

**Thursday 18 June 2020**

## **Newly merged GP practices in Swindon vow to continue putting patients first**

Leading doctors at five Swindon GP practices have marked the completion of an historic merger by vowing to always keep patients at the heart of everything they do.

The new Wyvern Health Partnership, which comprises Hawthorn Medical Centre, Lawn Medical Centre, Old Town Surgery, Priory Road Medical Centre and Merchiston Surgery, will see the surgeries come together as a traditional partner-owned practice to explore new ways of working, and deliver a wider and more accessible range of services to patients.

Following the merger on Monday 1 June, GPs at the practices – which have already been working together on an informal basis for some time – sought to reassure patients that the move would not lead to unnecessary change.

Dr Sue Adams, Clinical Director and Managing Partner at Merchiston Surgery, said: “This is not about streamlining, cutting costs or working with third-party companies that have no knowledge of our area or our people.

“This merger is about bringing together the knowledge, expertise and proven leadership from five practices, and using that wealth of resource to benefit 50,000 local people.

“Importantly, none of the clinicians want to lose the close links they have with their patients, so people will still be seen by familiar faces, but the merger now allows us to look at offering more than we could before, such as specialist, jointly-run clinics.”

The formation of the Wyvern Health Partnership has been several years in the making, and while nobody could have expected the merger to have been completed amidst a national lockdown, the teams have used the coronavirus pandemic as an opportunity to implement innovative ways of working.

Mark Hopkins, Chief Operating Officer, said: “Working together as a team of five practices really enabled us to adapt in a short space of time.

“New initiatives to support our response, such as home visits, drive-thru appointments and separate clinics for Covid and non-Covid patients, were only made possible because we had multiple sites at our disposal and a team of highly skilled staff who were willing and able to step up to the challenge.

“We know that coronavirus will be around for some time, but we’re now thinking about how we can maintain the momentum, drive and determination of the last 12 weeks to improve other areas of healthcare.”

One such initiative being looked at is a joint flu clinic, which could see patients from

the five practices receive their vaccine at a venue large enough for the current social distancing rules to be maintained.

Away from coronavirus, the new partnership has ambitions to move to a more proactive model of care, with a greater focus on preventing illness, rather than just treating a person after becoming unwell.

Working with Swindon Borough Council, Wyvern Health Partnership now has a social prescriber on its books, who is able to support patients in the community to improve their health and wellbeing in many ways, such as supporting them to overcome isolation and helping them to lose weight.

For more information on Wyvern Health Partnership, visit [www.wyvernhealthpartnership.nhs.uk](http://www.wyvernhealthpartnership.nhs.uk).