**Reach Healthcare**

Patients Participation Group (PPG)

Meeting held at 6pm on Thursday 12th October 2023

Lordswood Healthy Living Centre, Sultan Road.

Present:

Jeanette – patient

Gill – patient

Ken – patient

John – patient

Adrian – Business/Finance Manager

Sallyann – Communications lead

Lin – patient

Carol T – patient

Lesley - patient

Carol H – patient

Marion R – patient

Helen – patient

Sue – patient/Chair

1. Welcome and introductions.

The Chair welcomed all and introduced Sallyann who is Reach’s Communications lead.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Hannah, April, Christine, Marion A, Neil, Drs. Lall and Sinha.

Two members of the PPG had resigned as they had had other commitments for quite some time.

Ann E had retired from the practice.

1. Notes from the meeting of 13th July 2023 had been circulated, agreed, and displayed on the practice

website

1. Actions from previous meeting

Follow up HOPT invitation Still to be looked into.

Sensor light checked at Walderslade car park To be confirmed

Viability of reminder texts for non-urgent appointments. Completed.

Pass on appreciation to Reception team . Completed.

Sort confidentiality forms before PPG can assist patients. On Agenda

Training for PPG members to help patients register for Anima. On Agenda

Inform, via Chair, when PPG members needed at Flu/covid Clinics. Completed

Logging on issues of Anima Ongoing/Agenda

Decide whether to open Anima at 7am for working patients On Agenda

Check Admin box can remain on when Anima appointments closed On Agenda

Request GPs/others not to hang up too quickly upon phoning. Clinical Reviews by Dr. Lall

Arrange Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion training for PPG Discuss with Dr. Lall/PCN

Online Prescriptions added to Agenda Completed

Book room for 13th October. Completed.

1. Updates from practice
2. Anima

The members were given a “snapshot” on charts showing the number of Anima Requests over a short period of time in the summer. Mondays were the busiest days and there were usually up to 250 and lowest 150 online requests daily needing to be triaged by a clinician. Another chart of outcomes was shown for the same period; the vast majority were booked clinically appropriate appointments for patients. There were also admin requests dealt with, investigations booked, referrals-on made, information passed to patients on the phone and signposting to appropriate services. The members could see the high numbers daily of patients triaged on Anima.

Opening times. The practice is in discussions with the developers to try and work out better communications, e.g.so patients know when/if Anima is likely to be re-opened later in the day. It can be frustrating for patients, not knowing. It was confirmed that if patients really needed help that very day, particularly small children or frail, the telephone system was available. Patients who cannot use Anima are helped on the telephone by receptionists using a printed version of an Anima Request, for the clinician to triage with all the others. The practice will also look into why the ‘anima admin” box is not kept open when ‘medical requests’ are closed because of capacity.

Some patients struggle with Anima, some not being able to register. PPG members will assist if patients require. On agenda.

1. Telephone system

The members were shown a call summary for a month in August showing over 9,200 inbound calls and average waiting time of just over 5 minutes. This is in addition to Anima online consultation. Unanimously agreed that it was a vast improvement from before the system was installed, in particular the call-back option. At especially busy times, receptionists are called from other areas to assist with the telephone. The complaints have virtually disappeared.

1. Updates generally.

Members were told that due to “built in obsolescence”, or not supported by new systems, some equipment needed replacing in waiting rooms. The check in screen at Walderslade, and the LED equipment which used to give information for patients. The practice is to look into these issues particularly as the check-in now has to be manual at reception, leading to long queues (very cold in the winter at Walderslade) at busy times for patients turning up for appointments.

It was confirmed that languages accessibility is available on the website. Also that patients whose first language is not English can have their online devices set to translate to their first language. Discussions about changing the website, including main page, would take place in the near future as plans were being made to enhance the experience for patients and the practice.

1. Capacity/workforce

This year, a number of professionals have joined the practice which has somewhat eased the many pressures for clinicians and ensures patients can access appointments quicker than in the recent past. Having more permanent staff means using less locums which is better for continuity of care.

Full, and part time, clinical staff include 13 GPs, 1 Physician Associate, 4 Paramedics, 2 Advanced Nurse Practitioners, 2 Clinical Pharmacists, 9 practice nurses, 2 health care Assistants, and 3 nursing associates.

Full details of those and their roles are set out in the Autumn Reach Healthcare Patients Newsletter, to be finalised and distributed.

