

Louth GP practices propose merger and launch consultation

Two Louth-based GP practices have today, Monday 10 July 2017, launched a three-month consultation on their proposal to merge into one practice.

The Kidgate Surgery and James Street Practice have decided to propose a merger for a number of reasons; both practices strongly believe in, and are committed to, maintaining local provision of high quality general practice in our rural community, and both believe the best way to maintain, improve and deliver a high quality service to their patients is through a closer working arrangement in the form of a single practice.

“Our proposal means that Kidgate patients will be able to continue to access high quality care close to their current practice,” explains Dr Stovin, GP and Partner, The Kidgate Surgery. “We also have to consider the future of primary care provision locally and the difficulty recruiting GPs. The proposed merger, if it goes ahead, will ensure continuity of care for patients and should help us attract new GPs by being able to provide more desirable career opportunities.”

If the merger is approved the new practice will be called James Street Family Practice, and its practice boundary will cover the boundaries of the current two practices. Staff from Kidgate Surgery will move to join colleagues from James Street Practice at the new merged practice.

“This means that patients from either practice will still be able to see their preferred doctor or nurse,” adds Dr Ko, GP and Senior Partner, James Street Practice. “The services offered to patients by both practices are very similar, if anything patients will find they can access a wider range of services as a consequence of a merger, for example Kidgate patients will be able to access leg ulcer and Older Adults enhanced services, and James Street patients will benefit from access to Yellow Fever services. James Street is also a GP training practice and this will help improve recruitment and retention at a time when the profession is facing a workforce crisis.

“The merged practice will adopt the ‘Dr First’ appointment system currently employed by James Street. Dr First is a demand-led system that allows practices to effectively manage patient demand through clinicians talking to all patients on the telephone and assessing them on a clinical priority basis. If either the doctor or patient needs or wants to see the other, then an appointment is booked for the patient. This way, every patient triaged will be seen on the day by the clinician that best suits their needs.”

Both James Street and Kidgate are keen for their patients to share their views, either via a survey available online <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JamesSKidgate> or by completing a paper copy available at both practices. In addition, the practices will be running two events for patients to attend, which will include question and answer sessions, as follows:

- Thursday 20 July, 1-3pm, Eastgate Union Church, Louth
- Thursday 27 July, 6.30-8.30pm, Eastgate Union church, Louth

All of the venues chosen for the events are fully accessible.

After the conclusion of the three-month consultation, if the practices’ proposal goes ahead, the merger will be completed by 1 April 2018.

“We think what we are proposing is good news for our patients,” adds Dr Stovin. “It would enable us to safeguard high quality and sustainable primary care services in the future. Our patients are always our number one priority in anything we do and the proposed merger does not change this.

“The combined practice team will also mean that we can look to provide other services and James Street is currently in the process of undergoing improvements to its premises that will result in additional clinical space. Overall, we think that a merger would provide a layer of resilience for patients and primary care services in the Louth area.”

The three-month consultation on the proposal to merge will run from Monday 10 July until Monday 09 October.

Proposed Merger of James Street Family Practice and Kidgate Surgery Louth

Patient Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Partners of James Street Family Practice and Kidgate Surgery have submitted an application to NHS England and Lincolnshire East Clinical Commissioning Group to merge. If this proposed merger is approved, the merged practice would be known as James Street Family Practice. Listed below are a number of FAQs that are provided to answer any potential queries patients of the surgeries may have. Any further queries can be addressed at one of our patient engagement sessions or through email to the Practice Managers, all of which are listed at the end of this document.

Why are you doing this?

This was originally initiated as the Kidgate Partners, both now over retirement age, were struggling with recruitment of another partner (fewer doctors are choosing a career in general practice). Additionally, the currently occupied Kidgate building is in a very poor state, with anticipated demolition.

James Street wanted to work with Kidgate to ensure that between us we continue to provide a high standard of care to our patients that is sustainable for the future.

Will any of the surgeries close?

Yes, Kidgate Surgery would close if the merger was approved.

Why do you feel the Kidgate surgery needs to close?

