**Sunbury Health Centre Group Practice (SHCGP)**

**Patient Participation Group (PPG)**

**Minutes of a Core Group Meeting held on 28 September 2021**

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| **Present:**  **Sunbury Health Centre:**  **Richard Fryer (RF), Sasha Thurgood (ST)**  **PPG Core Group members:**  **Neil Huntingford (NH Chair), Paul Thompson (PT), Polly Healy (PH), Alison Richardson (AR)** | **Apologies:**  **Sunbury Health Centre:**  **Dave Gill (DG)**  **PPG Core Group members:**  **David Buttler (DB), Tom Fidler (TF), Dorothy Linter (DL), Jenny Downes (JD)** |

**Welcome**

**NH began by welcoming everyone to the first PPG Core Group meeting to be held at the Practice since 10 March 2020. Whilst meetings held via Zoom had enabled updates from the Practice and question and answer sessions, it had limited discussions and the development of ideas. It is hoped that all future meetings can once again be held with physical attendance.**

**PPG Membership and Election of Officers**

**The Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary posts are elected at each September meeting, in accordance with PPG Standing Orders. NH confirmed that 4 of the Core Group members have served the current maximum term and a new Secretary also needed to be appointed. NH informed the meeting that DL has decided to stand down. Her patience and wisdom will be missed, and NH has reluctantly accepted her resignation.**

**RF commented that the PPG Core Group has been hugely beneficial to the Practice, and improvements have been realised as a result. The working relationship is positive and it would be beneficial for it to continue. Whilst recognising the need to attract new members to the Core Group, there is much to be valued in the wisdom and expertise of longer serving members.**

**To continue to support the Practice – and with all Core Group members present willing to continue for a further year – it was agreed that the Standing Orders will be amended regarding total length of service, with the requirement for annual re-election. It was also agreed that the Secretary will, in future, have voting powers.**

**With a voting quorate in place, the following posts were confirmed:**

**Neil Huntingford – Chair**

**Paul Thompson – Vice-Chair**

**Alison Richardson – Secretary.**

**Minutes of Last Core Group Meeting**

**The minutes of the last meeting were accepted.**

**PPG – The Way Forward**

**NH explained that with the PPG Core Group having been in place for 10 years, and with the enforced break to many of its activities due to the pandemic, there is an opportunity to reflect, discuss and propose ideas on how the Core Group operates and continues to support the Practice from now on. It was agreed that a sub-group will develop ideas for discussion before the next meeting in November. Initial (but not exhaustive) areas for consideration are:**

* **Recruitment – to fill existing vacancies, attract younger members, and create a more diverse membership. NH mentioned that he hopes to meet with one prospective new recruit shortly.**
* **Succession planning – to prepare for some of the longer serving members to step down (with the suggestion from PT that prospective Chair candidates could initially serve as Vice-Chair to build knowledge and experience)**
* **Meeting Structures – including the timing of Core Group meetings and the future of Open Meetings. The latter have not been held since the start of pandemic, and still cannot be held safely.**
* **Patient Surveys – with RF highlighting there are now more ways of capturing patient feedback and other data than in the past (some being used by the CQC to carry out reviews remotely), and there may be a requirement before the end of the year for the Practice to engage in a broader survey.**

**SHCGP Feedback and Q & A**

**RF provided an update on behalf of SHCGP:**

**Patient Services and Covid Booster Programme:**

* **Everyone at the Practice continues to work in an extremely pressurised environment, and are busier than ever. Morale has been impacted by media stories about GP Practices “not being open” and appointments – especially face to face – not being available. The negative messaging is relentless and demoralising.**
* **The pandemic is not over, so some precautions need to continue. This also impacts on staff time needing to be utilised for extra duties e.g. cleaning the ‘red area’ has moved to other practice staff to release more time for nurse appointments.**
* **GPs are working long days, with administration, reviewing test results, correspondence and other administrative duties to attend to in addition to seeing and contacting patients.**
* **Last week for example,1,428 telephone calls were answered, 1,107 requests online were processed and approximately 2,000 documents were handled by the customer team. Pharmacists are helping more than 200 patients per week.**
* **Nursing staff are seeing patients largely in person and the number of face-to-face appointments with GPs is increasing. GPs want to see patients, but there is a balancing act with protecting the vulnerable.**
* **A potentially useful one-page document entitled *“Why are GP Practices still working differently?”* has been adopted by Surrey Heartlands, and seeks to explain why patients are experiencing changes in the way they access support from their local Practice. SHC believes there is merit in using this as a way of communicating with patients via its website and Facebook page, as well as utilising support in LOSRA updates, Sunbury Matters etc. PH observed that the use of black text on a dark blue background in one small area of the flyer would prove difficult to read for some. It was also suggested that the use of the title ‘Receptionist’ could be changed due to how this role may be perceived by patients. Is there a better term that could be used that more reflects this important part of their role?**
* **The Practice is supplying patient information by cohort to NICS for the Covid booster and ‘flu mixed clinics, which have started. The Practice cannot run Covid Booster clinics on site due to the storage requirements for the Pfizer vaccine plus the lack of space to safely accommodate the required 15-minute wait following vaccination.**
* **There are some ‘flu only clinics for people aged 50-64 also being run by NICS, so it is feasible that some younger adults will be able to access the ‘flu vaccination earlier than some older adults. The overall aim is to try and offer as much protection as possible to as many people as possible.**

