

Primary Care Networks Explained

Your GP Surgery is now a member of Knaresborough and Rural Primary Care Network – this leaflet explains what that means, and what differences it might mean to your care in the future.

What is a Primary Care Network?

Since the NHS was first created, the population has grown, and people are living longer, with much more complex needs. The Government has drafted the NHS Long Term Plan, in an attempt to try and meet these needs, and one part of this plan is the development of Primary Care Networks (PCNs).

So what are Primary Care Networks? Essentially, they are a group of GP practices working together - alongside other health, social care and voluntary sector services - to deliver care to their local communities. This aim is to both ensure the sustainability of practices, and to provide a wider range of local services in the future, whilst keeping the core services you already know.

PCNs have been introduced as part of the new contract for General Practice in England, and as a result there are roughly 1300 PCNs across the country, covering populations of 30-50,000 people.

Which practices are in our PCN?

There are six practices in Knaresborough and Rural PCN – these are:

Beech House Surgery, Knaresborough,
Church Lane Surgery, Boroughbridge,
Eastgate Medical Group, Knaresborough,
Nidderdale Group Practice,
Springbank Surgery, Green Hammerton
Stockwell Rd Surgery, Knaresborough.

We have a single, agreed vision, namely: “We will work together both as practices, and with the wider health and social care system, to deliver safe, resilient, effective, equitable, high quality care. Through collaboration we will improve the health and wellbeing of all within our local population, whilst maintaining the continuity and identity that our communities value.”

Are there other PCNs locally?

Yes. Within the Harrogate and Rural District, there are four PCNs, comprised of seventeen GP practices in total. Each PCN is led by a Clinical Director, and they have been working together, as well as with other organisations, to represent the 160,000 patients that fall under their collective care. Working in this way allows PCNs to share experience, skills and

develop opportunities, with the aim of bringing new services locally, and improving the population's wellbeing.

What will Primary Care Networks actually do?

In addition to the aims outlined in our vision, there are seven specific national service specifications that we are expected to deliver by 2021, these will be:

- Structured Medication Reviews. (Ensuring all medication remains appropriate and safe).
- Enhanced Health in Care Homes. (Including regular reviews of care home residents.)
- Anticipatory Care. (Working proactively alongside community teams to offer greater support to those considered at high risk).
- Supporting Early Cancer Diagnosis (Promoting screening, and ensuring early referral and identification of cancer where possible.)
- Personalised Care (Shared decision making and encouraging self management.)
- Prevention and Diagnosis of Cardiovascular Disease (such as heart attacks and stroke).
- Locally agreed action to tackle inequalities.

In addition PCNs will be encouraged to provide new services to patients, by employing a wider range of roles within their practices, in addition to doctors. These include pharmacists (who can help with reviewing and managing medication) and social prescribers (who help identify non-medical solutions to problems) in the first year. Over the next few years there will be an opportunity to add physiotherapists, physicians associates and paramedics to this growing team – all with the aim of ensuring you see the right person at the right time.

Of course it's possible that your surgery already offers many of these options already – but by working with other practices we can protect and grow this provision in the future.

Finally, practices within the PCN will be working together to increase the availability of GP appointments at weekends and evenings. In order to do this it means that you may sometimes be offered an appointment at another practice within the network, but they will still be able to view all your medical records as if you were seeing them at your usual practice. Of course, all the member practices will continue to offer appointments at the usual times throughout the week, if this is easier for you.