

Sheepcot Medical Centre

Virtual PPG Practice Meeting on Monday 9th May 2022 12.45 pm -1.30 pm

Present: Steve Macaulay (Chair), Jack Alvarez, Sharon Carter, Andy Glodowski, Brenda Hall, Jyoti Gupta, Isabelle Holloway, Stephen Hill, Teresa Batchelor, Nikki Chamberlain, Dr Alan Jackson.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Krystyna Glodowska, Jade Hoare and Ian White.

2. Review of the minutes of previous meeting

These were accepted.

3. Updates from the Practice

Pre-diabetes

There is a surgery initiative to identify those patients likely to be at risk of pre-diabetes. Jack said that there was a meeting on pre diabetes with the Herts Diabetic Support Group which he would like added to the Sheepcot website. (Jack to advise SMC of the dates as soon as he has them).

Out of hours cover

New funding arrangements have prompted the need to review the hours most suitable for patients for out of hours GP cover. The current arrangements are, 7:00-8.00 AM (2-3 times a week); 6.30-8.00 PM evenings (up to 2-3 times a week) and one Saturday morning a month.

Assistance is required from PPG members to identify current patient preferences and needs. This is part of a national survey. Teresa will provide the wording for the survey. Jyoti said that she will canvass opinion on the local estate via its Facebook page. PPG members are asked to email patient views to Steve Macaulay to collate.

Staffing

The primary care network (PCN) is attempting to recruit a mental health specialist to meet a pressing need. This will complement other clinical staff, for example there are now 4 clinical pharmacists within the PCN.

A number of staffing issues have arisen. A recruitment of one receptionist has been successful, with a start date of June. In addition, an administrator is required. Also a locum GP, Dr Kraskian, is no longer available and needs to be replaced. Use of locums provides a continuity of care issue, but widespread use of locums is also reflected nationally.

With other resources available for clinical matters, such as nurse practitioners, clinical pharmacists and paramedics, there is a problem sometimes of patient reluctance to see anyone other than a general practitioner. This is partly an education issue for some patients.

Staff sickness, largely with Covid, continues to be a problem.

4. Future vaccination sessions-Covid and Flu

Currently the practice is vaccinating the over 75s with a Covid spring booster, administered in small weekly clinics. Also 5 to 11-year-olds are being vaccinated and those who are housebound and in care homes. The Moderna vaccine is being used rather than Pfizer because of easier availability. The practice is waiting for government sign-off before proceeding with other patient age and need groups.

5. Patient appointments-update

More face-to-face appointments are taking place with over 50% now face-to-face. A subjective view is that patients seem largely happy with this current arrangement, though there will always be one or two who are unhappy. As ever, ideally patients would not want to wait for an appointment. It appears those who wait a long time are more likely to be patients who want to consult a particular doctor. Whilst this is understandable, the current arrangements are likely to mean a longer wait.

One of the PPG asked that a case be looked into where he waited 13 days for a response.

Chronic disease reviews will shortly be available to book via a text message, using a pin code.

With the closure of Covid hubs, those with Covid need now to be seen through the surgery.

Patients are asked to continue to wear masks and adopt Covid precautions at the surgery.

6. Supply of prescriptions-HRT shortages

The national HRT shortage mostly concerns availability of the gel. Locally, the position appears to be resolving itself, though further information would need to be gathered on this. At the weekend the newspapers said there was a shortage of a component of Piriton, used for hayfever. Dr Jackson said he wasn't aware of this and mostly these are bought over the counter, with suitable alternatives available.

7. Sheepcot website and social media progress and update

Websites and social media are now being updated more regularly by Amie who is now responsible for this. Nikki clarified that the PPG email address is still current, since she had referred someone interested in joining the PPG.

Steve said that he had a number of enquiries to join the PPG that he hadn't activated given the current pandemic situation. The PPG felt that they would like to bring any new members on board despite the current lack of busy regular meetings with the pandemic taking priority, otherwise they would risk losing them.

8. 1st July Change from Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to Integrated Care Board

From 1st July, the CCG would be subsumed within a broader integrated body, the Integrated Care System and locally an Integrated Care Board covering Herts Valley and Essex. The arrangements for this were still being worked out and communicated, specifically how it would affect GPs.

9. Any other business

There was no other business.

10. Date of future meeting

A future date would be agreed with Teresa and circulated.