

St Helens Medical Centre PPG Minutes
Monday 8th July 2024

In attendance:

Keith Bradford
Tricia Jepson
Susan Atwell
Peter Dodds
Diana Tuson
George Weech
Summer Wearn
Jolie Hurst

1. Apologies for absence

Maurice Dix, Pam Hogg, Derek Burt, Gay Allen and Anthony Smart.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes from Monday 13th May meeting, agreed, and signed off.

3. Matters arising

Keith asked for an update on the text message reminders. Summer and Jolie explained Steve, the Digital Transformation Lead for the PCN is meeting with them next week to try and see if he can help with resolving the issue as SymtmOne and Trusted Technology have not solved the problem.

The section about GPs leaving and patients being informed was discussed again. Megan said that due to the cost of sending letters, patients are no longer written to, to inform them of GPs leaving and who they are registered with. It was asked whether texts could be sent to patients, and then see how many patients it would leave to be written to. This may be an item for the next meeting.

The GP advert is still live and hoping to recruit.

Website – Keith and Peter will meet with Summer and Jolie to go through the website, date to be arranged.

Summer informed the group that reception were reminded that patients could ask for an appointment with any GP, it does not have to be the patients registered GP.

George brought an article from the newspaper about men being invited by GP surgeries for PSA testing. Jolie will look into this and feedback at the next meeting. Summer discussed the pop-up PSA testing results at the clinical meeting, and due to requirements for patients being referred, extra blood tests and a repeated PSA can sometimes be requested. Reception staff have a PSA protocol to follow.

Susan said she found the website reasonable to look at but wondered why the Easter opening hours were still showing. Summer explained the website has a latest news section, where you can also view older posts, and this shows previous posts.

4. Chairmans statement

Keith voiced his concerns about how the meetings are being taken over by personal issues, rather than generalised topics. Over the last few meetings Keith has found members are bringing up personal concerns which is not for discussion with the group. Other members agreed with Keith. George has brought comments and concerns to the meeting from patients passing information onto him, and asked if that was ok. All agreed it was, and that is the purpose of the meeting. Any personal concerns can be taken directly to Megan, Summer, or Jolie rather than aired at the meetings.

Tricia said there is a fine line between someone expressing a concern, where lessons could be learnt, which at times may be from a personal experience.

5. Surgery Update

Amy (Care–Coordinator) and Hannah (General Practice Assistant) introduced themselves to the group and explained what their roles involved.

Amy supports the care homes, The Limes, Inver House and The Elms, carries out welfare checks, dementia reviews, blood pressures, blood tests, ECGs and patients ACPs (advanced care plan) and DNR (do not resuscitate) forms. Amy acts as a link between the surgery and the care homes and spends half of her working week based at the surgery and the other half in the community.

Hannahs role is very similar - she also carries out dementia reviews, welfare checks, blood pressures, blood tests on her 2 clinical working days a week. Hannah then has 3 admin days a week where she deals with all the insurance requests. This includes DVLA fitness to drive forms, life insurance, holiday cancellation forms, benefit claims, solicitor requests and medical records requests either from patients or a third party. Hannahs role will be an item for the September newsletter.

Dr Poole joined the meeting to introduce himself, and Keith welcomed Dr Poole to the surgery on behalf of the PPG. Dr Poole said some members may remember him from doing his GP training at St Helens 15 years ago. He then went onto being a GP Partner at Argyll House Surgery, then joining St Helens as a Salaried GP, working 4 days a week in November 2023.

Peter asked why a nurse is not able to send a patient for an x-ray? Dr Poole explained that regulations do not allow nurses to refer patients for an x-ray, it has to be a GP due to risks linked to radiation exposure.

All thanked Dr Poole for popping in.

Summer shared the news that Dr Adas GP training finishes with the surgery in July so she will sadly no longer be with us. Dr Idris is our next GP Registrar joining St Helens in August. Gitta (Senior Administrator) who was the Deputy Manager for many years, will be retiring at the end of August, and the admin team will be expanding slightly to cover Gittas post plus another part time admin vacancy which is currently being advertised.

Tricia asked if there will be any changes due to the voting, Megan and Summer are not aware of any yet, but there may be changes brought in next year with the new GP contract.

6. Out of date covid vaccines – Susan

Susan had a couple of distressed patients who mentioned to her they had been given the covid vaccine and shortly after, informed the vaccine was out of date.

Summer explained the clinical staff member administering the vaccine had looked at the expiry date, not the post thaw date. The vaccine was given to a group of 20 patients. These patients did not to be re-vaccinated and no harm was caused to any patients. The clinical staff member involved is now overseen when vaccines are checked and administered. A significant even was raised at the surgery, the regional team and the ICB were also notified. All patients involved have been informed and any worries they may have will be supported by the surgery.

7. Checking in for appointments (George)

George had some feedback from a couple of patients who had checked in together for their separate appointments. Patient 1 had seen the nurse and was advised she needed to see a GP that same day. Patient 1 made an appointment at the desk but as it was a while away, the receptionist advised they went off to get a coffee and come back. When both patients arrived back at the surgery patient 2 did not check back in as she thought she was already checked in for her routine booked appointment. Unfortunately, the patient then missed her appointment. George asked whether in that kind of situation, it needs to be made clear to patients to check back in when they return. Jolie said due to a fire risk, patients would only be checked in when they are at the surgery. George understood this and Summer advised she would take this is the next reception meeting to mention.

Susan asked if staff are aware of patients with hearing difficulties, Summer said they are when in the patients record. A reminder can be set up for staff to see on the patient's home screen.

9. Newsletter ideas

Keith asked if anyone has any item suggestions for the newsletter, to please email either himself or Jolie.

Peter suggested a PPG section, this was in the June edition about who the PPG were. After a discussion it was agreed Peter would put something together for patients to read about the PPG, to encourage them to make contact with member regarding any comments or concerns they may have. This is to also go in the Whats On Magazine.

Susan mentioned about the TRs (temporary residents) being a topic for the newsletter which Tricia had brought up before. Jolie explained there had been a conversation about this, but as TRs do not have much of an effect on appointments, Jolie was not sure what needed to be shared. Megan said now patients can talk to their GP on the phone and medications can be sent from their registered GP surgery to a local chemist, not as many TRs need appointments when on holiday. Some do, and we are aware of the possible extra demand and plan extra on day appointments in over the summer holidays.

10. AOB

Keith asked how many complaints the surgery receives. Megan said on average 1-2 a month, not all complaints are upheld as some are resolved by contacting the patient.

Keith wondered whether all patients are aware they can use the check in screen in the entrance to the building to check in for appointments. Could this be a newsletter item?

Tricia has sent her apologies for the September meeting.

Date of next meeting – Monday 9th September 2024, 10am.