

Minutes for Withnell Health Centre Patient Participation Group

Wednesday 3rd December 2025

Patient Participants:

Jeff Cottam (Chair)	Ron Ainsworth
Bernard Melling (Minutes)	Lynne Lynch
Amy Miller	Tracie O’Gara
Janice Scanlon	Janet Melling
Ann Christopher	Mike Matulewicz
Hazel Hebson	Audrey Perry
Gillian Ainsworth	

Attendees from Withnell Health Centre:

Dr Ann Robinson
Nicola Phillipson

1. Apologies

Received from: Janet Horton, Margaret France, Alan Martin (Vice-Chair), Gill Tasker, David Wood and Karen Bretherton.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (3rd September 2025)

The group accepted the minutes, circulated by email, from the meeting on 3 September 2025 as a true record.

3. Matters Arising/Action Table

Jeff referred to the action table and the group reported on actions carried out since the last meeting. All actions were complete with no further matters arising.

- Friends and Family responses similar to other PPGs
- Drop off box for pathology samples, not a particular issue
- Email addresses have been shared with other PPGs within PCN
- Brinscall Baths swimming hours have been advertised in the practice
- Gillian is co-ordinating the Gardening Group
- £350 received from the Parish Council to assist with the Gardening Project
- A medical aid provision has been established at the surgery

4. **Feedback from Patients/Surveys**

Nicola provided a verbal report. For the November 2025 Friends & Family Feedback there had been 263 returns in total of which 246 were classed as very good and 17 as good. No feedbacks received had been classed as poor or very poor. The data for October 2025 was similar with 317 returns received in total with 300 classed as very good and only one return being classed as poor. It was agreed by the group that our performance remains consistently high.

Nicola reported the following additional statistics for November 2025:

- GP appointments 1112, Nurse appointments 620, Advanced Nurse Practitioner appointments 156, Health Care Assistant appointments 579.
- Home Visits 25
- Referrals to Secondary Care 122
- Prescriptions signed 2,140
- Sick notes issues 48
- Specific Admin tasks 109
- New registrations processed 33
- Answered calls by reception 2445
- Patients who did not attend 39

In terms of the patients who did not attend (DNA) their appointments, 39 was considered to be a low number. It was questioned whether these cases could be further scrutinised to better understand the reasoning for the DNA. Although it was recognised that this would be time consuming, lost appointments waste appointment slots for other patients and cost money. There was some discussion about applying a penalty for repeat offenders such as removal of registration with the practice but Dr Robinson explained why this could not be done.

5. **Surgery News & Practice Update**

Nicola provided the update report. The October flu clinic was very successful with over 700 patients being vaccinated. £2,500 was raised on the day through the sale of raffle tickets, coffee and cakes etc. All proceeds were donated to the Rosemere Centre and Breast Cancer Awareness charities. In total £3090 was raised for these two Charities. It was agreed that this was a tremendous achievement. Nicola reported that the Christmas raffle tickets are now available and proceeds will go to a Prostate Cancer Charity.

There was some discussion about the National move to "Booking Online" availability which is seen by the Government as a means to remove the 8am call for same day appointment system. Nicola explained that booking online has now been available at the practice for over 18 months and the uptake was generally good. It was felt however that the removal of the 8am call for same day appointment system was unlikely to be achieved with both booking options remaining available into the foreseeable future.

6. Medical Equipment Recycling Scheme Update

Tracie and Lynne provided a progress report explaining that the system is now set up and working at the surgery. The scheme availability is fortnightly on a Wednesday with dates provided in advance. All equipment is cleaned and disinfected on receipt and a disclaimer form is provided which must be signed before any item is taken away for use by a patient.

There was some discussion regarding the removal of equipment without the signing of the disclaimer form which includes the name and address of the recipient. The importance of this form being signed and being filed within the practice was highlighted as being crucial due to the risk of legal liability on the practice should this go wrong. It was noted that sometimes equipment had been taken by District Nurses which was felt inappropriate as this scheme was envisaged for direct patient access. It was agreed that if this was to be successful then it needed an improved level of control. Nicola agreed to speak with the reception staff and also the District Nurse Team to make sure all are aware of the correction operation of the system. **Action NP**

It was considered that any 'less than suitable equipment' may be of interest to the Ukrainian Charity Collection, based in Chorley. It was agreed that the equipment recycling scheme service will be periodically advertised through the PPG Facebook Group page and the newsletter. Jeff thanked Lynne and Tracie for their work in the implementation and running of this project.

7. Garden Space Progress Report & Next Steps

Gillian reported that the Wellbeing Garden development was progressing well. Gillian explained that some work will be required over the winter months. This will involve a general tidying up and planting of bulbs etc. The ivy is quite invasive in places and will need severely cutting back, perhaps replacing some areas with climbers. The new sculpture has been much admired and excellent feedback re the garden space in general has been received, in particular at the flu vaccination day event. Gillian explained that there was the possibility of a link up with the Witton Park Greenhouse Project who may be able to provide us with some support going forwards.

St Joseph's Primary School children have produced some excellent posters depicting their understanding of the benefits of the garden area, and these are now on display in the blood collection waiting room.

Jeff explained that on review of the wastepipe structure at the practice the installation of the water butt, being donated by Lynne, will need input from the NHS support team. It was noted however that this will not be required before Spring! Nicola agreed to contact the NHS Support Team to raise a job for the required work. **Action NP**

Jeff reported that we have received a £350 donation from the Withnell Parish Council. The funds are being held in a dedicated account managed by Jeff. He stated that he would

circulate a brief financial position report at each meeting. Currently the account has a balance of £301 following some small expenditure on plants and soil over the autumn period.

