

## Comment from Graham Luke

**I understand that the merger went through before the computer system were compatible now I never went to big school but I could see that was going to be problematic.**

In summer 2014 the two practices met as we both needed to decide on a new clinical system. We agreed to choose the same one so that we wouldn't have to change again if we ever decided to work more closely together. Bondgate migrated to SystemOne in Nov 2014 and IDMG in Apr 2015.

So we've had the same system for two and a half years

All of the practices in North Northumberland looked at their systems and Well Close, Felton, Glendale and Coquet were already on this system, so Widdrington, Union Brae, Belford and Cheviot followed suit.

We are the only locality in Northumberland to have made this decision to all be on the same system and it took some time to get this sorted.

Back to the merger – The GP SoC provided by NHS Digital offers up a suite of provisions available to practices, which all bar the main system funded by practices themselves

<https://digital.nhs.uk/GP-Systems-of-Choice/GPSoC-Services>

North east Commissioning Support [NECS] have the sole contract to help to initialise new systems and CANNOT place an order to merge the systems until the merger has been fully ratified by the Clinical Commissioning Group's Primary Care Commissioning Committee. This committee only meets once every two months and so after initial practice agreement to merge at the end of January 2017 and the wheels set in motion, the earliest possible date we could submit a fully worked up business case for the merge, with a business plan and proof of due diligence, was at the Meeting in June. This also allowed us to complete the statutory eight week public engagement and present the results to the committee.

So the CCG PCCC ratified the merger on June 21<sup>st</sup> and we placed the order to merge the two patient lists. In the meantime we asked the supplier how we could have a work around to ensure we could see all patients – it was tricky as for three weeks it meant opening two systems and having them on separate screens. The workaround really helped us deliver a much smoother system for staff and patients alike.

The merge of the patient lists is outside of the core IT contract and as such has required an investment from the practice of over £29000 to make this happen. We have a date of November 28<sup>th</sup> for the work to be carried out. That cost comes directly from the service we can provide and is almost enough to fund two front line receptionists to answer your calls.

From the initial decision to merge to having a fully operational new practice in less than 10 months is twice as quick as another local merger which took almost two years and everyone involved has pulled out the stops to ensure we can move forward to provide better patient care safely.

I hope this gives a flavour of some of the work that goes on behind the scenes.