

Waterfront Patients Participation Group Meeting

Thursday 13th February, 2025: Midday – 13.15 pm

Attendees:

- Louise Bunce, Practice Manager
- Joan Allen, Treasurer
- Clive Spicer
- Chris Swaithe
- Dr Chung joined the meeting
- Dawn Fellows
- Jane Spicer
- Sylvia Swaithe

Apologies

- Chris Beddall

Matters Arising

Karina Lloyd - Black Country AAA Screening Programme Manager

Louise said that the talk Karina gave to the last meeting about patients who are at risk of an aneurysm was very interesting. Now contacting Waterfront patients and experiencing a good take up of the service which is pleasing.

Dr Chung – GP update

Dr Chung attended the meeting: the main discussion with the PPG concerned the 'Table Triage System' (see 'Did Not Attend (DNA) Review' for explanation). Key points raised included that whilst a GP appointment was the ideal result of a patient's request for help, it might be better to have a decision made about treatment, even if the triage assessment meant attending the pharmacy, rather than having to wait some time for a GP appointment. It was agreed that Louise would look how the triage approach works at AW Surgeries where it is now in operation.

Did Not Attend (DNA) Review

Louise reported that the number of DNAs was not improving figures were:

- November – 183
- December – 171
- January - 209.

Unfortunately, it is a long-standing and recurring problem not only at the Waterfront Surgery, but both locally and nationally. Louise wondered whether putting back flu jabs from September to October and the severity of the flu season may have contributed to the current situation.

One approach now used by many practices is "Table Triage". Patients ring up or contact the practice and all are put onto a list: every patient is then reviewed by the on-call GP who makes a decision based on the information provided. For the patient this means either being seen at the practice or being triaged to other healthcare options such as the pharmacy. At present the Waterfront Partner GPs have not reached a decision about adopting this approach. As it stands the number of patients who request appointments versus appointments available means that there is a backlog for the following day. The PPG then had a wide-ranging discussion about the pros and cons of adopting the system.

Chris S emphasised the importance of educating patients about alternatives to an appointment with a GP and asked what else could be done to promote relevant healthcare options? Louise discussed the different ways of booking an appointment. Currently the NHS guidance is that if an appointment cannot be booked on the day one must be offered within two weeks, which then fills up appointment slots and reduces availability. Dawn cited her own experience of ringing up, being first in the queue but being told no appointments were available at the Waterfront Surgery.

Waterfront Website

Louise confirmed that there have been no updates on the website. NHS England are reviewing websites to try and improve them.

The Waterfront Practice now has a Facebook page after consultation with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) IT. Its purpose is to give information rather provide an opportunity for comments about the practice. Louise said if a patient Googles the practice the results still show Drs Mr and Mrs Sahni and the old telephone number. She has 'claimed' the business and is trying to update the page but the process was very convoluted and technically complex.

NHS Patient Survey and PPG Patient Survey 2025

Jane was invited to participate in the NHS GP Survey this year and will compare the questions with the PPG Patient Survey 2024. She will prepare a draft showing any changes for discussion at the next PPG Meeting.

Treasurer's Report

There has been no expenditure.

Waterfront Surgery Staffing Updates

Louise informed the meeting that Dr Zahra has now been at the practice for a few months. She works Tuesday and Wednesday at the Waterfront and has a GP role at the Rangeways Practice; it is hoped that she may increase her days at the practice in the future.

Amanda Sutton, our very highly regarded Practice Nurse, has left the Waterfront due to personal reasons. An advert was placed in January 2025 which resulted in a lot of applications and interviews. Unfortunately, many applicants did not have General Practice qualifications or experience. The successful candidate is a district nurse, Rebecca who will be going on a 9-month university course to obtain her G.P. Certificate. She will start at the Waterfront on 16th March, 2025 and will initially shadow the two locum nurses who will be at the practice in the interim.

Any Other Business

NHS England Improvement of Online Communications for Patients.

Already discussed under Waterfront Website.

Inspection Visits

Louise confirmed that there were no updates on any possible Inspection visits.

Friends and Family Test

The Friends and Family Test results remain positive. Currently the test is only delivered through text messages – Louise would like this to be expanded to include hard copy forms and a screen in the waiting area.

Autumn Campaign - Flu and Covid Vaccinations

Louise confirmed that the 2024/2025 Flu Vaccination campaign is nearly finished. The Primary Care Network (PCN) has approached the Waterfront to ask if they would deliver COVID and Flu vaccinations for 2025/2026 – the practice may take this on.

Pharmacy Services

Louise has had a meeting with the Head Pharmacist from the Integrated Care Board (ICB) relating to the practice not triaging enough patients to pharmacies for treatment. The practice is encouraging and educating staff to direct patients to a pharmacy if appropriate.

Rejected Prescriptions

Dawn asked about the procedure for notifying patients if a GP rejects a prescription as she had experienced problems with lack of notification. Louise outlined the process which should be that the GP sends a 'task' to the reception staff to advise patient to contact the GP. Sometimes the GP does not create a 'task' or it is on the list as non-urgent. Louise will ensure that all staff are reminded of the correct procedure.

Primary Care Network (PCN) PPG Meeting

Louise advised the members that the next PCN PPG meeting is to be held on 27th February at the Brockmoor Community Centre between 11.00 am and 1.00 pm. Shared Digital Services would be attending to promote through the PPGs. Anyone wishing to attend should let Louise know.

Black Country Foodbank Donation.

When Dr Ratra was PCN lead there were issues about donating money to the foodbank which has now been resolved with £5,000 having been donated.

NHS App

Joan and Sylvia reported that they are still having problems accessing the NHS App.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 11.00 am on Thursday 20th March, 2025.