

Leek & Biddulph Patient Locality Group

Notes of meeting held on

Tuesday 16th September 2025.

Via Microsoft 'Teams'

Present: Jane Cox (Deputy Chair). Ian Robbins. (Secretary). Bas Pickering. Mike Cozens. Ian Jones. Susan Findlow. Steve Tatton. Jenna Espley. Emma Thornes. Peter Price. Claire Knight. Diana McCaffrey. Holly Potts. Theresa Parker. Jo Burgess.

Apologies: Lesley Roberts. (Chair). Dan Cunningham (PCN). Emma Ford. (Healthwatch).

Topics discussed - Actions Arising therefrom.

Jane Cox took The Chair.

Agenda 2. Actions arising from last meeting.

- a) Pharmacy Out of Hours – Leek. Consultation period on the County Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment has ended. Results awaited.
- b) PCN 'Winter Ready' events.
Lengthy discussion about the Leek event on the 10th September. 38 members of the public counted in. Low number noted. Feedback on this included numerous suggestions as to how to reach the 'target audience' for such events.
ACTION: PCN/PLG to discuss publicity options prior to other events that may be proposed.
Positives: Excellent networking opportunities. Greater awareness of services available in the community. Raised profile for PCN – and PPGs.
BIDDULPH event on the 17th. Will inform venue choices as it will take place at Biddulph Town Hall, which is centrally placed? (*See Footnote**)
- c) Ear Wax Removal – loss of GP funding: ICB response letter circulated with agenda. *NOTED* that, under the new policy, patients would be eligible (for wax removal) if their GP deemed it to be clinically appropriate, if it was part of an ENT or Audiology pathway. May include presence of a foreign object; infection; trauma; need for complex care.
ACTION: Emma Thornes to share an email on this subject from Park Medical PPG. (*DONE. See email, 16th September. 1330 hrs. Emma Thornes.*)
- d) Ophthalmic Services: Access for none I.T. savvy patients. Primary Care Eye Services Ltd have provided reassurance that, where a patient cannot use 'smart phones' etc, a thorough telephone consultation will take place and were it deemed necessary, a face-to-face consultation arranged at a contracted Opticians 'near to where the patient resides'. (Leek = Boots. Biddulph = S.W. Cotton.)
- e) Key Safe Registers. Susan Findlow detailed her research and the subsequent leaflet was circulated with this meeting's agenda. (Chair thanked Susan for her work on this)

Agenda 3. Absence of Patient Voice at ICB.

A lengthy discussion took place, led by persons present at joint PPG/Healthwatch meeting on the 8th September in Leek. Noted that this meeting was arranged *before* it was learned of national proposals to disband Healthwatch.

After considerable input from those present it was AGREED that:

ACTION: Working Group to be formed to consider all the implications and to recommend a way forward for the PLG. *Mike Cozens to lead.*

ACTION: *Ian Robbins (PLG Secretary).* To Research and report back on,

- (a) The present situation regarding N.A.P.P. membership by PLG/PPG Members.
- (b) To discover the present N.A.P.P. activities around 'patient voice' on ICBs nationally.

Agenda 4. New GP Contract.

Extract from N.A.P.P. Bulletin circulated with this agenda and discussed. It is now a clear-cut contractual requirement for GPs to have a PPG and to consult with the membership (and more).

NOTED that Mike Cozens and Leek Health Centre PPG are already exploring options around 'co-production' at Practice level and that there will be opportunities to share learning arising from this.

Also Noted that The PLG and PCN, since its inception, have developed a good working relationship that mirrors the aspiration of the new GP Contract.

Agenda 5. PCN Update.

Claire Knight,

- (a) Introduced to the meeting Diana McCaffery, the new PCN Support Officer. (*Welcomed by The Chair*).
- (b) Confirmed that Holly Potts would be leaving the PCN and thanked her for her hard work. (*Chair thanked Holly for her significant input to the PLG during her term at the PCN. Endorsed unanimously*)
- (c) Advised that the Social Prescriber roles were now fully up to strength, working across the PCN area.
- (d) Advised that a new GP commences work at Biddulph in October and that recruitment is ongoing for a GP to work in the Leek area.

