

**Patient Participation Group Meeting****28/08/2024 at 2pm****Minutes:** Bruna Batista**Attendees:** Krishnaa Pandya, Huw James, Sana Khan, Danny McCrea.

**Participants:** Jacqueline Soale, Joan Ratcliffe, Ken Marriott, Nira Raguseelan, Gordon Kay, Diane Wadsworth, Minaxi Woodley, Carol Trower, Elizabeth Vanegas, Clio Springer, Neil Armour, Norman Young, Lesley Stanley, Graham Lyon, David Gladwell, Sally Harrison, Sally Cook, Fiona Nicol, Mira Armour, Sameer Bhiwapurkar, Awsam Garjo, Ahmed Gumaa

Minutes
<b>Introduction:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Huw James welcomed participants and provided an overview of the meeting.</li><li>Attendees were encouraged to ask questions during the presentation.</li><li>It was noted that the meeting would be recorded for ease in preparing minutes.</li><li>Participants were reminded to mute their microphones to avoid feedback.</li></ul>
<b>Team Introductions and Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Huw James introduced himself as the Patient Services Manager and the chair for the meeting.</li><li>Sana Khan (Practice Manager) and Dr. Danny McCrea (Senior Partner) were also introduced.</li></ul>
<b>Presentation of Agenda:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The agenda included updates on East Croydon Medical Centre (ECMC), general primary care updates, an operational review, National GP survey results, and any other business.</li></ul>
<b>ECMC Updates:</b> <p><u>Staff changes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Linda: Mental Health Practitioner, providing first contact for mental health issues (via GP referral).</li><li>Bruna: Compliance Lead, involved in administrative tasks and taking meeting minutes.</li><li>Amanda: New Lead Nurse with extensive experience.</li><li>Jake: New Lead Nurse Practitioner.</li><li>Three new registrars: Dr. Naya, Theo, and Amrita, being mentored by Dr. McCrea, Dr. Rybinski, and Dr. Malik. Also, more appointment is offered as they are qualified doctors.</li><li>A new trainee pharmacist under the mentorship of Krishna (Lead Pharmacist).</li><li>Two trainee nurses and one nurse associate added to the nursing team.</li><li>The practice now has a large, well-rounded team, including 13 salaried GPs, various specialists, and a solid nursing team.</li><li></li></ul>
<b>Operational changes:</b>

#### Sample Bottles for Urine Tests:

- Reverting to the pipette system used previously.
- Posters and flyers will be provided for guidance.

#### Prescription Request Process:

- No more phone requests for prescriptions to avoid errors and ensure an auditable process.
- Requests must be handwritten or emailed; voicemails can be left on the prescription line for follow-up by clerks.
- Registration process: almost exclusively online now, Huw explained that registrations are processed much quicker now.
- eConsult: eConsult are triaged by clinicians and so ECMC have two paramedics, 2 physician associates, that go through the eConsult daily. They will have a look through the inquiry then they tell reception to book an appointment for same day, next day or in two weeks' time. Sana Khan do assure patients that is a clinician responsible to the outcome provided by reception to the patient.

#### **Site Security:**

- Having issues with squatters and sleepers in the car park.

#### **General Primary Care Updates:**

Strikes – GP: Sana Khan explained that now we don't have any GP doctors in planning of any strikes, so also services will be running as normal even if there were strikes, the rest of the services are the paramedics, appointments with nurses, pharmacists, physios, that will all carry on as normal. Reassuring that we would obviously make sure that we can work around that if a strike happens, and we give enough notice to the patients.

Capped appointments: working at BMA appointments guidelines, so there are no changes to the appointment offer.

MPOX: We're monitoring closely, and we have procedures in place for any infectious disease.

#### **Operational Review:**

##### Appointment Cancellation System:

- A new appointment cancellation option was introduced two months ago.

- Patients are prompted to cancel appointments automatically, freeing up slots for others without requiring a receptionist to intervene.

#### Voicemail Service:

- 4,643 voicemails were received in the last three months.
- Average turnaround time for voicemail responses is 2 hours 45 minutes.

#### eConsult System:

- eConsult are triaged by paramedics and Physician Associates (PAs), clearing a significant number without needing GP intervention.
- 14,912 visits to the eConsult portal in the last three months.
- 1,462 eConsult were signposted to external services, reducing the burden on the practice.
- 5,794 eConsult were submitted to the practice, resulting in 303,476 saved appointments.
- eConsult are mostly handled on the same day unless received late in the evening.

#### Appointment Statistics:

- The practice offers an average of 1,323 appointments per week.
- 92% of appointments are booked within the 2-week target, with 53% booked within 1 week.
- 8% of appointments are for long-term condition reviews, which are scheduled further in advance.

