

## NOTES FROM ST MARGARETS PPG (by Zoom) – 10<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at 12.30pm

Present: Lisa Anderson, Richard Eason, Nigel Edwards, Heather Flint, Linda Green, Anne Hawkins, Colin Marsh, Mary Regan, Dr Saini, Zoë Smith. Apologies received from Barbara Benedek, Sue Bond, Laila Jan, Hilary Shenken, Diana Warren.

The notes of our last meeting (via Zoom) on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022 had been circulated.

### Matters arising from that meeting

- Nigel Edwards read out a few lines from the summary of the **Healthwatch survey** focus group report on online consultations (OC), namely: lack of understanding from patients on what OC is designed to do; a need for OC to conform to accessible information standards etc. The current and potential benefits were recognised by members of the focus group. NE also drew attention to a GP Survey. 385 surveys were sent out and 143 (37%) returned. 82% described their overall experience of the practice as good (in line with local and national averages). 91% found the receptionists to be helpful (better than average). However only 65% of respondents were offered a choice of appointment (local average 73%). Lisa Anderson said that steps were being taken to improve on this.
- On the question of **hospital referrals and discharges** Dr Saini said that this was work in progress – an advice line has been set up called Rego
- Regarding **communication** Lisa reported that the notice board in the waiting room had been revamped to provide a “You have said...We have done” format to show how issues raised by patients were being addressed. Mary Regan asked if the notice board could be used to provide information on such things as cancer, obesity etc. – Mary said that she was campaigns ambassador for Cancer Research UK. Dr Saini responded by saying that a lot of this sort of information was displayed on the TV screen in the waiting room and that this information was regularly updated by a central agency, thereby avoiding the problem of trying to keep the notice board up-to-date – and tidy. The website could also be used to sign-post to health campaigns.
- Nigel thanked Lisa and Zoë Smith for updating the Practice News section on the website (it’s well worth reading!) and for uploading all recent PPG meeting notes.

### Practice Update

- Lisa reported that practice staff were, in general, no longer wearing masks and that patients were no longer required to do so – some patients, e.g. those with respiratory problems, may still wish to wear masks.
- Lisa said that patient representatives for the Primary Care Network (PCN) were being sought. From October this year a new service is being introduced called Enhanced Access and the views of patients would be vital for this.
- Lisa explained that the practice was now operating a **referral to pharmacist service** which would involve patients requiring treatments for minor ailments to be referred to a community pharmacist (CP) of their choice. This referral would be initiated by receptionists,

using a triaging process – all receptionists on this scheme will have undergone a training programme. The receptionist contacts the CP who makes contact with the patient within two hours (before 4pm on the same day). All local pharmacies have signed up to the scheme. During the initial triaging the receptionist will identify any patients, via a “red flag” system, who should be seen/called by the GP because their condition is more serious. The CP can also refer the patient back to the GP if s/he feels that the patient should be treated by the GP. This service only started a week prior to the meeting – there had been 27 referrals over 5 days with no negative feed-back – “so far so good”!

- **Staffing and appointments** Nikki, the practice nurse, has left and recruitment of a replacement nurse is ongoing, as is the recruitment of a health care assistant. The practice physiotherapist is on site more regularly now – every Friday – and an appointment (for a single, not ongoing, assessment) can be made within a week. The receptionist can refer directly to the physiotherapist via the triage system. In answer to a question from Mary Regan about asthma assessments, Dr Saini said that these had been difficult to do during the Covid pandemic. He went on to say that asthma assessments can now also be carried out by the physician associate and the pharmacist.
- **Phoned appointments** are going more smoothly now that more staff are covering phone calls. Lisa said that they had had no complaints over the last couple of months. She reminded us about the ‘queue-busting’ option – giving the patient a call back on getting to number 1 in the queue. Linda Green said that this had worked very well for her recently. The waiting time for an appointment with a named doctor is now three weeks.
- **Space in the practice** Dr Saini said that they were always looking to create more space in the practice. Currently they are looking to get rid of medical records cabinets. Mary suggested using the online website, Freecycle.
- **Questions from PPG members** Linda asked about the time taken for hospital-to-practice referrals. Dr Saini explained that this depended on the urgency of the referral. Linda also asked about social prescribing. She said that she had received a text message about this and had a call from a social prescriber but there had been no follow-up as yet (although she did point out this was only a week or so ago). Lisa said that social prescribers had an advocate/advisory, not necessarily medical, role and that the service had been set up about 18 months ago. Dr Saini will be able to give more information on this at the next meeting.
- **Next meeting** – to be confirmed