



## MINUTES OF A PATIENT REPRESENTATIVE TEAM MEETING HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2025

Present: Grace Barden (GB), Megan Birch (MB), Bob Cooper (BC), Janet Copeland (JC), Tina Coulson (TC), Sheila Drury (SD), Marion Hellmuth (MH), Val Hyams (VH), Pat Osbourne (PO), Sheila Shepherd (SS)

### Action

1,2 & 3	<p><b>Welcome and Apologies.</b></p> <p>BC opened the meeting and welcomed our new member, Val Hyams, and our guest this meeting, Dr Grace Barden.</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Margaret Barton (MEB)</p> <p>BC advised that 2 new members will hopefully be joining us at the December meeting.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Minutes of the last meeting and Actions not covered by agenda items</b></p> <p>The Minutes of the last meeting were agreed. Actions arising from them not covered by agenda items:-</p> <p>4(3(9c)) PO had contacted Boots but only have leaflets available that have their logo on. Kamsons have said they will send any spare leaflets to the surgery.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Name Badges/Members helping with winter vaccination clinics.</b></p> <p>It was agreed badges would have just the first name and PRT.</p> <p>Megan ran through the procedure on the day, and it was agreed that PRT volunteers would be based in the corridor to guide patients to consulting rooms as they become available. PO had not received the email asking for volunteers and MB will resend.</p>	<b>MB</b>
6.	<p><b>Feedback from Network PPG/Online meeting themes/West Sussex meeting notes.</b></p> <p>BC had attended an online meeting of the Network PPG and is awaiting the date of the next meeting if any of our members would like to attend.</p> <p>The main theme from patients was the problem of accessing some services on the NHS app. GB advised that not all services are available on the app. Questions were raised as follows:</p> <p><i>a) Is help available for patients to learn how to access both the NHS and Patient Access apps?</i></p> <p>MB advised that some libraries have free IT help and some GP practices have tech champions. If there was enough demand, PHMG could</p>	

	<p>potentially have drop-in sessions on a Saturday. However, new patients are recommended to sign up for our online services at the point of registration and a good percentage of patients already use them.</p> <p><i>b) Is there a way to delete old messages on the NHS app?</i> It would appear that these cannot be deleted.</p> <p>More test results are being sent via the NHS app.</p> <p>The NHS England “You and Your General Practice” Guide that BC had circulated with the agenda, is now available online.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Staff updates</b></p> <p>Dr Jasmine Bhangra joined the practice in August as a salaried GP and will take over 6 sessions previously covered by Dr Ganeshkumar.</p> <p>Final checks are being carried out for the appointment of a new GP Partner who will hopefully be joining on 1<sup>st</sup> November. They will also be covering 6 sessions.</p> <p>Our Practice Nurse, Kerry Scott, will be returning in November and we have a new Practice Nurse, Natalie.</p>	
8.	<p><b>Updates from Megan</b></p> <p>a) New telephone system – feedback has been positive. The facility for call recording has been helpful, both for training and to check if a complaint is received.</p> <p>VH used it for the first time this morning and said that on call-back you get a text showing where you are in the queue, but the text seems to time-out. MB advised that it can be reactivated if you go back into the text but she will feedback to the provider.</p> <p>Callers have to listen to quite a long message when selecting option 2. MB will check whether this can be abbreviated.</p> <p>Information on the new system has been placed on social media and in the Copthorne Village magazine.</p>	<p><b>MB</b></p> <p><b>MB</b></p>
9.	<p><b>Changes to the GP Contract 2025/26</b></p> <p>These come into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> October. There are not too many changes, the main one being NHS England require practices to provide online access to patients throughout the day. Dr Barden advised that PHMG has concerns around patient safety as these online requests may not be viewed by staff immediately. They would be okay for routine requests, but certainly not suitable for emergency contact. There is a danger that patients would use this facility for symptoms that require an emergency response.</p> <p>This change is not being made at the present time as the practice view is that this would put patients at risk. On a phone call, patients get a response straight away, but not online.</p> <p>Discussion took place around the facility to add options for routine appointments that patients could select from, e.g. medication review, routine blood tests, annual review. As Safeguarding Lead, Dr Barden would want it</p>	

	very clear what is routine.	
10.	<p><b>Compliments and Complaints</b></p> <p>TC advised that more compliments than complaints had been received since our last meeting.</p> <p>Complaints had included not being able to book appointments ahead, although not seeing problems with book on the day.</p> <p>There are still a lot of missed appointments with patients not cancelling, there were 136 missed in August. One reason may be that patients book ahead and then get an on the day appointment and forget to cancel the original one. This is despite reminder texts being sent. SD asked whether there could be an option on these texts to either confirm or cancel the appointment as you can on restaurant bookings. MB didn't think so but will check. There is also an option on the phone system to cancel appointments.</p> <p>SD said she had recently come to the surgery just before 8 o'clock one morning to book an appointment for a neighbour. By the time the appointment booking system had opened at 8, people were queuing outside. This isn't so bad in the summer, but not so good in the winter or if it's pouring with rain. She wondered whether there could be a numbering ticket system, as there used to be for blood tests at the hospital, so that patients could sit in the waiting room and still keep their place in the queue. The practice view is that patients shouldn't be encouraged to queue for an appointment, it is much quicker on the phone as the patient's details are automatically recognised from their phone number.</p> <p>JC disagreed with this view as it is difficult to get an on the day appointment with a specific doctor. She has left home at 7.30 to drive to the surgery in order to get an appointment, and having to stand outside is not ideal. She queried why, when she was at the surgery at 8, was told the specific doctor she wanted had no appointments left. This happened 2 weeks running. TC will investigate as this shouldn't happen.</p> <p>VH said another problem with people having to queue outside, was that patients who had early appointments, blood test etc, joined the queue.</p> <p>SS wanted to compliment Physician Associate, Lauren H, who arranged tests for her within 2 weeks.</p>	<p><b>MB</b></p> <p><b>TC</b></p>
11.	<p><b>Future guests/speakers</b></p> <p>It is hoped that Dr Ikhida will join the next meeting.</p> <p>PO asked whether PHMG doctors specialise in any conditions. Dr Barden explained that they don't necessarily specialise but take the lead in certain conditions, e.g. she is the safeguarding lead and shares the diabetes lead with Dr Wykes.</p>	
12.	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p>a) SD advised that Kamsons in Pound Hill were now using a hub system, where the majority of online repeat prescription requests come from their hub in Uckfield. This has led to delays since the service started and there is now a notice up in the pharmacy for people to order their medication 7 days in advance. Our hard copy repeats state to allow 3 working days to be</p>	

	<p>issued. Should this be changed as if it takes the practice 3 days to issue the prescription, it only gives Kamsons 4 days? Dr Barden said patients can order 7 days ahead, but the question then is how do patients know this? MB and TC were unaware of this hub system and will investigate.</p> <p>b) SS asked whether the new covid strain is causing problems. GB said that there is a nasty cough and cold going round but as testing is not being routinely carried out, it is difficult to know if it is covid.</p> <p>c) Covid vaccinations are only for those over 75 this year. Flu vaccinations are for over 65s. JC complimented the practice on the excellent flu/covid clinics which run very efficiently.</p>	<b>TC/MB</b>
13.	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b></p> <p>Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 12.00 – 14.00</p>	