

PPG Meeting – Northern Medical Centre

Date: Friday, 22nd November 2024

Time: 1:00 PM

Format: Virtually (Teams)

Attendees:

- **Northern Medical Care Centre:**
 - Dr Craig Seymour (Clinical Lead)
 - Karol Budynek (Interim Operational Lead)
 - Dr Karin Schachinger (GP at Northern Medical Centre)
 - Toni Orloff (Deputy CEO – Islington GP Federation)
- **Patients:** Clare, Martin, AK, PH, EG-H, CM

Chair: Dr. Craig Seymour (CS)

Minutes: Karol Budynek (KB)

1. Introduction and Welcome

- Dr Craig Seymour, Clinical Lead at Northern Medical Centre, welcomed everyone, thanking them for attending the Patient Participation Group (PPG) meeting. This is the first PPG meeting in quite some time for the practice.
- Karol Budynek, Interim Operational Lead, also introduced himself.
- The agenda for the meeting was outlined: the first half focused on updates from Dr Seymour, followed by a session with the Integrated Care Board at 1:30.

2. Meeting Structure and Scope

- The PPG aims to be a forum for patients and staff to discuss broader issues related to the practice, particularly around strategy and the running of the practice.
- The meeting is not recorded, though a transcription function is being used to capture minutes that will be posted online (excluding sensitive or patient-specific information).
- The meeting was planned for 25 minutes for the first part, with an opportunity for open discussion at the end.

3. About Islington GP Federation (IGPF)

- Dr Craig Seymour introduced Islington GP Federation (IGPF), which owns and operates several GP practices in Islington, including Northern Medical Centre.

- IGPF has been operational for 10 years, focusing on community services, extended hours services (evenings and weekends), and supporting primary care networks (PCNs) across Islington.
- Services offered through IGPF include community ENT, gynaecology services, and support for general practice staff training.

4. Changes at Northern Medical Centre

- Dr Craig Seymour shared a brief history of the significant changes at Northern Medical Centre in the past two years.
 - **January 2023:** IGPF was asked to manage Northern Medical Centre after the practice faced a number of challenges, including temporary homelessness due to the loss of its original location at Northern Health Centre on Holloway Road.
 - Temporary clinical rooms were set up in the Village Practice and Holloway Community Health Centre (HCHC).
 - The practice is now operating out of 4 clinical rooms at HCHC, and by January 2025, will expand to eight clinical rooms and administrative spaces, which will allow for better facilities and services.
 - Dr Seymour also mentioned the changes in leadership with previous clinical leads stepping down, and his role as the new clinical lead for Northern Medical Centre.

5. Staff Changes and Recruitment

- Northern Medical Centre has undergone changes in staffing:
 - Long-time GP, Dr. Jane Wheatley, remains part of the team and handles triaging.
 - New staff members are joining, including additional GPs, nurses, and pharmacists, to provide comprehensive care for the practice's patients.
 - Dr Craig Seymour emphasized the importance of creating a stable and permanent team for continuity of care.
 - Paramedic- Sam is focusing on long-term conditions management.
- Recruitment for permanent staff is ongoing, with new doctors expected to start in early 2024. This is part of efforts to reduce reliance on locum staff and improve continuity of care.
- The team is also recruiting more nurses to address capacity issues and improve patient care, especially for long-term conditions and vulnerable populations such as those with learning disabilities.

6. Key Ethos and Practices

- Dr Seymour outlined the values driving IGPF and Northern Medical Centre:
 - **Quality Care:** Emphasis on providing care to those who need it most, especially marginalized populations, and meeting their needs proactively.
 - **Systems Over Individuals:** Focus on building robust systems that allow for safe, efficient, and clear patient care. The aim is to reduce reliance on individual efforts, making services more sustainable.
 - **Happy, Trained Staff:** Investing in staff development and creating a work environment where staff are supported, leading to better care for patients.

- **Patient-led Care:** Moving away from traditional approaches and aligning with patient needs through planned care (e.g., long-term conditions management) and improving administrative systems for easier patient access.

7. Upcoming Developments and Future Plans

- By January 2025, Northern Medical Centre will expand its facilities, providing more clinical rooms and administrative spaces, significantly improving the practice's capacity and service quality.
- There is ongoing recruitment to strengthen the team and ensure high standards of care.
- The team is working to improve the accessibility of the system, with phone wait times now averaging less than two minutes, compared to previous higher wait times. Patients no longer need to call back at set times, and the E-Consult system remains open until 4:30 pm for patient safety reasons.
- Feedback on the E-Consult system continues to be welcomed, and Dr Craig Seymour acknowledged that while it may not suit every situation, ongoing adjustments are being made to improve its functionality.

8. Friends and Family Test (FFT)

- The FFT has transitioned to an automated tool, with patients receiving digital or paper-based surveys after their appointments.
- The key question asks patients to rate their care, with options ranging from very poor to very good.
- Recent data shows that 80% of responses rated the service as good or very good. This improvement follows the shift to digital feedback, which has resulted in a higher response rate compared to the previous paper-only format.
- Positive feedback noted the speed of response, friendly and helpful staff, and smoother patient journeys. Specific staff compliments were appreciated and shared with the team.
- Negative feedback focused on waiting times, particularly for timed appointments, and the busy, noisy reception environment. Craig noted that the current reception setup is temporary and that improvements are expected with the new premises in January.

9. Feedback from the patients

- Peter, a long-time participant, praised the improvements made, particularly the triage system, which he described as "absolutely excellent." He noted that patients are now able to receive same-day appointments for issues that previously required a longer wait. He encouraged the team to continue refining the system.

10. Next Steps and Feedback Request

- Dr Seymour proposed a potential in-person meeting in the new premises in late January and asked for feedback on the timing of future meetings and the structure of the Patient Participation Group. He also sought input on whether attendees would like to discuss further topics like access or the triage system at the next meeting.