

RDMG Practice Merger FAQs

- **Can I still make an appointment to see my usual doctor or nurse?**

Yes, you can specifically ask to see any clinician. However, given the high level of patient demand particularly for GP appointments, we do sometimes have to re-direct your problem to a different clinician who is equally capable of dealing with your issue.

We would also need to point out that specifically requesting one individual clinician will result in a delay as that clinician might be on holiday or only work part time for the surgery.

- **Can I now make an appointment to see a doctor and/or nurse at either practice site?**

Yes. All GPs are working across both sites. All clinicians have access to your medical records at either surgery.

- **Do I have to go to another site for consultations and/or treatments?**

You will always be offered the earliest appropriate appointment irrespective of site, however, if this is not convenient or you wish to your appointment for a specific site or clinician it may extend your waiting time.

The only appointment type linked to a specific site is First Contact Physio. All other appointments for example asthma and diabetes clinics will run in both surgeries.

- **Can the merged practice provide any new services to patients?**

Yes, patients originally registered at Braeside will now have access to appointments with Advanced Nurse Practitioners and Paramedics, the Healthshare Musculoskeletal service, and the ultrasound service that use rooms at Devon Road. Devon Road patients can now see First Contact Physios at Braeside Surgery.

- **Has any service previously offered by my usual surgery been removed or stopped?**

No! We are pleased to advise there has been no changes.

- **Have the pre-merger surgery opening times stayed the same?**

Yes!

- **Have the usual telephone numbers stayed the same?**

Yes, Devon Road 01322 862121, Braeside 01322 862110. Calling either number gives access to the same appointment book. There is no advantage to calling either number. However, the telephone system is now unified, so you may find that you end up speaking to a staff member at the alternate site.

- **Have there been any changes to the way I book appointments?**

No, both surgeries use eConsult online, found on our website at <https://riverdarentmedicalgroup.co.uk/> and eConsult lite over the phone

We should advise that whichever route you choose, they all end up at the same end point- being triaged by the duty doctor to ensure the right clinician sees you, at the right place in the right timescale.

- **Are we using eConsult because of the merger?**

No. Each year all surgeries must sign a contract with the NHS agreeing to provide primary care services to the public. Every year the contract introduces new initiatives that we are contractually obliged to carry out. From 1st April 2023 part of that contract is that we must provide eConsultations. For this reason, the Kent Integrated Care Board commissioned the eConsult system; unfortunately we are unable to tweak it's design.

Devon Road Surgery have been using eConsult since June 2023 and have had lots of positive feedback from many patients, who relish the fact they no longer need to wait outside the door or queue on the phones. Finding that rather than delaying patients from seeing a doctor, those patients with the greatest need can be seen on the day, instead of missing out to a patient with a trivial problem who happened to be ahead of them on the phone lines at 8.00am.

For queries concerning the eConsult system please use the following link to the eConsult FAQs

[What is eConsult? | eConsult FAQs | eConsult](#)

If you wish to contact eConsult directly use [Contact Us | eConsult](#)

- **I have heard Medication Reviews are changing**

Yes, we have made some changes that will be new to Braeside and familiar to Devon Road patients.

Every prescription request is managed through our onsite dispensary irrespective of where you collect it from.

If your medication is due a review the dispensers will inform our pre-screening team, this will happen regardless of where you collect your medication- our dispensaries or your local pharmacy. The Pre-screeners will gather the information according to the Doctors instructions.

They will use a set of specially designed text messages tailored to your medication needs and arrange any necessary physical tests. Once the data is collected, it will be presented to the Doctor who will then decide if it is safe and appropriate for you to continue your medication. The Doctor will schedule an appointment with you if further clarification or changes are needed, or if any issues are identified during testing.

You may have noticed an appointment in your app, “admin task routine”. This is the slot used by the pre-screeners, letting the GP know you have had all your tests and the medication is ready for review, this is purely for admin purposes you are not required to attend the surgery.

This new system ensures that all patients taking repeat medication are well-monitored and safe, even if they are also under the care of a consultant or hospital department. We kindly ask for your cooperation in completing the required checks and responding to any text messages you receive. If these steps aren’t completed, regretfully it may reduce the quantity of medication dispensed until you have completed the required checks.

- **Have the arrangements that I have in place for getting my medicines stayed the same?**

Yes. If you use a local pharmacy your prescription will continue being sent to them.

If you are a dispensing patient you can continue collecting medication from usual surgery. If it is more convenient for you to collect from the other site, please let a member of the dispensary team know. If a GP prescribes medication during a consultation please make it clear where you would like to collect your medication from.

- **Has the merger affected any treatment or medication I am currently receiving either at my usual surgery or any hospital?**

No. Your medical records are fully available at both Practices; all clinicians are able to see all your hospital correspondence, treatment and prescriptions. There will be no changes to your planned care.

- **Are there any changes to how I access the GP out of hours service?**

No there are no changes. For access to help out of hours:-

- Phone 111.

- Visit an Urgent Care Centre
 - Gravesend 08.00-20.00,
 - Erith and District 08.00-22.00,
 - Queen Mary's Hospital 24hrs 365days
 - Princess Royal University Hospital 24hrs 365days
- Phone 999 in the case of an emergency
- **What has happened to my health records?**

Both practices used the same clinical systems. Those two systems were merged into one, over a period of a few days in June 2024. No records were lost in the process. Now your electronic health records can be viewed from either site. Braeside surgery still has substantial amounts of physical Lloyd George patient records, and they remain stored on the Braeside site.

Having physical records is increasingly seen as problematic for healthcare, (not least as they can only be in one place at a time.) We will therefore look to scan those records into an electronic format, as Devon Road site did in 2023.

- **Is there one app recommended that will facilitate all patient needs, including e-consult.**

We recommend the NHS app, available via the [NHS App and your NHS account - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

This app is direct with the NHS, is able to show you all NHS appointments including those at hospital, it can be used to view your record (once set up), reorder medication, check results, make appointments and complete eConsultations

- **I have further questions I would like to ask - how do I do this?**

If it is a clinical/illness related question, please send in an eConsult, available via our web site. <https://riverdarentmedicalgroup.co.uk/>

For a question about eConsult systems use [What is eConsult? | eConsult FAQs | eConsult](#) or If you wish to contact eConsult directly use [Contact Us | eConsult](#)

If you have any administrative questions about the merger please use the 'contact us' link on River Darent Medical Group Website

While we appreciate there have been many changes for patients and for our staff, we would like to take this opportunity to thank them and you for your continued understand and support.