#### **GP National Survey Results:**

- 81% of respondents rated their experience with the practice positively.
- Areas for improvement identified include ease of contact and the usefulness of the website.
- A new website is being developed to improve patient access and information.

#### Discussion Points:

- Gordon Kay (Healthwatch Croydon): Raised a query about the limited number of surveys sent out (490) considering the large patient list.
- Sana Khan: Clarified that the national survey is not controlled by the practice and that they conduct their own in-house surveys with 4,000-5,000 responses, yielding more positive feedback.

- Gordon Kay: Commended the practice for their proactive approach to gathering patient feedback and suggested it could serve as a model for other practices.

#### Upcoming Events:

- NHS app: NHS App promotion. App can be used for prescription requests, contact the practice, see medical records, proxy access, appointments. eConsult will be synced soon. Danny McCrea Highlighted the historic approach of discouraging phone-based prescription requests due to a high incidence of errors. Patients who are not computer literate were encouraged to submit written requests, potentially with the assistance of a neighbour.
- RSV Clinics: Pts eligible for this will be recalled starting from this week. The antenatal service is not yet administering the RSV vaccine, so pregnant patients are encouraged to book with the practice directly. The RSV vaccine is targeted at pregnant women (over 28 weeks) and those aged 75 and over.
- Flu and Covid Clinics: Huw and Sana provided an overview of the upcoming vaccination campaigns, which include flu, COVID, and the newly introduced RSV vaccine. The campaigns will start on the 3rd, with both walk-in clinics and scheduled appointments available.  
The Booking Process: Patients will receive messages if they are eligible and can book appointments online, which has been a successful method in previous campaigns. For those unable to book online, they can call or visit the practice for assistance. This year, the flu vaccine is available to everyone, not just registered patients, if they come for a COVID vaccine. There will be dedicated flu and COVID clinics running in the practice, especially from the 3rd to the 11th, with Saturdays open for all, including non-registered patients.

#### Questions:

##### 1. Patient Records and IT System Issues:

Norman Young expressed satisfaction with the improvements in the IT system, particularly the NHS app's usability. However, he raised concerns about important documents from hospitals or consultants often getting lost and not being added to patient records. He questioned the bottleneck in the process and sought clarification on what is being done to address this issue.

Sana Khan explained that the Medical Centre uses an old system called Docman, where hospitals send documents through a portal, and staff at the Centre then manually attach these to patient records. On average, the Centre receives 300-400 documents daily, which are then clinically coded and attached. Issues arise when documents are sent via post, as these are more prone to being lost or delayed.

She mentioned that a more efficient system exists, where hospitals can send documents directly into the Centre's clinical system called EMIS, but currently, they must follow the process contracted

to Docman. Sana Khan also encouraged patients to submit scanned copies of any hospital documents they receive before the Centre, to ensure they are added to their records promptly. Additional Information from Danny McCrea: added that there is a system called Cerner used by hospitals in South West London that the Medical Centre can access. This system allows access to hospital letters and other medical records for hospitals within this region. However, for hospitals outside of South West London, the Centre cannot access documents directly, which might cause delays in updating records.

Norman Young: Brought up issues with the feedback system for eConsults, noting that patients sometimes receive survey requests that don't specify which appointment they refer to, particularly when multiple eConsults are made. This can make it difficult to provide accurate feedback.

Huw James: Acknowledged the issue and committed to investigating it further to ensure that feedback requests are more specific and timely.

## 2. Document Handling Timeframes:

Norman Young asked about the expected timeframe for documents from hospital visits to appear in patient records.

Danny McCrea and Sana Khan noted that it varies widely, depending on the hospital and department. Sana Khan shared a personal experience of waiting two months for a letter from Mayday Hospital. The Medical Centre does follow up with hospitals when delays occur.

## 3. Name GP for Older Patients and Appointment Booking:

Sally Cook raised a concern about patients over 65 or 70 not consistently seeing their named GP, which could be confusing for them. She asked if the appointment booking system could ensure that older patients see their named GP.

Huw James explained that while every patient has a registered GP, it is challenging to ensure they see the same GP every time due to the current appointment model, which prioritizes availability and urgent needs. However, routine appointments can be booked in advance with the named GP, and patients are encouraged to plan ahead if they wish to see their specific GP.

## 4. Distinction Between Care Coordinators and Receptionists:

Minaxi Woodley inquired about the ability to distinguish between care coordinators and receptionists when a patient visits the surgery.