1. Newsletter/communications

Sallyann had created and produced the first Patient Newsletter (Autumn) which it is hoped, will be quarterly. It shares, in easy-to-understand words, current issues/information from the practice and the PPG, including vaccination clinics, Anima information, offers of help to register Anima, statistics of call queue times, PPG recruitment information and the names and Roles of Clinicians and clinical staff in the practice.

A draft will be sent to the members, agreed, finalised, and distributed by the end of October to:

Social media (Facebook and Next Door) and by individual PPG members in their local Networks.

On the website

Possibly in Pharmacies, the libraries?

Printed versions at receptions in Waiting rooms

Link sent via Text message by practice to patients, and information about where to find printed versions.

Members felt this was a welcome innovation, which should go a long way in keeping patients updated and informed about their practice.

1. PPG assisting at Flu and Covid Clinics Autumn 2023

A number of PPG members had kindly agreed to assist at the flu and covid clinics to be held in October, November and possibly beyond, at Lordswood and Walderslade. There were approximately three so far for each of the arranged sessions, for which the practice was appreciative.

1. PPG assisting with Anima registration; and other events in waiting rooms.

There was a discussion about the consequences of breach of confidentiality by volunteers regarding patients’ information. This included legal consequence for the partners and the practice, consequences for the volunteer, not to mention distress caused to patients. There was also a strong reminder of the trust placed in volunteers who in their role may hear information shared by a patient. Safeguarding of patients was also raised. With the exception of one or two members who are physically unable to join in community activities at the moment, PPG members have, or will, sign the agreement. It was agreed that members should have an ID, provided by the practice.

There will be training sessions with practice staff using iPads, to be arranged via the Chair on several dates. Then when members feel confident, the activity will be promoted by means of:

Sending blanket text messages to patients giving agreed dates and times.

The Newsletter

Social Media

There will be a rota of PPG members who will be able to attend and give assistance

1. Online Prescriptions system

A member asked why some prescriptions, which the practice knows are on repeat, have to be requested every 28 days, if they are not necessarily controlled drugs, when others can request every two months. The members were informed that currently, the clinical pharmacist is carrying out a review and it is hoped to simplify some of these issues, important when patients have to pay for prescriptions.

1. Meetings attended by PPG members (unless already shared online)

There had been few due to summer holidays and cancellations.

A new community reference group in Medway and Swale, which is squeezing in PPGs as unfortunately the existing PPG Chairs meetings are not being supported anymore, was cancelled due to covid uptake, much to the dissatisfaction of local PPG Chairs. It is expected to be held online at some point.

PCN PPG meeting cancelled due to ill-health, and training days. Next one in November.

PPG Champions. Work is being done across the country involving PPGs and ICBs. Not really happening in Kent & Medway.

The Chair has been invited on to the KCC Adult Social Care People’s Panel. Many Reach patients come under KCC (Maidstone BC or Tonbridge & Malling BC).

The Chair asked if members still wanted information shared online from various organisations which she receives. All members present said yes, they were useful.

1. Appointment of PPG officers (Annual)

It was proposed and seconded that the Chair should continue for another year. The Chair will continue taking meeting notes/admin until another member steps forward. But asked the members for help on various issues throughout the year. Members expressed they would, when requested.

1. Any other business
2. The group was reminded that, from 1st November 2023, NHS England, via the NHS App, will be giving access to all NHS patients of their medical records going forward. This will include consultations, prescriptions, and other areas. The practice is currently carrying out an audit of consultations and will ensure there will be sufficient information about care plans. It was requested that this information be shared with all patients in the Winter Patients Newsletter. The Chair will find the link on NHS England website and share with the group for more detailed information.
3. All members requested the practice pass on their appreciation to Ann E for the assistance she had given the group over the years and hopes she will enjoy a happy retirement.
4. Date for next meeting is **Thursday 11th January 2024** at 6pm at Lordswood. Reach to book.

ACTIONS

Follow up HOPT invitation Man Team AY

Check sensor Walderslade car park Man Team AB

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion issues Dr. Lall, PCN, Chair

Update on discussions with Anima developers re info on times Man Team

Check Anima Admin box should remain open during day Man Team AY

Update regarding equipment in waiting rooms Man Team

Draft Patients Newsletter sent to PPG as soon as possible SF and Chair

Distribution of First Newsletter online and in print SF and Chair

Produce IDs or volunteers in waiting rooms Man Team

Arrange dates for training of PPG in waiting rooms and arrange Rota Chair

Send NHS England link to members re Access to Records Chair

Pass on PPG’s appreciation to Ann E AY

Book room for next meeting Man Team