

Thank you for coming today. Just to let you know, we will be recording this session, so that we can properly capture your questions whilst at the same time giving you our undivided attention.

So, what we would like to do is quickly run through the rationale behind why the merger with Hanway is being proposed; what, based on patient feedback, we consider to be the main concerns that our patients have and what we plan to do to address these concerns. I'll talk for about 5 or so minutes, after which you will have around 15 minutes to ask any further questions which have not already been covered in my talk. We will be sticking quite rigidly to this timescale due to the amount of interest we are expecting this afternoon. If, at the end of this session, you still have any questions, I would ask you please to write them down and pop them in the box by the entrance to the surgery and we will then update our FAQs after this event.

So, why is a merger with Hanway being proposed?

In simple terms, it is because Hanway Rd Surgery is unable to continue in its current form. One of their 5 Partners is retiring in May, one is leaving to join another practice also in May and one is planning to retire in October. Despite their best efforts, they have been unable to recruit any replacement partners and it is impossible to run the Surgery with just one full time and one part-time partner. As a result, they approached us about 6 months ago, asking if we would be prepared to help them out, to which we said we would.

In all honesty, we would rather this situation had not arisen at all. We would rather Hanway had been able to recruit new Partners and was therefore able to continue to operate as a standalone surgery. However, given that they haven't been able to do this, we would rather work with them to help them find a solution to their problem, rather than be faced with the potential alternative, which would be for them to have to close their practice which would result in thousands of patients coming over to us anyway, but without any additional staff. There is an increasing number of examples nationally where this is happening, and the knock-on effects on neighbouring practices can be devastating.

It is not a decision that we have taken lightly. We are fully aware that getting an appointment at Kingston is already difficult. However, if the merger is approved, for the first 6 months nothing much would change. Hanway Road surgery would remain open and Hanway patients would continue to be seen there by the remaining Hanway Doctors in the usual way.

Around 3 months ago, when we knew that the Hanway merge was a possibility, we took the decision to start significantly increasing our team of GPs, Nurse Practitioners, Paramedic Practitioners and Clinical Pharmacists in readiness for the additional patients. This recruitment drive has proven successful and the size of our clinical team is already increasing with an additional 6 clinical members of staff having joined in the last 3 months. We are already beginning to see the impact of this. This morning, for example, only three quarters of our available appointments were booked.

The recruitment process is continuing in anticipation of the merger being approved by the CCG and will continue until we have a team that is big enough to meet the demand.

We are also aware that getting through on the phone can be frustratingly difficult at particular times of day and, again, we share this frustration with you. To address this, we are installing a new phone system and have created a centralised contact centre which now allows us to clearly identify when telephone demand is greatest, which means that we are therefore able to take on additional members of staff and have them working at the right times of day to match demand. Since nothing would really change in the first 6 months following the merge (as Hanway patients would continue

to go to Hanway Road), this would give us ample time to get the new system properly set up and running. The new system is designed to be able to cope with the additional number of patients that we would be getting from Hanway, should the merger be approved.

You may also be wondering why we would plan to close Hanway's existing surgery buildings and how Kingston Crescent surgery would cope with the additional patients.

The reason for closing the Hanway Road surgeries is that it would simply not be viable to continue to look after all the patients in three sites because the clinical staff we do have available would be spread even more thinly than they currently are. By concentrating our efforts on one site, we would be able to deliver a better and safer level of care for our patients whilst also saving the NHS a considerable amount of money.

In terms of this building, it was originally designed to look after 20,000 patients. We currently look after 12,000 and have plans to increase the capacity further. This would be done by reconfiguring the ground floor of the building to create an extra 3 consulting rooms and also by changing from the traditional model of doing 2 surgery sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, to a new model of doing 3 surgery sessions, one in the morning, one over the lunchtime period and one in the afternoon. This would significantly increase our capacity further and allow us to make the best use of the building possible. It would also allow us to offer lunchtime appointments, which should be more convenient for some of our patients. If the merge is approved, then we plan to start work on the ground floor as soon as possible, whilst planning to keep the disruption to an absolute minimum. We anticipate that the building works required should take no more than 12 weeks and we would be doing as much as possible outside of our normal working hours.

We would always have the option to extend the building in the future if this proves necessary.