

BLOFIELD SURGERY PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

Draft Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday, 4th February, 2025 at 5:30 pm at the Surgery
(rearranged from 28th January because of power cuts)

Present: Gill Henry, Locum Practice Manager; Peter Bucknall, Golda Conneely, Al Daly, Ruth Gaskin, Jane Hancy, Brian Hendrey, Susan Rowe, Roger Sandall, Stella Shackle and Arthur Wiffen

Apologies for absence received from Dr P Cronin, Ivan Block, Pat Budd and Len Thurston

1) Welcome and introductions: Gill apologised that the meeting arranged for the previous week had had to be postponed because of a power cut. She welcomed all to the meeting, asking everyone to introduce themselves as Jane Hancy is a new member of the group.

2) Minutes of the last meeting had been circulated and were agreed as accurate.

3) Matters Arising:

a) NHS App: at the previous meeting, members were encouraged to download the app and report how easy or difficult it was to use. Several members confirmed it had been easy to download and use. Concerns were raised however about patients who for various reasons would not be able to use the app.

4) Update – Staff at the Surgery: Gill H reported that:

- **IT and Facilities:** Ricky Connew had left the practice team and a replacement is to be recruited.
- **Dispensing Team:** several members are on or about to go on maternity leave, plus another member sadly is on long term sickness leave. Three new members of the team have been recruited, but the change in the team had resulted in a longer waiting time for prescriptions to be dispensed and led to some patient complaints. It was suggested that perhaps a notice could be compiled and a note put on medication packaging, apologising that there are “staffing issues” within the team leading to some delays.
- **Practice manager:** it is understood that Katie may be back to work in May.
- **Practice nursing team:** an experienced practice nurse has been recruited.
- **GPs:** Dr David Daley has begun working at the practice for eight sessions per week, covering the same number of sessions as previously undertaken by Drs Ledward and Vokins.

5) Patient numbers/DNAs

The list size currently stands at 8,737 patients. This is an increase of 47 patients since end October 2024.

Gill also reported that a number of complaints had been received by the practice, some dealing with dispensing delays, as already discussed, and another regarding the standard and level of care from the family of an elderly patient.

Analysis of DNA figures from 2024: Peter Bucknall had undertaken an in-depth analysis of patients not attending for booked appointments in 2024. There were two date ranges: January – June and July – December. He had counted the number of appointments missed and the number of minutes therefore wasted by GPs, nurses, healthcare assistants/phlebotomists, mental health/Mind clinicians and the physiotherapist. The total of DNA appointments for the year was 2,094, with the majority being with nurses and healthcare assistants/phlebotomists.

Peter was thanked for this work and discussion centred on:

- How far ahead were appointments made and might patients forget? (*Appointments can be booked up to six weeks ahead.*)
- Are patients reminded? (*Yes, if their mobile numbers have been recorded and permission given for contact by the surgery.*)
- Are patients contacted if appointments have been missed? (*Patient circumstances are often checked and if concerns felt, the patient would be contacted.*)
- Are “repeat offenders” rebuked in any way? (*Patients can be contacted and reminded of their lack of attendance and the consequent issues felt by the practice. They might be written to, too. However patients cannot be removed from the list as the practice cannot deny healthcare to a patient. On analysis the practice has identified that it is often younger patients who do not attend.*)
- DNAs were higher during the winter vaccination season.
- It was suggested that a notice be compiled to be put up in the surgery and on the TV system illustrating the clinical hours lost by patients not attending and the consequent cost to the practice.

Any further suggestions about how to tackle this issue would be appreciated – please send to Gill H.

6) Student GP training: Gill H confirmed that the practice had hosted two year 4 medical students during December 2024/January 2025. This well-structured training programme included GP supervision, patient permission and a GP debrief after consultations. It was suggested that patients could be informed about the scheme perhaps via the TV system. Gill H asked that if PPG members heard any patient concerns about the programme, to please let her know.

7) Park Run practice update: Ivan Block had sent a message for Gill H to discuss with the meeting regarding the Surgery organising a Park Run session at Lingwood one Saturday morning, to encourage healthy lifestyles. Issues included ensuring a sufficient number of experienced volunteers are available. Possible date for the event: Saturday, 21st June, 2025 (9 am start).

8) PPG volunteers to help in the surgery: Gill H had already proposed that PPG members might feel willing and able to demonstrate the NHS app and help patients download and use it.

A further aspect of patient care was also discussed – **the Titan paper-free repeat dispensing system** - <https://www.titanpmr.com/> The following is a quote from Dispensing Doctor Experts website:

Titan PMR has become the first viable software to be given full release authority by the NHS to provide electronic prescription services (EPS) to dispensing doctors.

As a dispensing doctor practice you provide a vital service to your rural community and you can now offer your patients the same level of benefits and efficiencies that electronic prescriptions and Titan PMR have brought to pharmacies around the UK.

Patients will enjoy lower waiting times, enhanced safety and improved service thanks to the use of barcode scanning, artificial intelligence and digital workflow in the back office. These features will also increase your efficiency, will help to reduce dispensing errors and improve organisation, increasing your capacity while enjoying the ability to integrate with other technologies.

Patients for whom the surgery can dispense will need to order their own repeat prescriptions, via the practice website SystmOnline or by writing out the prescription names/strengths or completing a form to be provided in the surgery. Turn around time is expected to be 7 days. It is anticipated that the system will reduce errors and free up GP time.

The surgery is likely to organise drop in sessions to help patients use the system, and any assistance PPG members could offer for this would be appreciated.

Several queries and concerns were raised, and it was agreed that an interim PPG meeting be arranged specifically to discuss the Titan system.

9) Newsletter: Peter Bucknall had kindly compiled a new practice newsletter, which was reviewed and agreed by the meeting. This led to some comments about keeping practice information up to date, e.g. names of current clinicians, and perhaps identifying specialised clinics for patients.

10) AOB :

- a) **Sound proofing in the building – feedback:** Gil H confirmed that comments had been made about patients being able to hear consultations taking place in Rooms A10 and A11 from the waiting area. Remedies are being considered, perhaps a radio transmitting to the area.
- b) **New GP Contract – update:** although there had been some discussion in the media about this, there are as yet no firm proposals for the NHS budget 2025/26 and any change in practice required. Once the contract has been issued, further details will be made available to the group.
- c) **Open day for the practice – looking at services run from the building and local groups:** Len Thurston had sent through a message encouraging the practice to “aim to be excellent”. Reference was made to “courses for members” but the context was not clear and will be discussed at a future meeting.

The proposal to hold an Open Day at the surgery had been made some time ago and July 2025 had been mooted, but nothing definite has yet been agreed. It was proposed that this be a separate agenda item at the next meeting.

- d) **Lessons learned following the power cut recently:** low level lighting to be considered for stairways and steps, in meeting rooms and perhaps in areas of the car park. An “uninterrupted power supply” system might be considered to avoid the practice computer suddenly shutting down in the event of a power cut.
- e) **Directional signs in reception:** it was queried whether it might be possible to install signs directing patients to the various areas of the surgery, e.g. to the lift / stairs.
- f) **Volunteering service / rota:** it was suggested that perhaps patients would find it useful if a volunteer could be in the surgery entrance area to help direct people, offer leaflets, help with e.g. the NHS app, hear patients’ suggestions or concerns. Several PPG members felt this could be a useful service and seemed willing to volunteer. For further consideration and discussion.

11) Date of next meeting: Tuesday, 22nd April, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

PPG members were thanked for their attendance. The meeting finished at 7:00 p.m.