

# PPG Meeting

13<sup>th</sup> July, 2021

## Attendees

Diane H, Anne G, Gary S, Peter H, Lesley S, Gail Patterson (Practice Manager), Josh Parker-List (Assistant Practice Manager / Minute Taker)

## Apologies

Jane W, Bettina H, Najmir A, David R, Beth S

## Agenda

- Welcome and introductions
- Review of actions from previous meeting
- The Forum Closure
- Income Generation re Cryotherapy / Ear Syringe
- Carers Update
- Review of the amended practice website for PPG information and comment
- AOB

## Previous Minutes

Agreed correct and no amendments needed

## Meeting Minutes

### Group Update

Leavers - Tracy D has left the group

Joiners – Bettina H and Beth S

### Actions discussed from previous meeting

**Recruitment to the PPG** – trying to get some more, however one member has joined. The surgery was going to post on Facebook, however due to COVID-19, it was felt it wasn't the best time. There is a big part on the website about the PPG and an application form for patients to join up. Gail has been in touch with the local CCG to find out how to recruit patients. Due to COVID-19, we haven't approached the college or Darlington and Stockton Times. We could also look at a virtual PPG in future.

**Telephone message** – due to a number of comments from patients, we've reduced the messages on the 'phone and stripped it down to the pre-COVID-19 message where it is just advises to contact 999 if having heart / stroke symptoms.

**Website** – the website has been reviewed with our website maintainer and we've hopefully made some positive steps forward; however, we're also restricted by Accessible Information Standards. Josh will go through the website to show the changes later in the meeting.

**Appointments** – Ken discussed at the last meeting that we may go to a 50/50 split of telephone and face to face appointments, however this hasn't happened yet as we're struggling with rising COVID-19 rates. Ken also mentioned that he wanted to reduce the time spent on each patient, by instead

of having a telephone call and then follow up with a F2F, which has made us think about how reception can book patients in if they state that they need a F2F appointment.

**19<sup>th</sup> July and face masks** – we will still be requesting that patient's wear face masks, even though guidance says differently.

**COVID-19 vaccinations** – The forum has closed, and surgery is now vaccinating patients for their 2<sup>nd</sup> AstraZeneca vaccination. We aren't doing 1<sup>st</sup> vaccinations or any other vaccinations other than AstraZeneca. Day Lewis has the contract for vaccinating patients across the country. Lesley mentioned the texting system worked amazingly when done at the Forum. The PPG group has a lot of praise for the Forum volunteers and staff covering it, worked very smoothly and efficiently.

## **Updates**

**Telephones** – We've increased the incoming lines to 6, outgoing to 18 lines. We were using an ACD (Automatic Call Distributor) system, which is a bit like what they use in a call centre, where the receptionist can make themselves available for calls, reducing the ringing in the reception area, which reduces the stress of not hearing 'phones ring all the time if they're already on the 'phone to a patient. We've had resource issues where staff have gone off ill, self-isolating etc. We have been having issues where patients were calling the surgery, but the 'phones in reception weren't ringing, which has resulted in us switching the system back to the way that it was prior to ACD (Automatic Call Distributor) system and we're now receiving calls again.

**Staffing issues** – 8 members of staff are self-isolating. There is a lot of pressure where patients haven't been able to get through and then turn up at the surgery to complain, further reducing receptionists on the 'phone, taking management away from their work in order to help resolve the patient's complaint.

**Appointments** – a large number of patients are told to ring the next day at 8am, which causes huge demand as soon as the surgery opens. We're hoping that when all staff are back and up to speed we'll be able to better meet this demand, reduce caller waiting times resulting in a better customer service. We've been looking at other telephone companies to see if we can improve the system, we also came across a virtual receptionist system, which will allow you to book, cancel, check appointments. The system is available 24 hours / 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Ann mentioned that her husband used the e-consult system and he got a call back very quickly! She asked whether we knew how many people use this system? As Ann was very impressed by this system. We're also continuing to promote online consultations. We're keen to adopt the Patient Partner (virtual receptionist) system, however we need to ensure that it will meet the surgery's and patients' needs.

