



Minutes for Withnell Health Centre Patient Participation Group

Wednesday 15th January 2025.

Patient Participants:

Jeff Cottam (Chair)	Amy Miller
Alan Martin (Vice Chair)	Sonia Sandland
Hazel Hebson	Janet Melling
Janet Horton	Mike Matulewicz
Bernard Melling	Audrey Perry
Ann Christopher	Ron Ainsworth
Tracy O`Gara	Janice Scanlon
Gillian Ainsworth	

Attendees from Withnell Health Centre:

Dr Ann Robinson
Nicola Phillipson
Kirsty Craney

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jeff opened the meeting by welcoming those present. Round the table introductions were made.

2. Apologies

Received from: Lynne Lynch, Gillian Tasker, Janet Fenna, Margaret France

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting (13 Nov 2024)

The group agreed that the minutes from the previous meeting were accurate.

4. Matters Arising

Non Raised

5. Feedback from Patients/Surveys

The group were distributed some feedback that the Practice had received through the Friends and Family survey which is sent to all patients electronically via text message following an appointment attendance at the Health Centre. The feedback forms are also available via paper copy in reception.

The poor and very poor scores were considered initially. It was agreed that some comments were individual experiences, so we were unable to comment but we did receive two complaints regarding the check in machine not working which were discussed by the group.

Common issues were discussed regarding the check in machine issues including complaints that it is slow and how patients often state that it is not working when usually they enter their date of birth incorrectly which alerts the patient to attend reception.

It was suggested that it may be worth PPG members attending the practice during busy sessions to educate patients in how to use the machine.

6. Surgery News and Practice Updates

Reception vacancy:

The practice has recently advertised for a reception vacancy. Jayne retired in May 2024 and the vacancy was advertised promptly but it was not possible to recruit. Existing staff have been doing extra shifts to cover but it has been decided to advertise again for 16 hrs per week.

Dr Ressel:

Dr Ressel is due to return from maternity leave on 23rd March. She will return on her usual sessions Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. Dr Khan will be staying at the practice and will work on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Dr Moitra will also be staying and working on a Monday.

Additional GP time:

All PCNs have been given some extra funding, ring fenced purely to employ GPs. Our PCN has managed to employ a GP with this funding for 4 sessions a week across the PCN. She is called Dr Chowdhury and is based at Withnell on a Thursday providing us with a few extra valuable GP appointments.

Flu Vaccines Uptake:

At the surgery we have given 1271 flu vaccinations this winter:

824 Over 65 Flu Vaccines = 64%

400 Under 65 at Risk = 51%

47 2-3 year olds = 51%

Elsewhere given at local pharmacies:

206 Over 65 Total: 79% over 65

211 Under 65 78% under 65

RSV Vaccine:

Another vaccine is available this winter – RSV vaccine.

Patients aged 75-79 on 31st August 2024 and those turning 75 between 1st Sept 2024 and 31st August 2025 are eligible for this vaccine. From an eligible population of 303 75-79 year olds, 165 have so far received the vaccine. For those patients turning 75 between 1 Sept 2024 and 31 Aug 2025, of the 30 patients eligible, 8 have received the vaccine.

Patients are being sent a text message if they have a mobile number or contacted by letter if they don't. They are also being caught opportunistically when attending surgery.

Garden Space:

Earlier last year Nicola applied for some funding for the surgery to provide a "Green Space" both for use by staff and by patients and the local community. This has been granted and they are going to be building the space by the end of February or early March. It will consist of raised planters for growing vegetables and planting flowers etc. We are led to believe there will be a picnic bench and a couple of benches.

£250 has been received to order some initial set up supplies such as gardening gloves, seeds, trowels etc. Once it has been built we will require volunteers to help maintain the upkeep of the area. It will become a "community space" that can be used by local groups if desired. There was general agreement from the group to support the maintenance of this area when the work is completed.

Fund Raising:

At the flu clinic this year a coffee and cake morning was held and during the month of October raffle tickets were sold to win a hamper. We raised an amazing £2199.95 for breast cancer which is a charity close the heart of one of our staff who suffered from the disease herself back in 2017.

