and within the practice. It will also make the practice more efficient and resilient, thereby reducing the chances of our having to merge with another practice or sell to a large scale provider.

We hope this explains why changes are needed. Please use the suggestion box: we will collate comments and questions and produce a response in a couple of months.

If you would like to join the Patient Reference Group, please email claire.ball3@nhs.net who will add your details to our list.

Finally, if you would like to join our highly valued Volunteer Group, (office work, driving etc), please contact any of our receptionists.

Many thanks

The Partners