**Portland Patient Participation Group invited Mony Panaser, Practice Pharmacist, to their meeting on 25th October 2023, for a question and answer session:**

**What is the role of the practice pharmacist?**

*Very diverse, helping patients to manage their long term conditions, blood pressure, cholesterol lowering, pain management, asthma, vaccinations, refining patient care by aligning medication to reduce no.of trips to the pharmacy. Mony works closely with the GPs and will pass on any concerns to them.*

**What is the best part of the job?**

*All of it! I can spend time with patients to help them to get the best from their medication and treatment.*

**How many scripts are created each week?**

*There are approximately 300 repeat prescriptions to authorise each day along with another 100+ prescription queries.*

**How should patients request a repeat prescription?**

*The best and easiest way is through the NHS app or Patient Access where the patient can see all their medication and tick the boxes for the items needed. However it is recognised that not all patients can do this and the alternative is to tick the boxes on the right hand portion of the slip accompanying the previous medication. This can be handed in to reception or put into the post box outside the surgery.*

*Ideally patients should put in their request a week before they need the items. Reception staff check when medication was last ordered before passing on requests to be checked and authorised.*

**How are repeat prescriptions monitored/supervised? This question arose from a PPG member who discovered a “hoard” of medicines after someone had died (not a Portland patient).**

*This is recognised nationally as a huge problem, along with patients accepting medication they do not plan to use. Sometimes in the past this has occurred where nominated pharmacies have automatically ordered items on behalf of patients. Patients can help reduce waste and unnecessary expenditure by only requesting the items they need rather than ticking all items on the repeat list.*

*It was agreed that a poster/screen display to draw attention to this issue would be helpful.*

**What is the annual expenditure on medicines?**

*The budget for medicines for all Walsall GP practices is held by the ICB (Integrated Care Board). Some treatments can be very expensive, especially newer highly specialised treatments for cancer care.*

**Which medications are no longer prescribed/patients should purchase themselves?**

*There is National Guidance on this which is updated regularly. It will include items such as paracetamol, antacids and head lice treatment. The practice has to comply with this and will check for alternatives if an item has been removed from the approved list.*

*Exemption certificates for free medication are available for some circumstances/conditions.*

**How are patients informed of immunisations they might be eligible for?**

*Text messages are used to remind and inform patients of this and other relevant information including appointments. The practice were keen to know if there are too many text messages; the group felt messages are very helpful to patients and are a valuable method of communication. Information is also displayed in the practice on posters and on the display screen. Some feedback was given around the size of font and speed of the display which is sometimes too fast to read. This will be investigated and remedied if possible; however some information is supplied from external sources and cannot be amended.*

**The group thanked Mony for attending the meeting.**

**The Patient Participation Group meets every 3 months on a Wednesday afternoon at 4.00 pm, and is open to all Portland patients. Please ask at reception for details.**