

NOTES FROM ST MARGARETS PPG (by Zoom) – 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 12.30pm

Present: Lisa Anderson, Barbara Benedek, Sue Bond, Richard Eason, Nigel Edwards, Heather Flint, Anne Hawkins, Dr Saini, Hilary Shenken, Zoe Smith, Ann Thomson, Harvey Woolfe.

Apologies: Linda Green

Sue Bond and Ann Thomson were welcomed to this, their first PPG meeting

The notes of our last meeting (via Zoom) on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020 were acknowledged

### **Practice Issues**

Dr Saini, Lisa and Zoe gave an update:

- Lisa reported that the proportion of on-line patients is increasing steadily – now at 37.2% (of whom 97% are actively using the service). Non-Covid patients continue to be seen at normal rates (via telephone, eConsult and face-to-face when necessary), although the District Nurse home-visiting service is under considerable pressure. The practice now has 2 GPs every day triaging calls/eConsults. Routine appointments (for non-named doctors) are taking 5-6 days on average.
- Flu clinics have been running at rates a lot higher than in normal years – 71.5% of over 65s and, currently, 34.1% in under 65s. More vaccines are on their way. Lisa confirmed (in answer to a question from Hilary) that any injections given in pharmacies are added to the total.
- Communications with patients are being improved. A new telephone system is being installed which will allow an almost unlimited number of lines. The eConsult contract (via NWLondon) comes to an end in March 2021 with a new system being introduced in April. Dr Saini felt sure that some aspects of the services introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic would continue, to the mutual benefit of both patients and practice, e.g. telephone consulting, which also made referral to physiotherapist, pharmacist or to admin much easier. Barbara hoped that that patients would not lose contact with the doctors they normally see. Dr Saini agreed, confirming the importance of continuity of care for those who need it.
- With regard to Covid-19 vaccination, Dr Saini that the guidance on administering the vaccine keeps changing but that it looks likely that a central Covid-19 vaccination site at the Brentford Fountain Leisure Centre will be used and there may be named practices within the CCG where vaccines can be given. As with the flu vaccine, the Covid-19 vaccine will be administered to cohorts of patients based on clinical priority. It seems from the trials that reactions to the vaccine are similar to those from other vaccines (local irritation, feeling slightly unwell etc.). The vaccine cannot be given at the same time as the flu vaccine and it appears that patients will have to wait 15 minutes before driving away from the vaccination sites. In answer to a query from Barbara, Zoe said that the Covid-19 Practice Update on the website would be updated (currently end of September) as soon as there was firm information about

the vaccine. Lisa confirmed, in answer to a question from Sue, that the vaccine will be offered to practice staff in the same way that the flu vaccine is offered – staff are free either to take up the offer or not. **Barbara said that she would forward an email from Healthwatch on attitudes to the Covid-19 vaccine.**

#### **PPG members' questions and comments**

- Harvey said that he had experienced some difficulty finding an email address to send photos to the practice following an eConsult session. Dr Saini apologised on behalf of the practice saying that he should have been given an email address at the end of the consultation.
- Hilary raised a couple of questions. One, following a fire safety training course she attended recently, related to the use of emollients (used in the treatment of dry skin conditions) which can be a fire risk – the new guidance (Drug Safety Update December 2018) covers all emollients not just paraffin-based ones (where the risk has been known for some time). The second question related to the use of steroid emergency cards (carried by patients on daily steroid treatments warning of the risk of adrenal crisis) – a patient who was recently prescribed steroids was told by the practice GP to ask the pharmacist for a 'steroid blue card' when collecting the prescription. The pharmacist had apparently never heard of this card before and the patient had to go back to the GP and ask for the card. Nigel was surprised that the pharmacist did not know about the steroid card as it has been in use for many years. These important safety issues were noted by PPG members and the practice staff present. **Lisa suggested it could go in the next practice newsletter.**
- Barbara asked if there was any way in which patients could be made more aware of medication reviews – the information is given on the right-hand side of the prescription but, perhaps, many patients might not be aware of this.

#### **Any other business**

- Zoe was asked about how much control the practice had on the layout and content of the practice website. She replied that much of the layout is controlled centrally (by NWLondon and/or the CCG). The practice can change the content but Zoe said it would be nice to have a Home Page, which doesn't appear to be possible.

**Next meeting – TBA - late January 2021?**