8. Communication Group Feedback

Jeff reported that, as agreed at the last meeting, a Communications Group had been formed including himself, Alan, Amy, Ron and Tracie. A meeting took place on Monday 20 October where a Communication Plan was agreed. This plan has been documented and circulated to the PPG members.

Jeff provided a brief summary of what had been agreed. Ron has set up a PPG Facebook Group page with the group members as administrators. Essentially the agreed system involves vetting any items for circulation by one of the administrators, posting onto the WHC PPG page and also 4 agreed other local Facebook Group pages and the WHC Group page, then scheduling a repeat posting periodically to ensure effective coverage. In terms of the newsletter, copies will be printed by the practice and made available to patients within the waiting areas. The group also identified 11 local areas eg coffee shop, Pharmacy, St Joseph's club etc where copies can be delivered by volunteers for display. Given the difficulties identified potentially with display space, we agreed to limit future newsletters to just 2 pages.

9. Managing the needs of Patients with Learning Disabilities

Since apologies had been received from David Wood and Karen Bretherton, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

10. Pharmacy Meeting Update & Next Steps

Jeff reported that he had had a successful meeting with the local Chief Pharmacist (Mohammed) on 5 November. He had explained the role of the PPG and suggested that, since they were seen as an extension of the practice in the eyes of the patients, we had an opportunity to create a meaningful dialogue. The benefits of good communication were discussed and Jeff explained that he had suggested that we could be a vehicle for the Pharmacy to communicate its key messages out to the community using, for example, our Facebook Group page. Also he suggested that we could relay patient feedback about the Pharmacy service to them. As two examples for feedback so far he relayed to Mohammed the frustration being vented by some patients about short prescriptions for patients on repeat medications, albeit in the knowledge of the problems they face with the supply prioritisation to the larger Pharmacy Groups. The issue of closing times was also mentioned and the wish being expressed by some patients for this to be extended. In terms of the repeat prescription supply issue Mohammed had explained that he had been in liaison with the Medicines Team at the practice and that they were, jointly, in the process of developing a system for improvement. He explained that he was currently waiting for the practice to respond to recent correspondence but that this hadn't

happened. Dr Robinson explained how she felt the pharmacy could help by undertaking the initial identification of patients suitable for repeat prescriptions as opposed to the Practice undertaking this role. Then, by taking a gradual approach, effective progress could be made. Jeff agreed to feed this back to Mohammed. **Action JC**

Jeff said that in summary he felt we had created a useful opportunity for effective liaison with the Pharmacy Team and that Mohammed appeared very keen to work with us on this and other issues. Jeff had informed Mohammed how much the local population valued having a pharmacy in the village and the willingness of the PPG to work with them to sustain this. He had extended an invite for him to attend the PPG for any future pharmacy related discussions.

11. Garstang PPG Meeting Feedback

Following previous discussion about linking with PPG groups outside of our PCN Jeff explained that he had recently received an invite to attend a PPG Meeting at the Garstang Medical Practice (Chair Peter Howard, Vice Chair Jen Olivine). As an established group they had expressed a willingness to offer us any support and guidance where needed.

Jeff reported that he had attended a meeting on Tuesday 14th October and that the meeting was well structured with approximately 8-10 in attendance. He went on to provide an outline of the types of discussion which took place which had a strong focus on community support and performance management. There was also a discussion regarding a Transport Group which their PPG had helped establish. Links are made with patients who need assistance to visit the surgery. There was some concern expressed re this service, and it was agreed not to proceed with a similar initiative.

Jeff explained he felt that, although we were not yet as established as the Garstang Group, we were making good progress due to a strong and committed group of members. Going forwards the link and offer of support we now have from the Garstang PPG, as and when needed, could be very useful.

12. Any Other Business

There were a number of issues raised:

- Discussion re the ring back service which some patients use, obviously the first 30 minutes of the day are particularly busy.
- Boots in Chorley will accept blister packs.
- Mike highlighted the exhibition of the work of a local artist, on display at Brinscall Cricket Club. He suggested that perhaps some of these could be on display at the surgery. This was agreed. Mike to contact the artist and liaise with the Practice. **Action MM**
- Jeff/Ann briefly discussed the information recently provided by the ICB regarding the "Good Health Starts" programme, designed to promote a local NHS winter resilience campaign. Jeff agreed to circulate the information via email. **Action JC**

- Rates of vaccination for flu and Covid are both lower again this year, again increasing pressure on A&E services over the winter months. The advance purchase of vaccination supplies is problematic, and leads to financial difficulties.

13. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at 6pm on Wednesday 25th February 2026.

The meeting concluded at 19:15. Please email Jeff with items for the February agenda.

Action Sheet Matrix
Withnell Health Centre Patient Participation Group
3 December 2025

Agenda Item No.	ACTION	BY	DATE
6	Nicola to speak with the reception staff and also the District Nurse Team to make sure all are aware of the correction operation of the Equipment Recycling scheme.	NP	Next Meeting
7	Contact the NHS Support Team to request the work required for the installation of the water butt.	NP	Next Meeting
10	Feedback meeting discussions re repeat prescription management to Pharmacy.	JC	Next Meeting
AOB	Mike to contact local artist, currently displaying his work at the cricket club, to make arrangements to display his work within the practice. Liaise with the HC	MM	Next Meeting
AOB	Circulate the recent ICB "Good Health Starts" programme information to the group via email	JC	Next Meeting