THE ESTON
AND
SOUTH GRANGE MEDICAL
CENTRE

Proposed Merger

Public Involvement Report

26th February 2010


Dr Nigel Robson  
10-12 Jubilee Road, Eston Middlesbrough. 75-77 Bolckow Road Grangetown, Middlesbrough  
And  
Dr Dilip Acquilla  
SGMC, Trunk Road Eston, Middlesbrough  

Introduction & Background  

The area covered by both of the practices is one of the most highly deprived socio-economic areas of Middlesbrough/Redcar with a high incidence of heart disease, diabetes, child protection issues and cancer.

The practices’ populations have been stable for the past two years and there are no new developments in the area to suggest that the list sizes of either practice will increase dramatically.

Normanby Health Centre and Albert House Clinic have committed to moving to Low Grange Medical Village which is scheduled to start functioning from April 2010.

The space in Low Grange Medical Village which was designated for commissioning medical services for the community will be effective and serve the patients from The Eston / SGMC as per the original plans.

The premises utilised by The Eston Surgery are old-fashioned and in need of modernisation. The premises utilised by SGMC was purpose built in 1994 and has the capacity to hold 10,000 patients.

Dr Robson’s partner, Rachel McMahon has left the practice and Dr Robson aims to guarantee the continued quality of care for patients and ensure the security of staff.

Both Surgeries are committed to this amalgamation; clinical and administrative staff have been consulted and feel it would be in the best interests all stakeholders to amalgamate.
Proposal

Our proposal is to merge both surgeries together and operate from SGMC site, a purpose-built and modern practice building.

The benefits for the patients of the proposed merge would be:

- Improving GP access for patients by offering both extended evening appointments and Saturday morning appointments.

- We would also be offering extended nurse access for patients who find it difficult to attend during the day to improve;
  - Cervical screening figures
  - Childhood immunisation take up
  - Chronic disease management
  - CVD risk assessment
  - Counselling and physiotherapy

- Benefits for the Eston Practice
  - Coil fitting/removal and checking
  - Implanon fitting and removal
  - Minor surgery
  - DVT pathway
  - Sports medicine and joint problems
  - A better working environment
  - Improved security for staff and premises
  - Sufficient consulting rooms for all clinicians

- The surgery would offer “Choose and Book” to patients whose referral fits the criteria, giving patients greater choice.

- To become completely paper light and work towards electronic prescribing, allowing prescriptions to be sent electronically to a designated pharmacy (thus removing the need for patients to drop off and collect their prescription)

- Patients will be able to access the patient transport system (a Practice ran courtesy bus which can pick up and drop off around appointment times)
Involvement

As part of the process of developing new premises we wanted to give all patients the opportunity to comment on the proposed merger.

Letters outlining the proposal were sent to each household rather than each patient for practical reasons, a newsletter containing further information was also posted out with the letters. Information, including our newsletters, were on display in all three current sites. Three drop in sessions were planned at the surgeries on the 8th and 9th and 10th February and a supervised site tour was arranged on the 18th February 2010. Views could also be submitted in writing to the surgery or posted in the suggestion box in the waiting areas of all three sites. The opportunity to comment on the proposals was from Tuesday 5th January to Thursday 25th February 2010

We asked for patient views on:

- What you think of the proposed merger and plans to deliver services for all patients from SGMC?
- Do you have suggestions for the enlarged practice?
- Do you have any questions or concerns?

Engagement also involved the following stakeholders and groups

- Cleveland Local Dental / Medical / Pharmaceutical / Optometric Committees
- Dr Ashok Kumar MP
- Neighbourhood Consultative Forums
- Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council Adult and Children’s Services
- Redcar and Cleveland Local Strategic Partnership
- Redcar and Cleveland Volunteer Development Agency
- Vera Baird MP
- Ward Councillors – Redcar and Cleveland
- Local Involvement Network
- Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Stakeholders
Summary of Responses

No responses were received from the Local Involvement Network, the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, local Councillors or other stakeholders.

Drop in Sessions

At the first of the 3 drop in sessions, at SGMC 3 patients attended and chatted with the Practice Managers from SGMC and Eston. Opinions were very positive, however the patients hoped that by having additional patients on one site still meant that they could see their own doctor and felt parking may be an issue.

At the second of the 3 drop in sessions at the Eston site, 3 patients attended and chatted with the Practice Managers from Eston and SGMC and Dr Robson from Eston. Opinions again were very positive, and the patients hoped that they would not lose the current friendly atmosphere at the surgery and would still be able to see Dr Robson.