Along with a lease that is due to expire in March 2018, the Kidgate Surgery premises are ageing and no longer fit for purpose. The lease for the premises is due to expire in March 2018 and it is unlikely that this could be renewed.

Which surgery will be the main surgery and which will be branch surgeries?

James Street Family Practice would be the main surgery

Will Dr Stovin be staying?

Yes, Dr Stovin will be staying. Dr Staunton is undecided, but is strongly considering retirement.

What will happen to the staff and other members of the Kidgate Surgery?

All the doctors, Nurses and Staff have been invited over to James Street Surgery.

Will there be enough space and GP/Nurse appointments at James Street to take on the patients of The Kidgate Surgery?

Yes, James Street is due to undergo some renovations and a small extension which could accommodate extra patients

Will there be any changes to the surgery opening times?

The will be no change to the main core opening times Monday – Friday.

Will the practice boundary change?

The Practice boundary will remain the same as the two existing practice boundaries will merge to form one larger boundary.

Will I still be able to see my usual doctor or nurse?

Yes, you will still be able to see your preferred GP.

What is the anticipated timescale for the merger?

With the help and support of the Lincolnshire East CCG (LECCG) and NHS England, completion would take effect from the 1st April 2018.

Would there be any changes to the way I book appointments?

In order to support all our patients with same day access, Kidgate patients would see a minor change to the way appointments are booked as a doctor would phone you back. Routine nurse appointments could still be booked in advance.

Will there be any changes to the primary care services provided to patients?

Additional services will be provided for both James Street and Kidgate patients. For example Kidgate patients will be able to access leg ulcer and Older Adults enhanced services, and James Street patients will benefit from access to Yellow Fever services. James Street is also a GP training practice and this will help improve recruitment and retention at a time when the profession is facing a workforce crisis.

Will any new services be introduced?

Yes, there will be enhanced services offered to the patients of the merged practice.

Will I still have online access and get text message reminders?

Yes, both practices use the same clinical operating system and these services remain available.

Will I need to re-register to remain on the practice list? Will my health record be transferred?

All Kidgate patients' health records would be transferred over to James Street. You would not need to do anything different.

Will this affect any treatment or medication I am currently receiving either at the GP practice or any hospital?

There may be some changes to the Practice Formulary, but there will be an opportunity to discuss with your GP. There may be some changes made, but if that is the case there will be an opportunity to discuss these with your GP.

Will I still be able to pick my dispensing items up as before?

Yes – both surgeries cover the same boundary and continuity of care will continue. In fact we may even be able to offer you an enhanced dispensing service, in the form of blister packs, should you qualify.

What about car parking space?

Car parking space is at a premium, which is in keeping with the times. However, there is off-road parking on James Street and nearby Ramsgate and Wellington Street, plus there are two car parks very close to the surgery; these being Northgate East (next to the British Legion) and one right next to the Co-op on Northgate East, as well as Kiln Lane (both of which are easily accessible by cutting straight through Co-op delivery yard).

How will we be kept informed of the merger and changes?

Regular newsletters and information will be displayed in both surgeries and on our practice websites as well as The James Street family Practice Facebook page. We also plan to hold Patient Engagement events. Information will also be available on the Lincolnshire East CCG website.

I have Questions to ask, how should I approach you?

We have Patient Engagement sessions scheduled for:

Thursday 20th July – Eastgate Union Church (opposite Morrisons), Louth 1.00 – 3.00pm

Thursday 27th July – Eastgate Union Church (opposite Morrisons), 6.30 – 8.30pm

However, should you be unable to attend, please feel free to email Julie Williams (Practice Manager at Kidgate) on Julie.williams15@nhs.net or Jackie Rotherham (Managing Partner at James Street) on Jackie.rotherham@nhs.net

We will also collate feedback at the engagement sessions, as well as providing surveys in both the surgeries. Alternatively there is the option to fill a survey in online by going to: or visiting our websites:

<http://www.jamesstreetsurgery.co.uk>

<http://www.thekidgatesurgery.co.uk>