## Frequently asked questions

Access

**Q. Will there still be the same number of appointments available at my usual practice?**

**A.**We aim to keep the same number of appointments as previously. Merging the practices will enable us to look at increasing provision. It will give us the opportunity to look at how efficiencies are created. We would hope that this will offer our patients a better choice of appointments.

**Q. Will I still be able to get an appointment at my usual practice?**

**A.** Patients will see no change. Appointments will be available at their chosen site as usual. You could be offered an appointment at another site if this is easier for you. This may be helpful in an acute urgent problem. We will always encourage continuity with the same clinician if it were an ongoing problem.

**Q. Will I still contact my practice on the usual telephone number to make an appointment?**

**A.** The existing practice telephone numbers will remain the same. You will contact your practice as you have always done.

**Q. Will I need to re-register with the practice?**

**A.** No. Patients do not need to do anything. They will remain registered with their practice.

Continuity of Care

**Q. Can I still speak to my regular GP or team member such as a practice nurse, paramedic, or physician's associate?**

**A.** Patients will still speak to their usual clinicians. They will see no change in practice. Our values are that patients should have clinical continuity with an ongoing problem as much as possible. Seeing the same clinician is a priority.

**Q.** **What benefit will I see?**

**A.** Being a bigger practice will help us be more resilient to changes in staffing and demands on primary care services.

Staff

**Q. Will the reception and clinical staff be affected by the proposed merger?**

**A.** All staff will remain the same. They will continue to provide business as usual at their current site. Being a part of a larger practice will increase resilience across all sites.

Opening Hours

**Q. Will the practice opening hours remain the same?**

**A.** Practice opening hours will continue as normal unless the central government or NHS dictate otherwise. The only practice that will see a change to its opening hours is Nelson Medical Group. This merger will see Nelson Medical Group open at 8.00am. This is 30 minutes earlier than their current opening time of 8.30am.

Practice Services

**Q.****Will I see any change to the services currently provided at the practice?**

**A.** We do not plan to change the services provided at each practice. As the practices provide different services on different dates, patients will be able to choose from a wider range of appointments. This will create greater flexibility.

Community Services

**Q. Will the proposed merger affect the care of patients who are housebound?**

**A.** Community nurses and other healthcare practitioners will continue to work closely with both practices as normal and be provided by the same teams.

**Q. Will there be any change to the service we receive from community midwives or health visitors?**

**A.**Midwives and health visitors will continue to work with both practices. They will continue to provide care to our expectant mothers and young children.

Prescriptions

**Q. Will I still be able to use my usual pharmacy for my prescriptions?**

**A.** Prescriptions will continue to be managed in the same way. You will still be able to use your preferred pharmacy or dispensary service. We continue to encourage all patients to use online services to help with requesting repeat prescriptions. If you would like to change your nominated pharmacy, you can do so by speaking to your practice directly.

Online Services

**Q.** **What will the new name be of the newly merged practice?**

**A.** Practices will retain their current names at present.

**Q.** **Will you have a new combined website for information?**

**A.** Patients will see no changes to their practice website.

**Q.** **Will I need to re-register with Anima and/or the NHS app?**

**A.** No. You will remain registered with Anima and the NHS app.

Other

**Q. How can I give feedback?**

**A.** You can give feedback through several channels:

* Complete our [online survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NTMFJ3Y).
* Complete a hard copy survey which can be found in each of our practices.
* Write to your practice. This can be sent through the post or delivered to our reception team. You can also call your practice to give feedback.
* If you would like to give feedback to someone independent, please contact **Healthwatch North Tyneside**.
* **Call:** 0191 2635321. Healthwatch also offers a callback service. Send them a text and they will arrange to call you back at a time that suits you.
* **Email:**info@hwnt.co.uk
* **Write to:**
	+ Healthwatch North Tyneside
	Spirit of North Tyneside Community Hub
	2nd Floor Wallsend Customer First Centre
	16 The Forum
	Wallsend, NE28 8JR
* You can also speak to PALS:
* **Call:** 0800 032 0202
* **Email:**pals@nhct.nhs.uk
* **Write to:**
	+ FREEPOST PALS

**Q. Do the practices currently have a relationship with each other?**

**A**. Yes. All four practices are members of Northumbria Primary Care (NPC). NPC is a not-for-profit, at-scale provider of primary care services in Northumberland and North Tyneside. You can read more about NPC by clicking [here](https://www.northumbriaprimarycare.co.uk).