At the third drop in session at Grangetown site only one patient attended and chatted with the Practice Managers from Eston and SGMC and Dr Robson from Eston and once again views were positive.

All Eston patients present at the drop in sessions appreciated that the Eston/Grangetown surgery premises needed new premises were long overdue and looked forward to the change.

Site tour and supervised visit to SGMC

Nine patients from Eston / Grangetown surgeries attended the supervised tour, some of which had taken public transport which they reported they had found very easy. They were greeted by Eston’s Practice Manager, Office Manager and two members of the reception team. Also present were SGMC’s Practice Manager, additional reception staff and Dr Goh. All visitors were impressed by the building and liked the lay out, especially the fact that the building was a purpose built medical centre. The feedback was very positive from all the visitors, with the exception of comments about the parking facilities. Although the site tour was originally to be held from 2pm – 5.30pm, we were asked to extend this time which we did until 6.30pm to accommodate working patients. Unfortunately no-one attended after 4.45pm.
Telephone Calls

3 telephone calls were received in response to the letter sent to patients:

There was no negative feedback given on the proposal itself.

Letters/emails

There were three letters received, two felt that it would be a mistake to move from Eston and Grangetown to SGMC (as it would be too far to go to SGMC) and felt transport to SGMC may be an issue. One letter wished us luck, thought the proposal was a good idea with good points that the patients will benefit from and long overdue.

Suggestion box comments from all three sites (Only comments /suggestions relevant to the questions asked have been included in this section)

Q - What do you think of the proposed merger and plans to deliver services for all patients from SGMC?

- I think it will be sad not to have a doctor on Bolckow Road
- Not Bothered
- Sounds a good idea
- I think it will make it an impersonal service
- Not happy with the change
- Seems a very good idea
- I don’t personally agree, Dr Robson’s practice has a very good personal service, easily accessible, excellent opening hours, plus very friendly.
- I have been against the merger since first informed about it.
- I think SGMC is very efficient and gives quality, this may be affected to detriment of patients
- Could be good
- I hope it improves services overall
- It would be unworkable in the present stage
- I think the practice will suffer with 3000 patients coming and only 1 doctor
Q - Do you have suggestions for the enlarged practice?

- Longer surgery times
- A larger car park, so we don’t have to compromise the safety of ourselves and our children
- Electronic check in
- Clearer appointment times (i.e. when open? list of Drs on duty)
- Better parking
- Make it easier for people on irregular working patterns to see a doctor of their choice
- Making it easier to get an appointment at a suitable time convenient to themselves
- Making it easier to get through on a morning, without re-dialling all the time.
- Increase the surgery hours (i.e. 2 late nights and Saturday mornings)
- Increase 28 days of prescriptions to 56 days so I don’t have to come down as much which puts stress on a lot of people as the surgery is in a bad spot especially for elderly people.

Q. - Do you have any questions or concerns?

- How will I get there, as there is no public transport near me
- How do I know that the doctor treating me will know my medical history?
- Will we keep the same friendly staff?
- Will we keep the same doctor?
- Will the doctor still come out for the elderly?
- How do I know I will get to see the doctor I want, at the time I want, and not have to wait because of high demand?
- Concerns that the new clinic will be more clinical rather than personal and friendly
- Any changes always seem to go from good to worse, I always want to see my own doctor
- We have lived outside the practice area (before your policy changed to remove people moving out of the area) Do we now have to change doctors?
- Parking would be impossible, as it is now, especially with thousands more patients
- Public transport – buses?
- Bus service? When, where?
- What are we going to do about the car parking?
- Why is there a need to merge?
- Will it improve access to doctors?
- Will we get to see our own doctor or will that slot be taken by someone from the other surgery?

**Taking Involvement Forward**

All responses received as part of the involvement activity outlined above will be considered as part of the proposal.

In particular, the two main points raised which will be prioritised are:

- **Transport** – which covers areas like:
  - car parking
  - bus routes
  - safety outside the surgery
  - courtesy bus

- **Access** – which covers areas like:
  - phoning your surgery
  - availability of the GP
  - the choice of a particular GP
  - amount of clinicians for all of the patients
  - at a convenient time

The practices have found the contribution of the patients’ comments very valuable and will continue to seek their views throughout the process.

Information regarding the merger will continue to be displayed in the waiting areas of each site including the frequently asked questions raised by patients.