



## Linton Health Centre

### Newsletter – July 2015

#### **Linton Health Centre and Sawston Medical Practice Working towards a merger of the two partnerships in April 2016**

The partners of Linton and Sawston practices have taken the decision to work towards merging the two partnerships in April 2016. Both Sawston and Linton are strong practices, very well respected in the local health community, and the merger will build on that strength and ensure that both sites can continue to provide the best possible service for patients in the future.

The spotlight was certainly focused on the NHS and GP services during the recent general election campaign. There is no doubt that the pressure on general practice has increased over recent years and, with an ageing population and more care to be delivered in the community, the pressure on GP services will continue to grow. General Practice needs to be prepared to evolve to meet that challenge.

Sawston and Linton are the two largest practices in South Cambridgeshire, delivering services to around 14,500 patients and 11,500 patients respectively. We have been in discussions together for the last two years, discussing how we can meet the challenge of 8 am – 8 pm working, how we can meet the challenge of looking after our ageing population in the community, how we can meet the challenge of training doctors and nurses to work in general practice. We are convinced that merging the two partnerships will enable us to meet such challenges better.

This is not a cost saving exercise: there will be no reduction in staffing levels on either site, and in fact all partners are investing in this merger as a means of building on the services we provide to our patients and securing a strong future for general practice in South Cambs.

Initially, we suspect that patients will notice very little difference! Although patients could choose to attend either site, we suspect that the majority of Linton patients will continue to see the Linton doctors and nurses at Linton, and Sawston patients will continue to see the Sawston doctors and nurses at Sawston. Each site will continue to provide all the current services for patients and, over time, we hope to be able to provide more services shared between the sites. An example would be extended 8-8 opening hours: neither practice could comfortably offer such extended hours alone, but together that becomes more feasible and is certainly a better option than having to travel to Chesterton for out-of-hours care. There are many opportunities for the future, but in the very short term the aim is to secure a sustainable future for delivering GP services to both Sawston and Linton patients.

The recent direction of travel from NHS England is for practices to work more collaboratively in order to provide 'primary care at scale', for example in federations/networks/mergers. In some respects Sawston and Linton are ahead of the curve with the proposal to merge the partnerships in April 2016.

We have had meetings with our respective Patient Reference Groups who are very supportive of this project and we aim to keep them updated as we move forward. As always, we appreciate the support and interest of our patients and both Practice Managers are very happy to take your comments.

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