Agenda 6. PPGs – Best Practice & Information Sharing. (Standing Agenda Item)

Biddulph Doctors. (Peter Price). Still issues with Biddulph patients accessing NHS services in nearby Congleton, which is in Cheshire East Local Government area. Reassurances that the promised Central Medical Records systems will resolve this, do not help the present situation.

Leek Health Centre. (Mike Cozens). PPG meeting held on the 9th was attended by Dr Mark Williams. Useful dialogue opened exploring options around 'co-production' at Practice level. (See Agenda 4).

Moorland Medical. (Steve Tatton). They have welcomed their new Practice manager.

They have set up a working group to look at the low take up of 'flu vaccinations in the 2- to 3-year-old age group. This may include PPG Members visiting pre-school etc settings – a 'first' for PPGs?

Their text-based recruitment drive has proved very successful (Membership now stands at 29). This prompted a discussion about the cost of text messaging and anticipated constraints on their use by the ICB.

ACTION: Jenna Espley to share data relating to SMS charges and any restrictions in their use in the next financial year.

Park Medical. (Ian Jones). Reported that the appointments triaging system was working much better than had been expected. They are looking at the use of A.I. software in the Practice, with implications for patients? – together with other I.T. innovations, such as the use of U-Tube. The PPG has also looked at 'complaints' made – an activity recommended to other PPGs as the resolution of the same gives good insights.

Agenda 7. Annual General Meeting.

AGREED: Will take place immediately prior to the next scheduled meeting (18th November).

NOMINATIONS are now sought for the positions of *Chair, Deputy Chair and Secretary.*

ACTION: Ian Robbins to post required notices.

Jane Cox (Deputy Chair) expressed her regrets that business pressures preclude her from standing.

Mike Cozens expressed a firm interest in taking on the role as *Chair* and was encouraged by all present to seek nomination at the AGM.

Agenda 8. Any other business.

(Secretary's Note: Misc. items recorded here for convenience).

Jane Cox encouraged all to look at the use of free software such as WhatsApp to reach out to patients.

ACTION: Jenna Espley to research factors around ICB approval.

Susan Findlow mentioned a presentation at another forum on the use of A.I. to create Carers' Notes. Concerns about patient agreement?

ACTION: Susan Findlow to furnish details to Ian Robbins with a view to input to the PLG and/or PPGs on this subject.

Jane Cox proposed that some form of joint gathering of ALL PPG members, from across the PCN area, take place, with a view to promoting engagement at both PPG and PLG levels. This could also bring about a more collective approach to the issues discussed, such as representation at ICB level.

ACTION: Ian Robbins. Future Agenda Item? Tba with Chair after AGM.

Agenda 9. Time and date of next meeting:

TUESDAY 18TH NOVEMBER 2025. 1PM – 3PM.

Annual General Meeting - followed by bi-monthly scheduled meeting.

Online – 'Microsoft Teams'

***POST MEETING FOOTNOTE.**

Agenda 2. (b). PCN 'Winter Ready' events.

Peter Price (Biddulph Doctors PPG) reports that volunteers from both Biddulph Doctors and Biddulph Valley PPGs attended the PCN 'Winter-Ready' event at Biddulph Town Hall on the 17th September.

The official count was 91, making it steady but not crowded. Overall, there was a good friendly atmosphere with positive feedback. The Practices booked quite a few Vaccinations of one sort or another, which they were pleased about as they had been sold the event as a major chance to book vaccinations. They did point out that there was very little advertisement of the fact to the people coming in.

Again, a very good networking opportunity.

This venue is centrally placed in the town and is well known for public/community events. Despite very wet weather in the morning, the turn-out was encouraging.