

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **How do Ilchester Surgery and Buttercross Health Centre work at the moment?**

In 2016, Ilchester Surgery and Buttercross Health Centre were one of the first three surgeries to join a new NHS healthcare organisation called Symphony Healthcare Services (SHS). Both practices had struggled to recruit new doctors after the existing partners had either left the practice or retired. This meant that more temporary doctors (locums) had been used to meet patient needs increasing the running costs at the practices.

### **Who is managing the service now?**

SHS is a larger NHS healthcare organisation that is creating a network of GP practices, so that they can work together more closely and support each other. SHS is a subsidiary of Yeovil Hospital and is a 'not-for-profit' organisation. SHS was created because we understand the importance of maintaining Primary Care services and health clinics (doctors and healthcare services) to ensure the whole healthcare system runs smoothly. Without these, hospitals would not be able to function.

GP surgeries choose to join SHS so that they can be supported through a larger clinical team (doctors, specialists and health practitioners) and benefit from the support of a central team in areas like HR and recruitment, finance and the day-to-day running of a practice. This helps to reduce duplication and save money by combining services and thus reinvesting in practice teams.

There are now nine GP practices which have joined SHS and we are developing new ways of working more closely together across practices. This may mean sharing teams and resources where practices are close to each other - but also provides support if a nurse or a doctor are unable to attend their clinics.

### **Why can't the service stay as it is?**

With a national shortage of doctors and other healthcare professionals and the increasing running costs of individual practices, it is becoming much harder to keep smaller practices like Ilchester Surgery running. When Ilchester Surgery joined SHS, it was costing more money than it received from the NHS and has since been supported by SHS. We are very committed to maintaining both surgeries in order to offer a wide range of healthcare services. However, to achieve this, we need to introduce a different, more efficient way of running these services. This means merging the practice lists and adjusting the opening hours at Ilchester.

### **Will Ilchester Surgery be completely closed in the future?**

We understand the importance of local healthcare services and we are committed to continuing to run a local service, but we must find new, more efficient ways of caring for our patients. We are working hard to keep a range of services running from Ilchester, subject to the funding available.

We do not want to close the surgery, but if we cannot make the current changes work we may have to consider this as one option in the future.

### **What will happen when the practices merge?**

Ilchester Surgery will become a branch surgery of Buttercross Health Centre. This means that the patient list will be merged and held by Buttercross. When this happens, you don't need to take any action and we will let you know who will be your new registered GP.

### **If I need an urgent appointment who can I see?**

Our Nurse Practitioner teams will be able to support you with a wide range of urgent healthcare needs. By calling the new appointment and triage line (**01458 272473**) our reception team will be able to advise you on the most suitable person to see.

If you have a severe or complex healthcare need, our reception team will book you a doctor's appointment at Buttercross Health Centre.

Home visits will still be carried out by a doctor or an ECP (highly trained Paramedics) if you are severely ill and unable to come to the surgery. These will be reviewed depending on your clinical needs.

### **Why are all the GPs going to be based at Buttercross Health Centre?**

By basing our doctors in one place we can ensure that we can always provide GP services and cover if a doctor is unable to attend a clinic. We now have four doctors who will provide services for all patients from both Ilchester and Buttercross surgeries. New specialist roles provide additional and specialist help and treatment for patients alongside our doctors.

### **What about my repeat prescriptions?**

You will be able to order your repeat prescriptions in exactly the same way. By ordering online at: [www.buttercrosshc.nhs.uk](http://www.buttercrosshc.nhs.uk) or by completing your repeat prescription request form and dropping into your local practice. You can choose where you would like to pick up your prescription, either by nominating your preferred pharmacy, or collecting from the surgery.

### **I don't have access to a car and am disabled/elderly – how do I get to Buttercross or Ilchester for my appointment?**

There are a number of transport options that will help you to get to the surgery: The **Number 54** or **Number 77** bus travel frequently between Ilchester and Somerton each day.

**South Somerset Community Transport** offer a wide range of travel support options for people who are unable to access public transport, or have mobility problems and would find it difficult to take the bus. For more information we have created a travel pack to help you.

### **How will I get the care I need when Ilchester Surgery is closed?**

**Ilchester Surgery will be closed on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Friday afternoons.** If you need to arrange an appointment, or need medical advice when the surgery is closed, you should call the main appointment and triage line (**01458 272473**) which is open: **Monday to Friday, between 8am and 6.30pm** to support **all patients** from both locations.

We are also launching a **new Triage service** which means you can call **01458 272473** and request to speak to one of our Nurse Practitioners for medical advice on the same day.

In addition if you have a problem or concern with any prescription or medication, you will be able to speak to one of our Pharmacy team by calling **01458 270639**, between **10am and 3pm - Monday to Friday**.

### **How will appointments be shared fairly between Ilchester and Buttercross?**

When the practices merge, all patients will join one practice list. Appointments with any of our healthcare practitioners will be booked to ensure that you see the right person to treat your medical need. Urgent appointments will be given to the patients with the most urgent or complex healthcare needs.

Our reception teams are trained to book you in with the most appropriate clinician - please be reassured that all patient conversations are treated with the utmost confidentiality.

### **How do I find out more?**

We will be running a number of information sessions, where you can book an individual time to talk to the practice team about any questions, ideas or concerns that you may have. Please ask at reception or visit the website to book a slot: [www.buttercrosshc.nhs.uk](http://www.buttercrosshc.nhs.uk)