

Primary Care Networks

What are Primary Care Networks?

Primary Care Networks are a new way for several general practices to work together. They are intended to help practices to offer more co-ordinated services and to provide better ways for patients to access a wider range of health care professionals.

The regulations around Primary Care Networks have been incorporated into the contract that each GP practice has with the NHS.

Each Primary Care Network will cover between 30-50,000 patients. Practices are of different sizes, so the number of practices making up a Network will vary. Our Primary Care Network is called Synergy Health and the practices within our network are Park House Medical Centre, The Jubilee Practice, Trentside Medical Group and West Oak Surgery. The size of our Network is around 30,000.

Why have they been set-up?

In January 2019 NHS England published a 10-year plan for the NHS. It is designed to tackle 3 key issues. These are:

- 1) Limits to the amount of funding
- 2) Shortages of clinical staff, especially GPs
- 3) Growing pressures from an increasing and ageing population.

Practices will work together and will work with other health service providers, including primary care, community services, social care and the voluntary sector to make patient care more co-ordinated and easier to access, whilst making the GP workload sustainable.

More information can be found on the NHS England website –www.longtermplan.nhs.uk

What will the Primary Care Networks do?

2019/2020 year has been seen as the 'setting up' year for the Primary Care Networks so that they can create their structure, appoint a Clinical Director and look at what their vision, values and priorities are.

Each Network will be given funding to recruit additional types of health professionals. In 2019/2020 funding has been allocated to start recruitment of a Clinical Pharmacist and Social Prescribing Link Worker. In 2020/2021 this will include Physiotherapists and Physician Associates and in 2021/2022 this will include Community Paramedics. Some practices already have these professionals working in their surgery, but these services will now be available to all practices within the network.

The NHS Long Term Plan also outlines some specific areas which networks will be asked to focus on. In 2020 they will be asked to work as a network on providing improved services to care homes, better early cancer diagnosis, and more co-ordinated care with other community services. From 2021 they will focus on tackling the health inequalities in their locality and prevention of cardiovascular (heart) disease.

How can patients have a say in any planned changes?

Once the Networks are fully set up and running they will regularly involve patients. We will let you know when and how you can get involved. For the time being you should be able to get more information through your Practice Manager.

Where any new services or changes are implemented you will be kept informed via Patient Participation Groups, notice boards, practice websites, Facebook pages etc.

How will these changes affect you?

You may not notice much change until 2020 and it will not affect any of the current services, appointment systems or procedures within the practice you are registered at. However, as practices get used to working together some services and practice staff may be shared and you may find that there may be changes to the types of services that are available to you and where they happen.