

The Family Practice Western College Patient Participation Group

Minutes of the meeting held in TFP Board Room Face to Face: 18/9/2023

Present:

Jill White (JW) (Chair)	
Sarah Udo-Affia (SO)	
Penny Dobson (PD) (Minutes)	
Ian Goodenough (IG)	
John Plumb (JP)	
Dr Darren Smyk (GP) (DS)	
Kathy Turner (KT) (Business Manager)	

1. Apologies:

Nick Benson Keith Dawes	Anna Goodenough
Mina Malpass	Ann Nicholls

2. Guest speaker

Toby Lumber (TL), Chair of Whiteladies Practice PPG, was welcomed to the meeting. Toby is an IT expert, now retired from a top managerial IT company post. He gave an enthusiastic overview of the function and advantages for patients of the new NHS App, which was launched by NHS England in October 2022. The NHS wants to encourage more online activity, to reduce costs and the workload on overstretched NHS staff. It is not replacing other means of communication, but is designed to enhance the process.

Toby has given a similar presentation to the Whiteladies and Pembroke Road PPGs – and is keen to set up a programme, across all three Practices, to assist PPG members who need help in uploading the NHS App and those/others who might be, in the longer term, willing to transfer their new skills in helping patients across the PCN. TL is seeking volunteers to help him with this endeavour.

The advantages of the new NHS App are immediate access to:

- making GP appointments and other appointments eg Vaccination programmes
- ordering repeat prescriptions
- getting test results
- e-consult
- personal health records *See the attached presentation for more information on the App.*

In order to upload and use the App one must be registered with a Practice and over 16 years of age. Also in order to gain access to personal health records (from October 2022 , or when they joined a Practice if later), this has to be approved by the Practice concerned – there are some safeguarding reasons why some should not be able to access their records.. It was recognised that this App will not suit everyone, but TL is keen to help those who might wish to take this forward.

There was a discussion about the advantages and the potential disadvantages of the App. JW raised the issue of “do all patients necessarily want to see their health records”? Some may, but DS raised the issue, while overall very supportive of the App, that some notes may not necessarily be in the best interests of patients to see (even in areas where third party sensitivities are redacted) e.g. patients with mental health issues.

There is also the issue of medical language. There was also a concern about the visibility of all the details of test results, as this might cause unnecessary anxiety without medical guidance e.g. knowledge of what is “normal”.

DS reassured us that all test results are reviewed by a GP and the patient is sent an opinion/summary via the App (or via other methods such as text).

ACTION PPG members will reflect upon the above discussion, as it was agreed that it needed time to “bed down”. We will discuss it again at the next PPG meeting in December. In the meantime, if anyone wishes to know more about TL’s proposed programme/ take part in a session to help them upload the App/teach others, please let JW know.

3. Minutes of last Meeting (5/6/2023) and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Matters Arising. Re: Item 6

KT reported that there had been no progress re the possibility of treatment at the Exercise Clinic on Blackboy Hill being added to the Social Prescribing. TFP’s Social Prescriber, Caroline Parsons, has left. KT will investigate **ACTION KT**

4. Operation Manager’s Report (KT)

DNAs over the period June – August 2023. There were 108 GP DNA’s and 220 nurse appointment DNAs. This was fewer GP DNAs than the period March – May 2023 (220),but slightly more nurse DNAs (195). There were more proportionally more DNAs in the 65+ age group this time.

Staffing

Three receptionists have left the Practice since the last meeting, which has been a challenge. But with a lot of effort and recruitment there is now a good team in place. TFP has invested in a new navigation tool, called Sentiers, which is designed to support Receptionists in their conversations with patients and their decisions about where best to navigate them. IG raised the issue of some patients feeling uncomfortable about answering questions about their condition, but DS said that this was necessary to make sure that people were being transferred on in the most appropriate way. It was all about how this is explained and the language used. The Practice is working hard on this issue.

KT also reported that there has been a lot of sickness amongst staff over this period, plus extra work with the Flu and Covid Vaccination programme. KT mentioned that they had ordered the vaccines well in advance as instructed by the government, then were initially told that they would not be paid if they administered them before October, putting them at risk of financial loss if a fridge failed. Much energy and time was expended nationally combatting this and achieving success! PPG members said that this was very smoothly operated and congratulated the PCN staff who organised this, plus the volunteers.

One GP, Dr Emily Burn, has left since the last meeting. A new GP, Dr Grace Baxter, has joined the team. The Practice is still short of two GPs for maternity cover. It is difficult to recruit full time GPs in the current climate. Two Practice Nurses have left (one for a promotion, the other to join the 111 team); the Practice is reviewing the situation and using Bank Nurses as a temporary measure. TFP had a medical student over the summer, which was very positive.

5. AOB

DS raised the issue of practice staff's photographs being on the Practice website and in the surgery. The Practice are concerned that this puts individual members of staff at risk of intimidation and abuse, in the current climate. PPG members are supportive of these coming down. JW suggested that perhaps instead photos of our distinctive Practice building could be used more fully to "personalise" the Practice website. **Agreed.**

Also agreed that JP's feedback on his attendance at the Patient Participation Forum would be an agenda item at the next PPG meeting.

6. Date of next meeting: December 11th at 7pm (hopefully again Face to Face: JW to confirm this nearer the time).

PD 20/9/2023