Minutes of Meeting of Portland PPG Wednesday 4th September 2019 5.00 pm

Present: Sue Cousins, (Chairperson), Gail Jukes, Hilary Mulholland, Sally Foster, Carol Atton, Dawn Smart, Sabrina Ruffles (Locality Manager)

Apologies for absence: Liz Smith, Jean Halford

1. Minutes of last meeting – agreed as an accurate record.
2. Matters arising from previous meeting:

Lunch time telephone access SR reported that she had discussed this with the clinical team but it is currently not possible to provide a member of staff to answer the telephone between 1.00 – 2.00 pm due to staff rota times, lunch breaks and pressure of other tasks. The CCG requires the practice to be open between core hours but not necessarily to be able to respond to telephone calls during all of those hours. However it has been agreed that an additional member of staff will be released from other duties to answer the telephone at peak times i.e. first thing each morning, to make telephone waits shorter. The group felt this was a positive arrangement and also accepted that whilst it might be ideal for patients to be able to access the service by phone throughout the day this is currently not possible unless additional funding for more reception staff is available. This issue has been discussed on two previous occasions and it was agreed it would not be raised as a future agenda item unless the Practice reports any changes to the situation.

Appointment timing: SR had discussed the use of timers with the clinical team. Those clinicians using timers responded by saying that the timers were for their personal benefit to enable them to avoid making patients wait beyond their appointment times. Clinicians have agreed to trial an on-screen timer which will be less obvious to patients during their consultation.

1. Health Promotion/awareness weeks: SC suggested that the group could consider supporting Self Care week during 18th – 24th November and that this could be a joint initiative between Portland and Northgate PPGs. SR said that Portland Practice has a named Self Care Champion, Jane Devico. Northgate Practice will also have a Self Care Champion. SR suggested that a “Fair” type approach would be suitable, with a number of relevant organisations being invited to take part. Suggestions included Heart Care, practice pharmacist, selected services from Walsall Community Living Directory. Target populations of patients could be invited, dependent on the services available. The PPG could use the opportunity to recruit more members and to demonstrate electronic access. Friday was felt to be the most appropriate day. SC will contact Northgate PPG to invite their involvement and will begin searching for appropriate services to attend once a date has been agreed.
2. PPG Charter – circulated for information.
3. Flu clinics: SR said it would be helpful if a couple of PPG members could assist, as in previous years:

14th September (over 65s): GJ and SF volunteered

19th October (under 65s/chronic, long term conditions): SC and HM

23rd November – possible “mop-up” date if needed.

Members commented that some patients had asked whilst waiting in the queue last year for advice regarding whether they could have the vaccine if they felt unwell. SR advised that patients cannot receive the vaccine if they have a raised temperature, but any concerns should be raised face to face with the clinicians before receiving the vaccination. The injection cannot cause anyone to have flu.

1. Any other business

CA asked about progress with the walk-in phlebotomy clinic. SR reported that the service has been suspended temporarily as the room was not large enough, alterations have been made and this service should start shortly. This will enable patients to have an immediate blood test if this is agreed as an outcome of their consultation with their doctor, if they are prepared to wait for a short while. The group felt this is an excellent development as it prevents the need to return on another date. Use of a dedicated phlebotomist will enable Health Care Assistants to be released from taking bloods to carry out other tasks; training is currently underway.

GJ asked if there are any specific tasks that the practice would like the PPG to carry out. She referred back to previous times when the PPG were involved in encouraging patients to access Pharmacy First, and to fund-raising activities. These gave the group a sense of purpose and encouraged greater involvement. SR responded that if PPG members are able to spend time in the waiting room demonstrating the new health monitor this would be helpful. The information is stored electronically and is inputted into patient records by the administration team.

SR also advised that the NHS digital App now in use will be helpful for patients. 25% of all appointments are now offered on-line, including some urgent, same day appointments. PPG members spending time in the waiting room to raise awareness of this and the other features available would also be helpful.

Group members who are willing to spend time in the waiting room shared their telephone numbers so that dates could be organised. SC will create a WhatsApp group, but not all members use this system and will need to use text messages.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 4th December at 5.00 pm.