**Building Capacity - SHC Staffing and Training**

* **GP numbers are increasing, with Dr Amy Baker joining the Practice, following a period of working there as a training doctor.**
* **Nursing capacity is under pressure, with one nurse having left and another currently on sick leave. Recruitment has begun for a replacement nurse.**
* **Recruitment is underway for a HCA, with a candidate having been selected.**
* **3 full-time Care Co-ordinators have been recruited to the Practice, to support the work on chronic disease areas.**
* **There are 3 new Receptionists, and 3 Pharmacists now in post.**
* **A working group from the Practice will take part in a “Learning Time” session to explore how revising processes can improve how patients benefit from online access via the website. The Practice cannot change much of the website without broader agreement as the website is provided across Surrey Heartlands. However, some modifications may be made and have been requested via the web developer.**

**Building capacity – Premises**

* **There is a feasibility study underway with NHS Property Services to create more clinical space and upgrade the entrance and front of the building. Some structural work may be required, as well as moving staff around. The aim is to create more space for multi-disciplinary teams and see more patients. One extra room, for example, can enable an additional 40 consultations per day. The practice is hopeful that the feasibility study will result in funding being secured to make the improvements.**

**Questions & Answers:**

**Question (PH): Recent press reports have said that GP Practices are facing abuse from patients following cancelled blood tests linked to a shortage of test tubes, plus ‘flu injections being cancelled. Is SHC experiencing this?**

* ***Answer (RF): We are experiencing increased levels of abuse in general unfortunately. The shortage of blood test bottles has not helped, although that is now largely resolved.***

**Question (PT): I understand it is normal practice not to advise patients when test results or scans come back as ‘normal’ or ‘no action required’. There may be a proportion of patients who are left concerned, having heard nothing. Would the action of providing ‘negative’ results be too burdensome/time consuming?**

* ***Answer (RF): There is not the staff capacity to contact every patient with ‘negative’ results unfortunately. There is a form on the website to request test results, and enquiries are taken by ‘phone. There may be an opportunity to provide some clearer messaging on the website about when test results are likely to be available.***

**Question (PT): Does the Practice receive funding for ‘flu vaccinations carried out at Covid Vaccination Centres, as it did for those given at the Practice?**

* ***Answer (RF): Yes. The Practice historically is paid for every ‘flu jab they carry out at the Practice at the annual ‘flu clinics. This year, the ‘flu jabs will be given at the local Covid Vaccination Centres but the funding will still go to the Practice. The funding for any ‘flu jabs given at local chemists goes to the chemist, not the Practice.***

**Question (PT): Is there always a GP on the triage team?**

* ***Answer (RF): No. The triage process is under the leadership of Dr Jopling. Enquiries can always be referred if guidance is required.***

**Question (PT): How many full-time equivalent GPs does the Practice currently have?**

* ***Answer (RF): Due to working patterns, this will be calculated and confirmed following the meeting.***

**Question (NH): Has RF been approached by an organisation who contacted NH about providing free digital access to magazines for patients in the waiting room and carpark areas?**

* ***Answer (RF): If the offer is what it seems, and there is no cost to the Practice, this would be welcomed.***

**Actions:**

**NH: A sub-group of the Core Group will meet to discuss the way forward for the PPG Core Group, and present some ideas to the Practice in time for the next meeting.**

**ST: To ask some of the younger members of staff about best media routes to use to attract potential younger recruits to the Core Group, and advise NH.**

**RF: To consider how communication can be improved for patients waiting for and requesting test results.**

**RF: To confirm how many full-time equivalent GPs the Practice currently has.**

**RF: To take back comments made regarding the Surrey Heartlands flier to Surrey Heartlands.**

**NH: To contact the organisation offering free digital access to magazines for Practice patients to confirm progress.**

**Date of the next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 23 November 2021 at 3.30p.m.**