

Minutes of the Patient Group held on Zoom, Wednesday 13 October 2021

Present: Adeeba Malik (Co-Chair)
John Stone (Co-Chair)
Kathy Bairstow (Minutes)
Wilma Nichol
John Samual
Marian Le Pla
Andra Matthew
Howard Turnpenny
Nicola Farrar (Hub Manager)
Sandra Shallcross
Sharon Barraclough (Business Development, Enterprise and Finance Manager)
Dr Arlene Raw (GP Partner)

Apologies: Richard Dunbar, Diane Burke

Welcome and Apologies

Adeeba welcomed the group and noted apologies. Olga Green has resigned from the group. Adeeba expressed our thanks to her.

The previous minutes were accepted as a correct record.

Update on Website

Sharon advised the group that the practice team had looked at the website and agreed it needs updating to make it more user friendly. They have looked at other practice website, to see what works best for patient communications. The aim is to make it as easy visually as possible. They will then negotiate with their provider to start the new website from scratch. Nicola is now sourcing a developer and once a template had been Drafted the Patient Group would be involved in what their thoughts were.

Newsletter

There was some confusion about where the current version has been posted. Sharon will find out what has happened to it, and make sure it is posted online as soon as possible. In the past, the Newsletter has been available at the

practice, but because of COVID, this can no longer happen. Sharon will investigate and get back to the group when she has some news as to where it had been displayed, as it was her understanding that it was on the website. Adeeba wondered whether it could be distributed to local groups, such as Café West. Sharon will find out and update group.

Post meeting update: The newsletter is on the website already. It's under the blog, so not as accessible as it could be. This highlights the need for more clarity in the new website. Sharon has emailed Richard Dunbar to discuss circulating the Newsletter in the wider community.

COVID vaccination boosters

All first phase COVID vaccinations have been completed. People eligible for the boosters will be invited back to the Ridge Practice for them. They will have their flu vaccinations at the same appointment

Some group members had not yet been invited by the Ridge for their booster, even though they are in the qualifying group. They can call the Ridge direct to enquire about this or our Practice will do it for them. However, the Ridge will be working through the age groups as they did with the first vaccinations.

There was some discussion about the logistics of using the Ridge Practice. Dr Raw advised the group that there are specific storage requirements for the Pfizer vaccination as it was impossible to split batches. The Ridge has the facilities to store all the doses needed along with the space for patients to be seen in larger numbers.

One group member had been invited to the Leyland Practice for her booster by 119. This sounded like an error. Nicola will check this out.

Flu vaccinations

Children aged between two and school age, vaccinations will have their vaccines at Hollyns. Primary and secondary school children will be done at school.

People who are not eligible for the booster but eligible for the flu vaccination and people who are not eligible for their booster soon can also arrange to have their flu vaccination now at the Ridge Practice, Hollyns, or at some

pharmacies. Rimmngton's in the city centre, are doing both flu vaccinations and COVID boosters, for those eligible.

Adeeba questioned why Hollyns are not holding flu clinics this year. This is a question of logistics and space, but the Ridge are running clinics during the weeks and at the weekend for all the practice patients in the network.

Allerton Practice

Adeeba asked when the Allerton site would be fully opened. Sharon advised that it had been expected from 4 October but then four staff went off sick, so it wasn't possible after all. In addition, two members of staff have resigned: one retired this week, and one is retiring next month. Altogether there is a staff shortage of eight people now including clinical and admin staff, and the practice are struggling just to cover the day-to-day work.

We have two nursing team vacancies. One ACP started Monday and had to self-isolate from Tuesday. It's impossible to plan services when we don't know how many staff will be available.

Adeeba wondered if the practice had considered using supply staff. Sharon has contacted all practices in the Network, and they are all in the same boat. Admin staff can earn better money elsewhere and staff are either changing careers or retiring early due to the pressures in the NHS.

We are still trying to recruit a GP and have a permanent advertisement for clinical practitioners. No practice is in a good way.

Dr Raw told the group that 16 years ago there were six GPs in Clayton and the same in Allerton. Now there is a total of six part time GPs across both practices, of which one is on maternity leave and one currently cannot see patients face to face, and one is off sick. The situation is dire. In part, this is because GPs now prefer to do locum work, as they have no responsibilities and can earn more money. Due to the dire situation now, older clinicians are taking early retirement, despite their loss of income.

Dr Raw and Dr Suleman have become GP trainers to try to entice GP registrars to come to work for us.

Sandra said there were staffing problems before COVID and that patients in Allerton feel left down. She wondered how we could move forward, as she

was concerned about equality of access. Wilma had looked on the website and noted that Allerton opens every day but half days on Monday/Wednesday/Fridays due to staffing issues as detailed above, , whereas Clayton is open all day every day during the week. She agreed people feel let down. Adeeba wondered whether this problem would continue for the next few months. Dr Raw told the group that, as soon as people return from sickness, they are desperate to get back to full time at Allerton. More than 50% of staff had had to self-isolate at some point due to COVID – one of whom was double vaccinated but got COVID twice. When asked, Dr Raw explained that there is no national ratio for how many patients each GP should have along with practices like ours, have more patients per doctor than in less deprived areas.

The question was asked whether ex-employees could be asked to come back. Sharon confirmed that this had already happened and Nicola Smith is doing some locum work for us. Also, we are trying to persuade the current registrars to come back to work with us when qualified.

Adeeba asked whether the PPG can do anything to help. The best thing we could do was tell other patients of the difficulties the practice is facing and asking for their understanding.

Other business

Routine reviews

All routine reviews are now taking place, except for blood tests, which are restricted because of a shortage of sample bottles. It is hoped this will be resolved within 2 or 3 weeks.

Appointment release times

Soon it is intended to amend appointment release times from 8 am daily to 8 am and 1 pm daily. This will be more accessible for people not in a position to phone at 8 am.

Shingles vaccinations

These are being gradually rolled to eligible people over 70. If you are eligible, you will be invited for your vaccine.

Insurance for missed cancer diagnosis

Howard asked whether the practice was insured for missed diagnosis due to lack of face-to-face appointments. The group were advised that each individual GP pays into a Defence Union to help work through this type of scenario.

Social distancing

The Health Secretary wants to reduce social distancing to allow more face-to-face appointments. However, social distancing is happening anyway as there are fewer face-to-face appointments, so fewer patients waiting together.

Dementia support group

John advised that there is group meeting at Clayton Village Hall. The group would also like to start one at Allerton and are inviting comments from interested parties.

Pets as therapy

Andra's dog has now completed her pets as therapy training and is available to the practice.

Next meeting: date to be confirmed.

18 October 2021