

Aylmer Lodge and Cookley PPG Thursday 27 January 2022 via zoom.

Attended by Corinne Wood (Practice Manager), Julia Stanfield (Chair), Alison Price (Secretary), Barbara Pugh, John Wilson, Barry Hibble.

Apologies : Cathryn Plain, Audrey Jones, Margaret Clilverd, Joan Kidd, Heather Fulcher, Carol Hinett, Keith Lawrence, Melissa Rogers, Mary Rayner, Shelagh Ravenscroft, Steve Ravenscroft, Andrew Mullins, Elaine Botfield.

Speakers : Rose Carver and Eva Neo Harris from DIAL Worcestershire

1. Julia welcomed members to the meeting especially Barry Hibble, a new member. The meeting arranged for December had been cancelled, due to surgery pressures.

2. Minutes from the last meeting were approved. Matters outstanding -

A meeting with Nurse Heather to discuss recruitment to the PPG had not yet been arranged. In the current situation, PPG are asking for help from the surgery to recruit a more diverse membership.

ACTION Corinne to arrange.

Members had asked Corinne to bring some demographic information to this meeting. This had not been possible because of pressure of work.

ACTION Corinne to send out details to members.

The suggestion of a poster in reception to promote and explain the work of the surgery was outstanding.

ACTION Corinne to arrange.

3. Rose and Eva from DIAL Worcestershire spoke about their work with DIAL(Disability and Information Advice Line) . This is a free, confidential helpline for people with disabilities, their carers and families and professionals. They can help with issues like benefit forms, advice on mobility aids and leisure activities . During covid, volunteers were not used, so officers were under pressure. Rose and Eva are employed on the government Kick Start scheme. Their initial contracts have been extended. They are keen to build up contacts and get into the community, for instance they are working closely with St Peter's Church on Birchen Coppice. They invited members to share information about small groups they know and are particularly interested to identify younger people and those with hidden disabilities. Currently the majority of their work is with physical disability. A member suggested that linking in with the Social Prescribing Service may be helpful to them. Barry told them about his Cookley charity, a visiting service for the elderly and disabled - this has slowed during the pandemic and they are looking for new referrals. ACTION Barry to send details and Alison to forward these to the surgery. Eva has secured funding for a focus group in February to hear experiences of people with physical disability in covid. John offered to take part.

ACTION Eva to forward details to the practice.

Subsequent ACTION Corinne to circulate to nurses.

DIAL are looking for more volunteers to fulfil a variety of roles. Training is offered for those volunteers manning the helpline. Currently there is no capacity for home visits.

4. Practice Report

Corinne explained that the practice was still under tremendous pressure and very much affected by covid. 5 receptionists and Corinne herself had recently had covid and every day this week a staff team has been impacted. Alterations to services were often needed at short notice because of sickness.

An update on staffing is as follows : Dr Riley has left ;Dr Hutchinson is leaving in February; Dr Southall joins as a new GP in March; the current registrar will be retained ; Dr Lord will be taking maternity leave from May and there is locum cover for this. New receptionists are being recruited to relieve the pressure on the phones. The nursing team is stable and a new HCA joined in December . It is proving difficult to recruit an Advanced Nurse Practitioner, so a locum has been in place since November and Sheila Varilone has come back from retirement on an ad hoc basis. Lisa Benton and Dr Carter have had a meeting with the organisation who installed the new telephony system because of negative feedback about this. They asked whether this was a problem with the system or just due to high demand. They were advised that essentially the system was being used correctly but some ideas for improvements had been suggested.

Changes to the voicemail messages have just been made. Members are asked to provide Julia and Alison with any feedback about this so that the practice can be informed.

ACTION members to contact Julia and Alison with any patient feedback about the telephone system.

The surgery are working closely with the Primary Care Network and good relationships have developed. The vaccination programme is working very well with weekly clinics which accept both walk ins and booked appointments. All boosters have been completed. 65000 vaccinations have been delivered from the building. There is a good atmosphere at vaccination clinics . Julia has stewarded at clinics so has witnessed this too.

In December, some services had been stopped by National Health Service England (NHSE) to enable a faster roll out of the programme but these have now resumed.

Members suggested that more positive stories were posted on social media to promote the work they do. Corinne acknowledged that when under pressure, the regular use of social media did not rank highly.

5. Patients feedback

There had been positive feedback about vaccinations, the new ring back system and the ENT service at the surgery.

However there were continuing concerns about telephone waiting times, the long answerphone message and prolonged waits for call backs. A patient had reported that they were not phoned back by a doctor the same day- Corinne asked for details so that she could investigate. She acknowledged that there had been long waiting times this week because of GP sickness and the subsequent daily impact on their work. Members suggested that social media, in particular Facebook, could be used to keep patients informed. Corinne said this did happen on occasions. Members had been told of 3 occasions when patients said that receptionists had been discourteous and asked whether this was a training issue with new reception staff. Corinne requested that members try and obtain more detail from the patients concerned so that she can identify the problems.

A member had raised issues with repeat prescriptions for controlled drugs. Corinne explained that there are procedures in place but was aware that patients are complaining about Cohens, which is independent from the practice. Dirty areas and long queues had been mentioned. Members asked if the surgery could influence this- Corinne agreed to look into this, possibly speaking to the landlord. ACTION Corinne to look in to concerns raised about Cohen's.

A member asked whether there could be a dedicated email address for patients expressing compliments, concerns or complaints and another dedicated email address for cancelling appointments. Corinne thought this might be possible. ACTION Corinne to look into this and report back to PPG.

A member had raised an issue around the routine procedure for replacement of prolapse rings and why it was necessary to make a phone call, then wait for a telephone consultation before getting an appointment for this . Corinne would like more details about this case.

Staffing at Cookley for blood tests was discussed. Corinne is having a meeting today with a nurse to discuss a well-managed reintroduction of this service. She said suggestions like patients seen on the car park would not be appropriate.

Temporary registration of patients who are students was discussed. A particular issue was raised which led a patient to have a 5 week delay in accessing vital medication. Corinne said this was most unusual.

6. Development of PPG. Julia reminded the group that she would be stepping down as chair at the AGM . A member has now come forward who is offering to take the chair. Alison is willing to continue as secretary if members want this. John has agreed to take up a role managing the noticeboard in reception. Following recent resignations, there is still a need to recruit more members and if possible from diverse ages and backgrounds. Because PPG members are not able to recruit using normal processes like floor walking, help will be needed from the surgery. ACTION Corinne to arrange a meeting with Julia and Alison to find ways to take this forward.

The next PPG meeting will be the AGM at 2pm on Thursday 24th March. This will be held in person at the surgery, covid permitting.

ACTION Corinne to book meeting room.

Alison Price

