

Waterfront Patients Participation Group Meeting

Thursday 24^h July, 2025: 11.00 – 12.30 pm

Attendees:

- Louise Bunce, Practice Manager
- Joan Allen, Treasurer
- Clive Spicer
- Chris Swaithe
- Jim (@juststraighttalk.com)
- Chris Beddall
- Jane Spicer
- Sylvia Swaithe

Apologies

- Dawn Fellows

Matters Arising

Presentation from Jim of juststraighttalk.org

Jim introduced himself and juststraighttalk.org which was set up in 2012 with the aim of supporting individuals with varying issues to increase their confidence and well-being through a range of projects. Their mission statement is: "We want to encourage and empower people to build better lives within the communities where they live"

Jim explained that the current project is "Digi Dudley" which began in 2021 to help people requiring technology support who are over 65 or housebound; it aims to increase social connections using technology. Jim is the "Digi Buddy" lead for the project, and runs several groups around the borough including Halesowen and Stourbridge (which meet fortnightly) and Kingswinford and Coseley (which meet monthly), and Kate's Hill.

For new starters there is a 7-session cycle which can be repeated if necessary, that focuses on demystifying the NHS App, online banking and shopping. If appropriate he can provide individual lessons and he gave an example of a successful intervention for a housebound individual. Individuals can self-refer if over 65 and there is also "Digital Divide" aimed at individuals aged between 19 and 64. Places must be booked by ringing Jim if someone has not attended before and individuals do not need a device. Jim noted that funding comes from varied organisations including Dudley Council. Digi Dudley has a very limited device provision and has signed up to the device bank.

Louise asked about the best way of advertising the services on offer to patients at the Waterfront Surgery? Jim said that Kingswinford Medical Practice uses a notice board. Louise suggested sending texts, but Chris B said that although this was fine for patients with smart phones what about those without one? Louise then suggested undertaking research to identify individuals who might benefit. Jim suggested using the receptionist team as gatekeepers who could signpost patients to him.

Jim would be more than happy to run sessions in Brierley Hill but has no funding for accommodation which makes setting up and running courses in the area challenging. Chris B wondered if a local church hall might be suitable? Chris S and Sylvia suggested that the Black Country Foodbank might be a possible venue.

Jim closed by distributing leaflets to PPG members who thanked him for his thorough, detailed and informative briefing.

Triage Assessment (Dr Chung – GP update)

Louise informed the meeting that she would provide the usage figures later.

Did Not Attend (DNA) Review

Louise reported that following the reduction of DNAs in May to 151, there had been an increase in June to 169 with 145 to date in July. In June the figures had included 91 appointments for clinicians other than nurses. The PPG expressed their ongoing frustration that there were still so many 'no shows' and the problem, as ever, was not simply a local one but national.

Louise said that she was uncertain what action could be taken that would improve the figures. The practice now restricts patients with 3 or more DNAs to making an appointment on the day. With that in mind, last week one patient had booked an appointment for that day and still failed to attend. She confirmed that over the last two weeks demand had been very high with children and older people with colds.

Waterfront Website + NHS App

Louise said that she hoped to liaise with Jim to increase patient usage of the NHS App.

NHS Patient Survey and PPG Patient Survey 2025

As promised at the last meeting Louise had provided Jane with patient data including ethnicity. Unfortunately, it could not be used as there are a significant number of patients who have not indicated their ethnicity.

Louise distributed a comparison of the recently published 2025 NHS Patient Survey results and Jane gave out the Draft PPG Summer 2025 Survey results tables for information. The meeting then analysed and debated the results at some length. One practical innovation was put forward by Louise that trays might be provided in practitioners' offices with pens and paper to allow patients to make notes during a consultation if required. It was agreed that the draft report for the PPG Summer 2025 Survey would be completed and be discussed at the next PPG meeting in early September.

Treasurer's Report

Joan (Treasurer) reported that the funds were growing, slowly. She had noticed that there was only one poster on the wall in reception and asked if there needed to be anymore. It was agreed that Joan would source a couple more as children rip them.

Waterfront Surgery Staffing Updates

Louise had previously reported that the practice intended to recruit another apprentice and confirmed that Poppy had started on Monday – she has previous work experience at a GP practice.

Chris S asked whether when a receptionist leaves the practice do they explain why? Louise said that they generally do, often citing stress as an issue, related to patients' abuse and attitude both face-to-face and over the phone. Sylvia shared her experience in the role and Chris S discussed the viability of a rota for receptionists to ensure that they were not always front of house and had a 'break' doing other admin tasks in the back office. Louise said that most patients were fine, but the partners were considering deregistering the small percentage that were abusive as per NHS England guidelines.

Any Other Business

NHS England Improvement of Online Communications for Patients.

There were no updates for this item.

Inspection Visits

Louise updated the meeting on the Full Inspection Control Audit that took place on 3rd July, 2025. Overall, the Inspector was impressed but identified some minor issues including chewing gum under a chair and that the blinds (provided by the building leasers) are not wipeable. The rating was 94% - green - meaning that there will not be another inspection for two years.

Friends and Family Test

The Friends and Family Test results remain very positive.

Autumn Campaign - Flu and Covid Vaccinations

Louise advised the meeting that a letter from NHS England had confirmed that the practice will be unable to give flu jabs until 1st October, 2025. It is considered that this delay will potentially have a negative impact on take-up.

PPG Awareness Week 2025

Both Louise and Clive and Jane had forwarded the agreed PPG's response to the Black Country Integrated Care Board's PPG initiative.

Newsletter Autumn 2025

It was agreed that Clive would draft the next newsletter for discussion at the next meeting. It was hoped that the following topics would be covered: PPG Summer 2025 Survey results, Flu jags and 'DigiDudley'

Car Parking

Louise advised the meeting that car parking at the Brierley Hill Social Care Centre may be taken over by a private company which could significantly impact users with the probable introduction of fines for parking infringements.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 11.00 am on Thursday 11th September, 2025. It is hoped that Dr Chung may be able to attend.