

Integral Medical Holdings (IMH) in Swindon: Past, present and future

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Working together:

NHS Bath and North East Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group

NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group

NHS Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Welcome

By the end of this meeting, you will:

- Know more about the IMH Group
- Understand how the group became involved in primary care in Swindon
- Know what is being done to support practices affected by IMH
- Learn more about the new providers supporting practices on a long-term basis
- Have a chance to ask questions

Background information

In recent years, primary care – which includes services offered at GP practices – has struggled with a number of challenges, such as:

- Increasing patient demand
- A national shortage of qualified medical staff
- Limited or reduced resources
- Many GPs approaching retirement age

To overcome these issues, GP practices looked at what could be done to provide care and treatment in a different, more effective and more efficient way.

Background information (2)

Struggling GP practices across the country – including many in Swindon – began to work in partnership with other practices to share the workload, particularly in terms of non-clinical duties, and enable doctors to spend more time with patients.

Between 2016 and 2018, five Swindon practices – some of which were at serious risk of closure – began to work with the Integral Medical Holdings Group (IMH).

Under this arrangement, IMH took on responsibility for the administrative work – e.g. finance, recruitment, governance, CQC compliance and IT support – for all of the practices.

The role of the CCG

- The CCG is responsible for planning and purchasing healthcare services in Swindon based on the needs of the local population
- In 2017, the CCG took over the commissioning responsibility for Swindon and Shrivenham's 23 GP practices from NHS England
- This meant that funding for primary care services now came from the CCG, rather than at a national level
- GP practices are independent businesses which are contracted by the NHS to provide primary care services to a specific population
- The role of the CCG is to monitor and oversee this contract, while also supporting GPs to implement national policy

Integral Medical Holdings Group

- A privately owned company that works alongside providers of NHS services, such as GP practices
- The company is based in Manchester and managed by a clinical team of experienced GPs
- In addition to Swindon, IMH has worked with healthcare staff in more than 50 locations across the country
- IMH first began working with Abbey Meads Medical Group in 2016
- Over the next 18 months, the group also started to offer support to Moredon Medical Centre, Taw Hill Medical Practice, Eldene Surgery and Phoenix Surgery
- A single centralised call hub for patients was established in September 2018

IMH in Swindon

- The partnership had a positive beginning, with two of the five practices moving from a CQC rating of requires improvement to good
- In September 2018, IMH went live with a centralised call handling centre that would receive all calls from patients at each of the practices
- This led to many patients struggling to book appointments, with those using the call hub experiencing long waits for their call to be answered
- Patients spoke of not being kept in the loop with the changes being introduced

The CCG's response

Throughout IMH's time in Swindon, the CCG held regular meetings with the group to monitor performance and seek assurance that improvements could be made.

Following the initial troubles, extra staff – both clinical and non-clinical – were recruited to the hub and IMH was confident this would help patients book appointments.

However, problems continued and, although the CCG afforded IMH the time to make further improvements, when it became clear the situation was not improving, the CCG issued each GP practice with a remedial notice that required the group to implement immediate change.

Shortly after this, a meeting between senior practice staff, IMH and the CCG took place and it was then agreed IMH would withdraw its support from primary care in Swindon.

Providing support to the five practices

Following the announcement of IMH's withdrawal, the CCG provided the five practices with practical support to keep services running as close to normal as possible.

Some of this support included:

- Providing extra clinical resource
- Reviewing clinical correspondence (e.g. hospital referral letters)
- Re-examining patient complaints for issues that posed a risk to safety
- Bringing in an experienced call centre manager to provide support to staff in the call hub

At the same time, the CCG worked to identify new local, NHS-based providers that could work with the practices on a long-term basis going forward.

New providers

GP practice	New provider
Taw Hill Medical Practice	Westrop Medical Practice
Eldene Surgery	Victoria Cross Surgery
Abbey Meads Medical Group and Moredon Medical Centre	Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (not yet confirmed)
Phoenix Surgery	To-be-confirmed Swindon GP practice

What happens next

Each of the five GP practices are expected to enter into their new arrangements before the end of the year.

As practices begin to separate from IMH, calls made by patients will no longer be handled by the central call centre, but instead be answered by staff at each practice.

Any changes to the process will be advertised to patients by each practice.

IMH is expected to officially leave in Swindon in November.

Thank you

Please feel free to ask any questions you may have.