

Pangbourne Medical Practice
PPG Meeting Minutes
Held on 9 August 2023 at 6.15 pm
In-person Meeting

Present: Barry Ashdown, Rosie Barker (Practice Manager), John Creagh, Sarah Dixon (Chair), Kim Hiscutt, Doreen Hawkins, Brenda Hook, Kit Marriott, Diana Smith, Dr Rupert Woolley (GP)

1 Introduction and changes in members

We have a new member, Farzana Hasan; she was unable to join us at this meeting but we sent her our warmest wishes and look forward to meeting her soon.

2 Apologies

Apologies were received from Carolyn Geraldine, Gill Reid

3 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted with no amendments.

4 Covid update and vaccination programmes

There will be a Covid & flu vaccination programme in the Autumn. The following cohorts will be eligible:

- Residents in a care home for older adults
- All adults aged 65 years and over on 31.3.24
- Persons aged 6 months to 64 years in a clinical risk group
- Frontline health and social care workers
- Persons aged 12 to 64 years who are household contacts of people with immunosuppression
- Persons aged 16 to 64 years who are carers and staff working in care homes for older adults.

(Although we will only do patients aged 18+ for covid, we WILL do flu for eligible children)

We will give both the covid and flu vaccines at the same appointment, we will not offer separate appointments. Clinics expected to start in October; no delivery dates have been given yet, so no clinic dates have been arranged yet.

The media have reported that there has been a surge in Covid cases recently; Dr Woolley confirmed that this did seem to be the case, but that the current form of the disease seems to be much milder. Purley Park, a residential home in the surgery catchment area,

had certainly seen a surge in cases. John C mentioned that he has recently visited the US where there is also a surge in cases, and that this has been put down to so many people visiting cinemas on the same weekend (the Barbenheimer effect)!

The shingles vaccine programme is changing in September. The eligible cohort will increase (age reduces to 65 from 70, plus immunosuppressed from 50), and all patients will be offered 2 doses of Shingrix (inactivated) rather than one dose of Zostavax (live).

5 Surgery News and Update

The Friends and Family Test results for June and July had been circulated before the meeting; overall, the comments were extremely positive and the reception team came in for particular praise.

Dr Jesse Jaramek has now left, and we have new registrar Dr Bethan Evans joining on 2nd August. She will be with us until August 2024.

We have arranged for a locum GP to increase appointment capacity across the summer holidays - Dr Akhil Kanzaria will start clinics next week.

Our reception team is going through a high staff turnover at the moment, so patience and understanding is appreciated over the next couple of months. Four receptionists have left, all for unrelated reasons; replacements are in place but will of course need to go through a training process.

Our respiratory Nurse, Helen, will be leaving at the end of August and will be sorely missed. And we are also on the lookout for a medical secretary as Jane Hodgson is retiring.

Demand and patient expectations are as high as ever; Dr Woolley talked more about this later in the meeting.

Patients with the NHS App will now receive messages via the app rather than as a text message; if you don't look at the message within a set time it will be resent as a text message. We encourage patients to register with the NHS App and turn notifications 'ON' to ensure messages are received.

6 Patient Voice

There was a meeting of the North & West Reading Patient Voice group on 25th July. The first topic of discussion was a statistical analysis of publicly available data relating to patients and surgeries that has been carried out by Francis Brown of Balmore Park PPG. Specifically, he examined the proportion of patients signed up for digital access; analysis of the GP patient survey (GPPS); and analysis of specific questions from the FFT results. Sarah D agreed to send the results of the analyses to PPG members by email after the meeting. In summary, the results for the Boathouse Surgery are absolutely outstanding and place our surgery in the very highest quartile.

The second topic was regarding the benefits of surgery newsletters, which we ourselves touched on in our last meeting. Sarah D will circulate copies of three examples of newsletters from Western Elms surgery.

The date for the next Patient Voice meeting is Tuesday 26th September at 4pm via Zoom; any PPG member can attend, and if you would like to please let Sarah D know.

8 Any Other Business

Prescriptions

We returned to the subject of prescriptions in general and our local pharmacy in particular. A number of useful points were made:

- If you use an online pharmacy then you can order your meds either online via their website or in answer to an email prompt from them: however, you can also order via Patient Access or the NHS app. You do not have to ring them up
- Tesco in Reading is used by a lot of patients and if you give them your mobile number they will ping you when your prescription is ready to be collected
- The local pharmacy seems to be under new management; some PPG members reported improved service, while other did not
- If you get your meds in 6-month batches you still need to order them from the surgery, even if you use an online service
- Changes in medication can result in problems with online services if the new medication is not on the service provider's list; patients may need to contact the surgery
- As Dr Manjadar confirmed at our previous meeting, some medications are in short supply

Articles in local magazines

We discussed the possibility of inserting an article in local newsletters. The surgery used to put an article into the Pangbourne Magazine regularly, and we felt that we, the PPG, could re start this as a supplement to the postings on the various Facebook pages and village websites that the surgery team use for bulletins. The list of newsletters was as follows: Purley newsletter, Upper Basildon, Pangbourne Magazine, Whitchurch Bulletin, Whitchurch Hill Newsletter, Yattendon newsletter. Sarah D agreed to draft an article and discuss it with the PPG and the surgery team.

Managing patient expectations and demands

We then asked Dr Woolley to address the situation of increasing patient expectations and demands. It is certainly taking longer to get an appointment with a named GP: at least two weeks, and often four. This can create pressure for the daily emergency clinic and for book-on-the-day slots. In effect, there are two services running in parallel. In addition, there is the ability to ask a GP a question online; this is becoming more and more popular and as there is no cap on the number of requests it is becoming very difficult to answer the questions in a timely manner.

With an ageing population, more available treatments and an increase in care-in-the-community there is an increase in demand for GP services - but the capacity is not increasing. Furthermore, patient expectation is becoming more demanding, and patients are not prepared to wait.

Dr Woolley was asked whether he felt that the increasing waiting lists for hospital procedures is increasing pressure on GPs. He feels it definitely is, although it is difficult to quantify; at the very least, patients need more painkillers more often.

To help to manage the situation the surgery team has been supplemented by two paramedics who deal with minor illnesses - and who came in for particular praise in the FFTs in the last meeting. We now have two pharmacists and a technician, who deal with medication changes, queries, hospital letters and so on. In addition, there are now three

more GP sessions every week. Finally, the team is about to get some GP assistants which will help to relieve the administrative burden on the GPs.

Dr Woolley was asked how the GPs feel about the changes in their working practices. As well as seeing patients they are now required to supervise paramedics, for example. Dr Woolley feels that his colleagues are coping well and enjoying their leadership roles.

Finally, he was asked - is there room for all these extra people? We learned that there is a project to digitise the historical paper notes and that this will release two new rooms; building an extension is not feasible because of the riparian nature of the site.

We thanked Dr Woolley for his presentation; as PPG members we are often asked why it is "so difficult to get an appointment" and so on; as a result of this discussion we are now all in a position to give an informed response.

The date of the next meeting will be Wednesday 11 October 2023, 6.15pm, at the surgery. Dr Tom Morgan will be the attending GP