

**NOVUM HEALTH PARTNERSHIP
BARING ROAD BRANCH PATIENTS' GROUP**

**Online Meeting: 8 October 2020
4.00 p.m.**

MINUTES

Present: Lee Walker (LW, chair), Robert Thompson (RT, minute taker), Janet Thompson, Patrick Connolly, Paul Howell, Anthony Atherton, Elaine Curley, Suzy Wilkinson. Apologies had been received from Jan Gimble, Bob Blunden, Pat Blunden and Jean Mynett.

Before beginning formal business, LW outlined the etiquette for conducting online meetings in terms of waiting for cues to speak, minimising background noise, muting devices when not speaking and so on.

As no representative of Novum was present, and the group had hoped that a GP would attend, it was decided unanimously that the meeting should not proceed as planned, and that the Patients' Group should not meet again unless joined by a GP. It was agreed that the Chair should write politely but firmly to the partners making our dissatisfaction clear, and copy the letter to appropriate supervisory bodies.

There was then a brief discussion of our major areas of concern:

- Complaints about telephone access had been received by RT via email, through chance encounters on the street by LW, and by several group members from friends, neighbours and relatives.
- One group member who had been repeatedly dropped out of the telephone queue had to go to the practice in person and ask the receptionist to call back to arrange an appointment. A letter of complaint about this issue has not been answered.
- Other members reported being held on the phone for 40 minutes or an hour, with no indication of the likely waiting time.
- A member who had tried to complain to the CCG ended up being directed back to the practice itself.
- A member who received a misdirected message (obviously meant for another patient) about an important repeat check attempted to let the practice know but gave up after being on hold for an hour.

It was agreed that these problems should not have persisted for so long and amount to patient safety issues.

On the positive side, it was noted that the administration of flu vaccinations had been safe and efficient once an appointment had been arranged. The group believed that many practice services were available, but problems in arranging appointments effectively limit access.

A planned talk on health and exercise will be put on hold until arrangements for future meetings have been resolved.

A proposal that online meetings should take place at 6.00 p.m., when it is hoped that more working-age patients will be able to take part, was unanimously accepted, at least for the November meeting if one is held.

The meeting was declared closed at 4.30 p.m.

Next meetings: Thursdays 19 November at 6.00 p.m; 17 December and 28 January 2021 at a time to be confirmed. All probably online.