Throughout December, tickets were sold to win a Christmas hamper which raised over £150 for "Chorley Buddies", a community group providing befriending, shopping and a medicine delivery service for isolated individuals. They also provide "Activity Buddies" which is for exercise, re- socialisation, good food clubs and general support.

7. Communicating with patients

There was a lengthy discussion about the importance of communicating with patients, in particular, how to reach out to them to raise awareness of the PPG existence and its purpose. Jeff explained that this issue had been discussed at the informal meeting held in December and a number of suggestions had been made. These suggestions were discussed again at this meeting.

1. Noticeboard in reception – move the current PPG noticeboard into the reception waiting area and update the board. It was agreed it needed to be more visible and eye catching

and also continually kept up to date. – Hazel, Gillian and Amy volunteered to help with this. **Action.**

2. TV screen in Reception – to update with PPG information by use of a scrolling screen. Mike had suggested at the meeting in December that it may be useful to also have a video periodically displayed on the screen delivered by Jeff as Chair of the group. Jeff agreed to supply a proposed scrolling screen message and also a video for consideration. **Action.**
3. Message on prescription scripts – this had previously been suggested but as the practice no longer uses paper prescriptions it was felt this would not be feasible.
4. Face to Face meetings – involving PPG members coming into the practice to speak to patients directly in the waiting room to both raise awareness of the PPG and to ask for their input and feedback on current services. Whilst there was wide agreement from the group to support this it would need to be tailored to specific times when the most benefit could be gained. Nicola to request support when opportunities arise.
5. Newsletter – it was agreed that the production of a PPG newsletter would be beneficial. This could deliver news about the work of the PPG including a photograph of the PPG members in the first issue. It could also issue current news about the Practice and deliver key messages. Various means of issuing out the newsletter were discussed, including having copies available in reception, in local shops, tea rooms, nurseries (to reach a younger population). Also sending out by text messaging and inclusion on the website. A quarterly issue was considered appropriate. Amy kindly agreed to take on the role as lead Editor supported by Jeff and Alan. Information would need to be provided by a range of people as appropriate and delivered to Amy for collation into each future issue. **Action.**

There followed a discussion about how information is effectively received from patients. A number of suggestions were discussed.

1. Suggestion box – it was agreed that this was needed and should be placed in reception within the newly designated PPG area. **Action.**
2. Dedicated email address – it was suggested and agreed that a dedicated email address which could be used for patients to communicate with the PPG, in confidence, would be useful. The importance of regularly checking the email box was discussed. Nicola agreed to look into this. **Action**
3. Adding a form to the website for patients to contact the PPG directly. **Action**
4. Ensure any electronic feedback generates an automatic response which lets patients know that their comments will be discussed at the next meeting and ensure patients know that this is only for constructive feedback and not to discuss personal/medical issues.

Confidentiality of the PPG was also discussed if members are liaising with patients directly. It was noted that there may be a need to sign a Confidentiality Agreement. Nicola will check with the LMC (Lancashire medical committee) regarding this. **Action**

8. Telephone appointment clinics

It was noted that a complaint had been raised on social media which was seen by PPG member Alan Martin regarding telephone appointments. The patient claimed that, as she was unable to answer the call, she discovered, on calling the practice later in the day that her name had been removed from the appointment list.

Dr Robinson clarified the procedure that clinicians follow when contacting patients via telephone. Patients are contacted at least twice but the clinicians will not continue to call numerous times. Messages/voicemails are left by the clinician to inform them that they have called and to rearrange their appointment if they still needed one.

It was discussed what messages the reception team can give to the patient when patients book an appointment. Can the receptionist inform patients when they book a call that the GP will only call twice?

A query was raised from a PPG member who stated that when they recently received a call when expecting a telephone appointment, it was from an unknown number so he didn't like to answer the call. It isn't always clear the call is from the practice. Dr Robinson clarified that sometimes clinicians work remotely and therefore they would ensure their private number is withheld. It was suggested that some clarification could be added to the newsletter for patient information. Nicola will look into this. **Action.**

It was also raised that patients do not know what time the Doctor may call as the Reception staff do not give specific times. Dr Robinson clarified that telephone calls are triaged based on urgency and therefore the call may be done later in the day. Reception staff often ask patients if there is a specific time they are unable to take a call and they relay that message to the GP. If the patient is only available at a specific time, reception suggests a face-to-face appointment to ensure they are seen at their preferred time.