**Virtual Receptionist Questions** - If patients rang the virtual receptionist out of hours, would there be an option to ring the patient back when the surgery opens? If that is the case, will a receptionist be taken out to ring patients the following morning, instead of receiving calls. This is something Gail will ask the company about.

**Staffing** –

- Faith Dawson (Phlebotomist) has started, which will help reduce waiting times for bloods / NHS health checks, dressing care etc.
- Most staff isolation is due to family members having COVID-19, but not themselves, however they are working from home where they can. Due to schools sending children home, this also means that staff are having to go home to care for them.

- We have had three other members of staff, an Apprentice and two receptionists, start since the last meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> March. The reception team have really stepped up to cover absence and they have been amazing!
- Primary Care Network First Contact Physio' is in place. Mental Health Consultant hasn't yet been appointed.

**Abuse** - There has also been a lot of abuse towards reception staff and has taken a number of hours dealing with other work that needs doing.

**Isolation rules** - likely to relax from 19<sup>th</sup> July, hopefully this will be that if staff are negative when doing lateral flow tests, they will be able to return to work.

**Telephone demand** – Peter mentioned that putting stats on the website might be useful to show the number of calls we're receiving.

**Telephone waiting times** – The practice would like the PPG members to try ringing twice per day, ideally not at 8am, but from 10am onwards, just to see how long they're on the 'phone for.

**Friends and Family Test** – due to COVID-19 we've kept this turned off, however we're looking to start this back up on 19<sup>th</sup> July.

**GP Survey** – this is a national survey carried out annually to see patients' experiences are like when liaising with their GP surgery. Mayford House Surgery was rated poor for access to appointments / clinicians of choice; however, care and customer service was very high. This is different to the Friends and Family Test as it has more questions across different experience areas.

## Agenda Items

**Income Generation re Cryotherapy / Ear Syringe** – prescription charges can be a form of income for the practice. Cryotherapy is no longer available in the practice, Shirley has used this service before, but it is finding it very difficult to access this. Ear irrigation to go private is months waiting list and costs a lot of money. With regards to these services no longer being funded by the CCG, is there potential to bring this into surgery for us to make surplus income? Due to the way that the GMS contract works, the surgery is not allowed to offer any services privately which is available on the NHS, even if these waiting lists are long.

**Carers' Update** – Dr Mitford has been doing a lot of work with carers, ensuring that they're aware of their eligibility for the influenza vaccination, carers' reviews as well as providing contact numbers for them to use for further support.

Website Review and Actions (Josh presented this to the group)

1. Move 'Repeat Prescription' button to where 'COVID-19' is;
2. On the 'Appointments' page, move the 'Consult your Doctor online' to the tops of the page. (this was later reviewed with the website designer and it was felt that it was better to link it to the 'Consult your GP online' webpage);
3. Change the wording of 'Consult your Doctor online' to 'Consult you Surgery online';
4. On the 'Consult your Surgery online' webpage, add admin query and clinical query to the website with some examples of what you'd use it for.

**Green Impact for Health** – We would like to develop a green area around the back of the surgery and were wondering if any of the PPG members would like to do some gardening to clean it up a bit? The PPG proposed that we could get in-touch with Northdale Horticulture (Community Venture)

**DVLA Reports** - Anne asked how many DVLA reports do we get through to the surgery? Apparently the DVLA are going to be cracking down on elderly drivers who may not be fit to drive, so we may receive a number more reports to be completed.

**Chairperson Vacancy** – Tracy D is no longer part of the PPG, however we'll send an e-mail out to all PPG members to see if anyone would like to take on the chairperson role.

**Next PPG Meeting - Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> September at 18:30 until 8pm**