Huw James clarified that receptionists are stationed at the reception areas on each floor, while care coordinators work in separate administration rooms due to their need to make outgoing calls and manage other tasks. Receptionists will always greet visitors, and care coordinators will identify themselves when contacting patients.

## 5. Privacy Concerns in Public Spaces

Minaxi Woodley expressed concern about privacy when discussing matters with administrative staff, noting that she had to converse in a corridor due to a lack of private spaces.

Huw James acknowledged this issue and mentioned that while there are private rooms available, they are sometimes fully booked. He suggested that if privacy is needed, patients could ask to be taken to a quieter area or book a private consultation in advance.

#### 6. Use of Coordinate My Care (CMC)

Carol Trower asked if CMC is still being actively encouraged, especially for end-of-life care.

Danny McCrea explained that CMC has been replaced by a new system called Vista, which serves a similar purpose and includes proactive care planning, including end-of-life questions.

#### 7. Healthwatch and PPG Network

Gordon Kay from Healthwatch highlighted their efforts to support Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) and invited members of the meeting to join their PPG network. He mentioned that Healthwatch gathers insights on various health and social care services, which could be valuable for the surgery.

Huw James expressed interest in participating in the PPG network and requested to remain on the Healthwatch mailing list for future updates and collaboration opportunities.

#### 8. Challenges for Visually Impaired Patients and people who don't use smartphones/laptops

Diane Wadsworth: Raised concerns about accessibility for visually impaired patients, particularly regarding the eConsult system and booking same-day appointments. She emphasized that such patients might feel disadvantaged as they can't access online services and have limited options outside of waiting for routine appointments.

Sana Khan: Responded that appointments are not strictly released at 8 AM and that the booking process involves a triage system where urgent cases are prioritized. Patients calling in are asked questions by receptionists that mirror the eConsult process, ensuring that they are treated fairly and appropriately.

Danny McCrea: Suggested that visually impaired patients could have a "buddy" to assist with online applications in emergencies, though Diane pointed out the importance of privacy and autonomy in handling personal information.

Sana Khan: Mentioned that reception staff can assist patients in completing an eConsult over the phone if all appointments are booked. Plans are also underway to install kiosks in the waiting area to help patients learn how to use the online system.

Huw James: Added that reception staff are trained to empathize with and accommodate patients with disabilities, ensuring that their needs are addressed, even if this sometimes means deviating from the standard process. Special circumstances will always be taken into account, possibly involving escalation to a senior receptionist or manager.

#### 9. Issue Raised by Nira Raguseelan:

Nira, a patient of East Croydon Medical Centre for 15 years, expressed difficulties in accessing the NHS app after changing her email and no longer working with the NHS. Despite multiple attempts, including assistance from reception staff, she was unable to log in or get support from the Help Centre.

Huw acknowledged the issue and assured Nira that he would personally contact her to troubleshoot the problem further. He offered to try additional methods and suggested that this issue might be an anomaly rather than a widespread problem.

Gordon highlighted a community training program funded by the NHS, run by Clear Community Web, that helps individuals who are less confident with technology, including NHS app usage.

Huw mentioned the restrictive hours and specific location (Croydon Library) of this training but agreed to share the information with patients who might benefit.

#### 10. Handling Patients Unable to Connect Online

Gordon Kay asked how the practice handles bookings for patients who cannot connect online. Huw James answered that patients who cannot book online can call the practice directly. The practice is sending out messages in batches to avoid system overload, with around 1000 patients eligible for the RSV vaccination.

#### **Actions:**

- Sana Khan to continue advocating for the implementation of a more efficient system where hospitals can send documents directly into EMIS.
- Patients are encouraged to scan and send any hospital documents they receive to the Medical Centre to ensure these are promptly added to their records.
- Reception Staff to be reminded to offer patients over 70 the option to book appointments with their named GP when possible, especially for routine follow-ups.
- Huw James to remain in contact with Gordon Kay and explore further collaboration with Healthwatch.
- Consider booking private consultation rooms in advance for patients needing confidential discussions.
- Follow up with any interested PPG members regarding joining the Healthwatch PPG network.
- Address privacy concerns raised by Minaxi Woodley by exploring ways to better utilize available space for private conversations.
- Investigate and address the feedback system issue mentioned by Norman Young.
- Continue the development and implementation of support mechanisms for visually impaired and other disabled patients, including the planned kiosks.
- Ensure that reception staff remain well-trained in empathetic and flexible service delivery.
- Huw James: To contact Nira Raguseelan to resolve her NHS app issue.
- Practice Team: To share information about the community training for the NHS app with patients who may benefit.
- Vaccination Team: Continue sending out messages and manage online bookings while providing alternatives for those unable to book online.