

Present: Bob Blunden (chair), Pat Blunden, Jan Gimble, Robert Thompson (minute taker), Janet Thompson, Patrick Connolly, David William's, Chris Blake, Lee Walker, Seyhan Yusuf BRMC), Dr Sashi Arora from 16.25). Apologies were received from Gill Lewis, Suzy Wilkinson, Paul Howell and Elaine Curley.

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as an accurate record.

Matters arising.

Chris Blake reported that the publicity material on healthy eating promised at our last meeting, to be sent to the Patients' Group through the Ringway Centre, had not arrived. However, some BRMC patients had been recommended to join the zumba group there.

The practice report promised after the last meeting had not been forthcoming.

Concerns were raised about the appointment system; there was a perception that online appointment bookings were taking precedence over those made by telephone, and some frustration was expressed that patients are asked to call back in the morning, do so, and find that all the day's appointments have already been taken.

There was also concern that patients with serious conditions had been unable to make appointments in the near future.

Dr Arora reassured the group that the practice uses its resources effectively. The difficulty in getting same-day appointments is a nationwide issue, but the practice is aware of the frustration it causes. A significant number of same-day appointments are always available, though generally insufficient for the demand. More appointment slots are available now than a few months ago, and the appointment of two Physician Associates, whose role is substantially to triage patients and ensure that those requiring GP expertise are seen by a doctor promptly, has also helped.

Dr Arora confirmed that patients with known serious conditions will be flagged up to the receptionist and will be given appropriate priority, either through a prompt appointment or through a telephone consultation. She also pointed out for those who can use it the Ask NHS app automatically prioritises and will itself arrange timely appointments where necessary.

Concern was expressed about continuing inaccuracies on the website, although the group is pleased that its minutes are available there. Robert will draw attention to the remaining corrections needed when sending this current set of minutes

Web reviews and responses

the meeting expressed concern that critical online reviews have not been acknowledged. Even if they are unreasonable or groundless, a response of some kind would be good for public relations and confidence in the practice. This point was unanimously agreed upon, and Dr Arora will look in to ways of ensuring a better reaction.

Room booking

The double booking of the room on the afternoon of our April meeting resulted from an oversight which will not be repeated

Seyhan presented a surgery report noting some change in personnel. All those who have left have been replaced, however, and staffing levels in all areas are satisfactory.

There had been 169 DNAs in May, mostly from online appointments.

AOB

There was some discussion of perceptions of the reception staff. There was a great deal to praise, for example their handling of dissatisfied and uncooperative patients and their general helpfulness. Some comments, however, both first hand and on websites, indicated perceptions of lack of interest and inefficiency, which the practice will address at a forthcoming staff training day.

Dr Arora was asked whether BRMC could provide blood test services for other practices, as the closure of the Marvels Lane centre meant that some patients now have long and difficult journeys. She explained that the resources available at BRMC are only sufficient for its own patients. Four other blood test centres are available in the area.

Dr Arora was asked whether reception staff facing difficult or possibly threatening situations can easily call for support. She explained that support is always available and that there is an alarm button for emergency situations.