9. Booking in System and Reception

Issues regarding the checking in machine were discussed. Of some concern was of patients not knowing if they were actually checked in as there is no message to indicate this. Kristy will check with the company to see what messages could be added? **Action**

It was clarified that reception are always aware who is in reception and how many people are waiting. The appointment book shows how long someone has been waiting from the time they check in and staff will often do a head count if they can see that patients have been waiting a while to ensure that the number of patients waiting matches up with the amount of patients who have checked in.

PPG members explained that patients want reassurance that they are monitored in reception when waiting for appointments. The possibility of having a sign up on the noticeboard asking patients to check with reception if they have been waiting a long time was discussed.

It was mentioned that patients and visitors can often feel ignored when waiting at reception as the receptionists aren't actually sat at the window but are now seated away from the window in the general office area either answering the phone or completing other work at their desks.

Dr Robinson explained that the Reception Team have a large list of tasks to complete and this work cannot be completed whilst working at the front desk due to confidentiality issues. The reception team are efficient at tending to patients at the desk and keeping waiting times to a minimum. There was some discussion about potentially changing the office layout to improve the situation. Nicola agreed to look into this. **Action**

10. Terms of reference

Jeff suggested the need to revisit the Terms of Reference for the group, given its new format. He proposed that he would make his own considered changes and then circulate the amended document to the group by email for further changes. He suggested that if these could then be agreed electronically they could be officially approved at the next meeting without further discussion. **Action**

11. PPG Development update in Central Lancashire

Ann Christopher gave an update on the current PPG developments across The Lancashire and South Cumbria region. She explained the future plans for the Chairs of the PPGs from each practice to meet in Networks to work together. Jeff agreed that this would be helpful and he would look forward to hearing further updates.

12. Any other business

Social prescribing event:

The practice is organising a Social Prescribing event on Wednesday 19th February between 10am - 12pm.

Kieran from the Families Social Prescribing Team has been invited to provide an Information and Support session for patients and families who may benefit from extra community based support. Trisha, our GP assistant has just completed a course on "Understanding Autism" and is hoping to host upcoming coffee mornings to provide support to individuals and families with SEND.

Volunteers were requested to help with tea and coffee for the session.

Total triage:

A query was raised about the implementation of total triage in GP practices and if this is something we are also implementing. Dr Robinson clarified that this is something we already do to a degree where patients can send requests via an app but the main stream of our

appointment requests come via telephone and we can deal with the demand on the day. We do get some queries and appointment requests through the e-consultation service via the NHS app or Accrx which are triaged by our reception team.

13. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Next meeting is on Thursday 13th March at 4pm.

Action Sheet Matrix
Withnell Health Centre Patient Participation Group
15 January 2025

Agenda Item No.	ACTION	BY	DATE
7	Relocate and Update the Noticeboard in reception.	Hazel, Gillian, Amy	Next Meeting
7	Scrolling screen message and video for TV screen in reception for consideration.	Jeff	Next meeting
7	Face to Face meeting with patients. Nicola to notify group members when best opportunities arise.	Nicola	Ongoing
7	PPG Newsletter production.	Amy (Editor) Jeff, Alan +	Next Meeting
7	PPG Reception Box in Reception.	Hazel, Gillian, Amy	Next Meeting
7	Dedicated email address.	Nicola	Next Meeting
7	Adding a form to the website for patients to contact the PPG directly.	Nicola/Kirsty	Next Meeting
7	Confidentiality Agreement necessity and process of introduction.	Nicola	Next Meeting
8	Check which number shows up from the surgery when calling patients.	Nicola	Next Meeting
8	Write a statement about procedure for telephone calls which can be displayed in newsletter and in waiting room	Nicola	Next Meeting
9	To check with Booking in Screen company what messaging can be used to confirm booking in.	Kirsty	Next Meeting
9	Arrange for a sign to be displayed informing patients what to do if they feel they have been waiting a long time.	Nicola/Kirsty	Next Meeting
9	Consider changes to office area layout to support reception issues discussed.	Nicola	Next Meeting
10	Update and circulate Terms of Reference for further changes and final electronic approval.	Jeff	Next Meeting