

Collaboration between The Rycote Practice and the Surgeries at Watlington and Chalgrove – FAQ

Why are the practices merging?

All GP practices are facing more demand and greater pressure on their services. Being part of a larger group secures and strengthens current services locally and offers opportunities for new services in the future.

Will I still be able to see my usual GP and practice team?

Yes. The Partners are clear that the practices will continue to operate independently as far as possible. We understand that this is the best possible way of ensuring the personalised care, close to home, that patients tell us they value.

Will I have to travel to a different site to have an appointment?

No. The practices will continue largely to operate as they do now, with patients being seen at the practice they are currently seen at.

Will it be harder to get an appointment?

Although the merger will see the ownership of the practice change, the day-to-day running of the practices will stay the same. We are actively recruiting new doctors and nurses across the practices to ensure that access to services remains high.

Are any of the doctors leaving?

Two GP Partners will be retiring from The Chiltern & The Brook Surgeries this year.

- Dr Ding, after many years as a Partner, will be retiring on the 31st March 2026
- Dr McManus will continue to work for a few months before retiring at the end of June 2026 after many years as a Partner

New GPs will be recruited to replace Dr Ding's and Dr McManus's clinical sessions.

Will you be bringing in new staff to help me get an appointment?

We understand that it can sometimes be frustrating trying get an appointment. Whilst supply and demand will always vary, we are actively recruiting staff to ensure we can continue to offer a range of appointments.

Will I wait longer in the queue for my call to be answered?

No. Full reception teams will continue to work in each surgery, and the telephone number you call to contact your practice will stay the same.

Are The Chiltern & The Brook Surgeries closing as a result of the merger?

No.

Will service provision in Watlington and Chalgrove be changing?

The merger will initially not result in any changes to services. Over time we hope that the increase in overall size of the merged surgery will result in new services being offered. There are no plans to reduce the service provision at any site.

Will I still be registered at my practice?

All patients will continue to be seen at the practice they are usually seen at.

What are the opportunities this brings?

This merger will bring opportunities to provide new services, some of which may currently only be offered at one of the two practices, and some of which may not be offered yet at all. Looking after a larger population brings in extra resources which can be invested in services. Looking after more people also means that it can become possible to offer more specialist services that would not be possible with smaller patient numbers.

Will a bigger practice mean I lose personalised care?

No. We place great value in continuity of care and a personalised approach. There are no plans to make any changes to the way services are delivered in each of the surgeries, and no plans to reduce the number of doctors and nurses.

Why did you need to do this?

General practice is increasingly challenging, with uncertainty in funding and staffing, and increasing clinical and social complexity. As a bigger organisation, we are in a stronger position to deal with these challenges. By increasing the number of patients we look after, we also improve our ability to offer new services. Finally, we hope that being bigger could mean we have a louder voice in shaping services and attracting services to our corner of Oxfordshire.

Is this a short-term decision? (are you going to sell this off)

This decision has been taken for the long-term sustainability of primary care in Thame, Watlington and Chalgrove.

Will there be any changes to telephone numbers or contact information?

No. The telephone numbers and email addresses you use to contact the surgery will not change.

Will the practice change its name?

No. The three sites will continue to use their current names:

The Rycote Practice Thame

The Chiltern Surgery Watlington

The Brook Surgery Chalgrove