

Minutes of the Patient Group held on Wednesday 25 May 2022

Present: Adeeba Malik (Chair)
John Stone (Co-Chair)
Kathy Bairstow (Minutes)
Patrick Gilligan
Wilma Nichol
John Samuel
Marian Le Pla
Andra Matthews
Howard Turnpenny
Nicola Farrar (Operations Manager)
Sandra Shallcross
Sharon Barraclough (Business Development, Enterprise and Finance Manager)
Louise Lewis (ANP Partner)

Apologies: Diane Burke and Fred Stone

Welcome and Apologies

Adeeba welcomed the group and the new member Patrick and noted apologies.

The previous minutes were accepted as a correct record.

Matters arising from those minutes were all on the agenda for today.

Allerton re-opening

Due to continuing staff shortages, Allerton will not be re-opening full time until possibly September but this will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. Clinically, it was hoped there would be sufficient clinical staff to open fully at the beginning of May, but with one doctor working part-time and another doctor becoming ill again, this couldn't happen. Staff issues will be dealt with in more detail later. Currently, Allerton is open for 3 mornings 8-1pm and 2 full days, 8-6pm.

Overall, there have been fewer patients complaining about the reduced opening times than previously. The opening times are on the website and texts are sent to patients telling them if the surgery has had to close. These, and the

newsletter are the only ways patients can be kept up to date, as mail shots are not allowed.

Directive that all surgeries must offer routine appointments 7 days a week from October

With widespread clinician shortages, it is unlikely that this directive will work as, as Sandra explained, although there are more GPs nationally, they are working fewer hours.

Sharon advised that we are part of a Primary Care Network (PCN) with 4 other practices over 6 sites. This network will be charged with providing cover 7 days a week. To cover these appointments, other services will need to be reduced. The dilemma is which services can be reduced.

Sandra advised that a year ago the directive was that patients should be able to book appointments by telephone, online and in person, but online is still suspended. A notice at Allerton asks patients to ring for appointment and not ask at reception. This has been a problem for a long time as there are always more appointments requested than slots available. It is also difficult to get through on the telephone. Nicola informed the group that the telephone system capacity had been increased recently from 30 calls being allowed to queue to 50. Nicola also told the group about the new call back service, where queuing patients have the option to be called back when they reach number one in the queue, rather than having to spend a long time on the phone waiting for their turn. There have been no complaints about not getting through recently.

There is some suggestion that the GPs/PCNs may withdraw from the directive, or it may be postponed.

A discussion about NHS England and the politics of the NHS were discussed, along with some positive stories about how well some PG members had been treated when they presented with concerning symptoms. Both had met the appropriate standards.

Staffing and Practice Update

Clinicians

As mentioned earlier two GPs have worked reduced hours, so there have only been one or two GPs available. One GP has returned from maternity leave on

fewer hours, and we can't recruit for the remainder of her hours. Our GP registrar has decided to work as a locum, rather than a practice GP, so will leave the practice in August. As a training practice, we will have three GP registrars in training with us from August,

Despite continually advertising for more GPs, we have not been successful. We've also tried the CCG, universities and agencies, even though an agency introduction costs around £15,000. The money isn't the problem, it's the lack of GPs that is. However, the practice has been successful in obtaining sponsorship to recruit overseas doctors.

We lost our paramedics during covid, as they returned to their previous jobs. The recently recruited Advanced Nurse Practitioner gave backward 2 months into her notice period with her previous employer. The same happened with the Physician Associate.

We welcomed a new nurse in January and appointed two today. They include one nurse prescriber and one minor illness nurse. The new nurses will have to serve their 3 months notice period with their current employers.

Admin Team

The admin team is up to strength now with 3 new recruits. Otherwise, the team is static.

Covid and vaccinations

All our care home and house bound patients have had their vaccinations. People over 75 and clinically extremely vulnerable patients are begin recalled for their fourth vaccine.

We are waiting to find out which age groups will need their flu vaccinations in September. At the moment, we don't know whether the flu vaccines will be given at the practice or elsewhere. Adeeba reiterated that the PG would help out wherever they can.

John Samuel asked whether patients could request a PCR if they are going on holiday. He was told that that is not possible.

Newsletter

The group were given a copy of the newly printed newsletter. It includes the practice opening times, the new phone system and the new call back services, which is now live.

The newsletter is online, available at the practice and at Café West. Café West has been given a BP monitor and other new equipment to help patients. They are able to show patients how to access online services.

Update on Website

The prototype for the new practice website is not yet available. The designer knows what we need and has taken onboard all previous comment from the PG. It will be a more streamlined version, have more links and tabs, and will be more user friendly. It will be made available to the PG when available and an extra-ordinary meeting will be arranged purely for this. **Action Nicola**

Prescription requests are no longer being accepted on the phones. We will be promoting SystmOnline and will have a prescription order form on the website.

Any other business

Re-authorising prescriptions

Kathy asked whether a glitch had been solved whereby the practice were not made aware that the Trust pharmacists had re-authorised prescriptions. Nicola advised that this was now sorted, so patients should not be left without their prescriptions.

Recycling

Andra told the group that Superdrug are able to recycle blister packs from tablets.

Deputy Lieutenant

Adeeba has recently been made a Deputy Lieutenant. The post assists the Lord-Lieutenant in carrying out their role as the Queen's representatives. Adeeba will tell us more about her involvement later

Date and Time of Next Meeting

To be agreed at a later date, possibly September, members will be notified