

Frequently Asked Questions

Introducing the Symphony Programme and Symphony Healthcare Services

In 2015, the south Somerset Symphony Programme was created through Yeovil Hospital and key healthcare organisations within south Somerset. The programme was given 'vanguard status' (special project funding from NHS England) and tasked with creating innovative new ways of delivering high quality care to patients and in particular, strengthening and supporting primary care to support GPs and ease the pressure on the NHS as a whole.

Symphony Healthcare Services was developed as part of the Symphony Programme, to offer further support to GP Practices and ensure that Primary Care had the capacity to reduce activity on hospital services.

One of the key targets of the Symphony Programme was to develop different types of healthcare services; known as 'new models of care'. This new model developed a '**Complex Care service**', for the top 4% of patients with the most complex long-term healthcare conditions and an '**Enhanced Primary Care service**' that has seen the Health Coach role introduced into 17 GP practices across south Somerset.

Tell me more about Symphony Healthcare Services

In April 2016, Symphony Healthcare Services (SHS) was created after three GP practices approached Yeovil Hospital directly for help. Ilchester Surgery, Yeovil Health Centre and Buttercross Health Centre in Somerton were the first practices to integrate with SHS.

Like many GP practices locally and nationally, these practices had been struggling to manage the operational and financial pressures on the surgery; with difficulties in recruiting permanent GPs, rising costs, growing patient numbers and demand, along with increasingly complex healthcare needs. By joining together we aim to help practices to meet the current and future challenges of providing a sustainable, high quality healthcare service for our patients.

Is it private healthcare?

No, it is an NHS healthcare organisation. SHS is a wholly owned subsidiary of Yeovil Hospital that operates as an 'arm's length' General Practice company.

The healthcare services that we provide our patients are funded by the NHS through the same contracts as any other GP practice. We work very closely with NHS England, the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the Local Medical Committee (LMC) and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to ensure that the care we provide meets the high standards set.

Which practices have joined Symphony Healthcare Services?

Ten GP practices have chosen to join Symphony Healthcare Services (SHS) including; Yeovil Health Centre, Ilchester Surgery, Buttercross Health Centre (Somerton), Crewkerne Health Centre, Oaklands Surgery in Yeovil, Highbridge Medical Centre, St Lukes & Greenswood Medical Centre in Brixham, Wincanton Health Centre, Hamdon Medical Centre and West One Surgery who have recently merged with Crewkerne Health Centre.



We are also in discussion with a number of other GP practices, so we are likely to grow.

Since our initial launch, SHS has grown to support GP practices across a wider geographical area across the south west; in particular those practices who share the same challenges of recruiting and retaining GPs, more complex patient healthcare needs and an ageing demographic. Increasing numbers of successful GP practices are also choosing to integrate with SHS, as part of their strategic vision for the future.

How will Symphony Healthcare Services support GP practices?

Practices that choose to join SHS will benefit from the additional support of an experienced central team; providing support with back office functions as well as clinical expertise, enabling GPs and practice healthcare teams to focus more on patient care.

With reducing numbers of GPs nationally and increasing patient needs, the traditional GP focused model is no longer able to meet the changing needs of our patients and we must adapt the way that we can offer high quality healthcare services. Being part of a larger organisation means that we can help to support GP practices to develop the healthcare teams required for the future and adapt the ways that we can provide high quality healthcare services.

New roles are being developed as part of a multi-disciplinary team to work alongside our GPs. These new roles include; Pharmacists, Musculoskeletal Practitioners (MSK), Enhanced Care Practitioners, Nurse Practitioners and Health Coaches as well as developing specialist training in the community away from the hospital.

By developing multi-disciplinary teams across our practices, we can support the patients with the most complex healthcare needs, as well as helping patients to manage their existing health conditions at home, without unnecessary admittance to hospital.

What changes will be seen?

Initially very few, the aim of Symphony Healthcare Services is to support practices to develop their healthcare services to strengthen primary care across south Somerset and help to retain and recruit the healthcare teams required to provide high quality healthcare services for patients.

Over time we will help our practices to develop opportunities to work together more closely; providing services for the local patient population and to meet the growing challenges in Primary Care.

By developing and extending our healthcare teams through a multi-disciplinary approach, we can help to manage GP workloads and offer patients a wider choice of specialist services.

We are currently supporting our practices to adapt the way that healthcare services can be offered, to meet increasing patient needs. This includes trialling the development of more online services, as well as improving phone systems and providing extra training to our practice administration teams to reduce the pressure on our GPs and clinical teams.

Our central support team works very closely with all our practices alongside our GP Clinical Lead network and Practice Managers who join together to share ideas, knowledge and to promote innovation and transformation for the future.

Our vision

‘To provide seamless, integrated healthcare to enable our patients to lead healthy, independent lives ‘

You can find out more information about Symphony Healthcare Services by visiting:

www.symphonyhealthcareservices.com, or by following us  @SHSPractices