

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We are delighted that **Plumstead Health Centre PMS & Trinity Medical Centre** are planning to merge with effect from 1st April 2022.

This list of frequently asked questions is designed to provide you with all the information you need as a patient.

1. Why are Plumstead Health Centre PMS & Trinity Medical Centre proposing to merge?

There have been many changes in recent times in the provision of Primary Care Services.

The introduction of Primary Care Networks have brought local practices together to work in a more collaborative way to provide a more consistent service for the local registered patients, and to have a more collective voice in the shaping of services.

In recognition of this there has in recent times been more alignment between the two practices, the Partners are the same and they share the premises at Garland Road.

This alignment has allowed both practices to become members of the same Primary Care Network; both Plumstead **Health Centre PMS & Trinity Medical Centre** are now members of Unity Primary Care Network.

The practices have linked and supported each other very closely over the years and have in recent times have been in discussion about merging practices to provide an improved service to both practices' patients in terms of patient access, with more sites, more clinicians available and more effective back office functions being able to take advantage of larger scale. The merger will further cement this and also address the current issue of access to notes by merging clinical systems, which will enable patients to have access to more clinical and admin staff

Merger will enable patients of Trinity Medical Centre sustainability and continuity to its patients, and also allows patients improved access to across the new practice. Patients of Plumstead Health Centre will also benefit from these improved efficiencies and access as well as giving it resilience and sustainability. The merger will also enable the merged practice to be at the forefront of the developments within the PCN.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has led to the need for General Practice to adapt in the way services are provided, and the introduction of video consultations and more remote style of working, whilst still providing essential face to face consultations when clinically needed.

Both practices are responding to the situation and have also introduced online consultation methods and adapted processes in order to respond to the needs of our patients, in order to ensure those in need are supported whilst maintaining the safety of staff and patients.





The practices are also aware of the very real risk of clinical and admin staff potentially being temporary or permanently unavailable due to the situation and therefore destabilizing services, and therefore would like to progress the merger of the practices in order to provide the resilience to ensure the continuity and stability of services to our patients.

The Merger will essentially allow an integration of both clinical and administrative systems and therefore increasing access to clinicians and reducing duplication and inefficiencies.

Services for PHC will continue to be provided from both the Tewson and Garland road sites, and after the merger patients from Trinity will be able to access all services from Tewson Road in addition to Garland Road.

The merger would allow the patients of Trinity continuity of care with the clinicians they know in the premises they know staffed by the people they know. It allows long term sustainability and avoids the potential of dispersing the list to neighbouring practices.

A dispersment of Trinity's list would increase workload to Plumstead Health Centre as the practice most likely to be impacted. The merger therefore avoids this and allows the practices to build on the integration they have already achieved.

2. Is the merger supported by Primary Care Contract team at South East London CCG and the borough based board at NHS Greenwich?

We have discussed our plans with Primary Care Contract team at South East London CCG and the borough based board at NHS Greenwich both of whom are supporting the proposed plans for our practices to merge. We have also engaged with the Patient Participation groups from both practices, who in principle are supportive and we have consulted with Healthwatch Greenwich.

3. When would the merger be completed?

Following meetings with all stakeholders the plan is that the Practices will merge with effect from 1st April 2022, should it be approved in December's Primary Care Commissioning meeting, this will then enable time for the practices to implement its mobilisation plan

4. Would I still be able to see my usual GP or Nurse?

Yes, once the proposed merger is complete, patients will still be able to book an appointment with their preferred clinician at the location of their choice. They will also have the option of new clinicians with full access to your medical records.

5. Will I still be able to collect my medication from my usual pharmacy?



There will be no change to where you collect your prescriptions or medication from. We will continue to request and suggest patients use the Electronic Prescribing service so prescriptions can be sent direct to the pharmacy of your choice.

6. How will the proposed merger benefit patients?

By merging the practices patients will benefit as it will allow us to introduce new systems, which need to be done at scale; it will also enable us to harmonise back office functions and will not only bring sustainability and resilience to the practices. The new systems, more sites will also improve access whilst maintaining continuity of care in the locations YOU know with the people YOU know.

7. What will change?

The staff at both practices both Clinical and admin will remain the same; however there will be some crossover to ensure consistency and continuity across the practices, so you will still be able to see and speak with people you know.

The phone number of Trinity Medical Centre will change so that the merged practices have the same cloud based system enabling patients to have the benefit of more phone access across all sites. This will be done in a timely way to allow the transition, however for a period of time patients would still be able to use the current number. Patients will be notified of this change in due course to allow them to update their details.

8. Would I have to go to another site for my consultations?

The benefit of the proposed merger is that patients will still be able to access care at their preferred premises whilst also enabling TMC patients to attend the Tewson Road site.

9. Would there be improved access to appointments?

We will continue to review the availability of appointments regularly to ensure patients have access to the care they need. We will also introduce an increase in telephone video and on line consultations

10. Would the proposed merger affect access to other services such as community nurses, midwives or health visitors?

No, patients receiving care from community based services either at home or in practice will not be affected.

11. What would happen to my medical record?

Both practices currently use the same clinical system and both practices have plans to scan all their patient's medical records.



Up until the notes are scanned notes will still be kept in either the Tewson Road or Garland Road sites, so clinicians will be able to access them if needed.

12. How are you planning to keep patients informed of the progress of the merger?

Both practices are working very closely with the respective Patient Participation Groups on communications, and are working with Healthwatch too.

Updates will be available in the form of postings on the websites, posters in the waiting room, and patient participation group meetings.

13. Would I have to stay with the merged practice?

No, if you do not wish to remain with the proposed merged practice you are free at any time to register with another GP practice, provided you live within their practice boundary. The NHS website provides information on other local practices www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp

14. Phone lines are already busy, won't this get worse?

The introduction of the cloud based telephony system across all sites will enable us to utilise staff more efficiently and so increase the number of reception staff available at busy times.

15. What will be the name of the merged Practice?

PLUMSTEAD HEALTH CENTRE

