

## Waterfront Patients Participation Group Meeting

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2025: 11.00 a.m. – 12.15 pm

### Attendees:

- Louise Bunce, Practice Manager
- Chris Beddall
- Chris Swaithe
- Jane Spicer
- Sylvia Swaithe

### Apologies

- Clive Spicer
- Dawn Fellows
- Joan Allen, Treasurer

### Matters Arising

#### Jim of juststraighttalk.org

Louise informed the PPG that since the meeting with Reception Staff Jim had come to the Waterfront Practice as agreed to meet patients in the waiting room and provide advice: he had been able to assist some patients with IT problems. The practice will invite him to come again in 2026 to run another support session. Sylvia confirmed Jim and his manager had been to the 'Foodbank' last week but there was no outcome to date.

#### Triage Assessment

Louise reviewed the data traffic through the website – on average the practice is receiving an additional 100 completed on-line forms per month. She will continue to monitor and analyse the patient or carer submissions, whilst trying to encourage website usage for non-urgent cases to hopefully ensure urgent telephone callers are able to get through.

A text message has been sent encouraging patients to sign up for the NHS App. Reception staff will proactively encourage the use of the app, as an example for patients to check blood test results. Chris S asked if there was a different way of assessing the need for a GP appointment? The PPG discussed in detail patients requesting to see the same GP and the need for consistency in healthcare for chronic medical conditions. Chris B highlighted the need for patient education.

#### Patient Personal Information

The importance of patients keeping personal information up to date such as phone numbers, email addresses etc. was emphasised.

#### Did Not Attend (DNA) Review

Louise reported that there had been 39 DNAs for GPs in November which means that the DNA numbers for GPs remains stable with 45 in August, 37 in September and 35 in October. Still frustrating and far too many despite all the protocols in place to try to ensure fewer 'no shows.'

#### Waterfront Website + NHS App

See Triage Assessment above.

#### NHS Patient Survey and PPG Patient Survey 2025

This item was now closed since the PPG Patient Survey and Report 2025 has now been signed-off and published.

#### Treasurer's Report

There was no update in the absence of Joan, the Treasurer.

#### Waterfront Surgery Staffing Updates

Louise confirmed that Dr Firdous was now in place at the practice and everything was extremely positive.

## **Any Other Business**

### **NHS England Improvement of Online Communications for Patients.**

There were no updates for this item.

### **Inspection Visits**

There were no updates for this item.

### **Friends and Family Test**

There were no updates for this item.

### **Autumn Campaign - Flu and Covid Vaccinations**

Becky (Practice Nurse) is going out to deliver flu vaccinations to housebound patients and will take copies of the PPG Newsletter as previously agreed.

### **Newsletter Autumn 2025**

Louise is going to send a text with the newsletter included to patients who have not been to the practice in the last 12 months.

### **GP Practices Quarterly Assessments**

Louise updated the meeting on the Health Secretary, Wes Streeting's GP Practice Assessment Initiative which will consist of 8 assessment categories, and if a Practice is rated below in 5 or more categories, then it will be targeted. Reviews will be through contact with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Practice which is waiting for access to the data to review.

NHS England has required all telephone service providers to submit GP Practice telephone data for October 2025. Louise has reviewed the data and of the Dudley 43 GP practices only one third is represented. Louise has undertaken research into the number of calls that the Waterfront took. NHS England data identified 10,000 calls of which only 42% were answered, compared to Louise's estimated 6,000 calls in total. Trying to understand the discrepancy in data she has contacted the phone provider for additional information, and they estimate 7,000 calls. One possible explanation is that as the Waterfront does not operate "Total Triage" patients may end a call before it is answered.

Louise noted that she is trying various strategies to reduce call traffic including:

- Having all staff answering calls between 8 and 9 a.m. each morning, which to date has reduced the call queue from 17 to 5.
- Changed the message in respect of prescription ordering to encourage online ordering. Chris B gave an example of ordering a repeat prescription which involved several phone calls and visits to pharmacy and surgery.
- Establishing if staff are using the "on task" option when dealing with calls. If not, this can result in a call being transferred to another extension and being recorded as "failed".
- Undertake detailed analysis of call data to highlight potential system delays as well as review call length with 8.5% of calls taking over 5 minutes.

Louise was asked about any other potential issues facing GP Practices and she mentioned the possibility of removing Primary Care Networks (PCNs) next year which then raised the issue of where the current funding would be deployed.

### **PPG Message to Waterfront Staff**

Chris S asked Louise to re-emphasise to all staff how much the PPG appreciates all that they do.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for 11.00 a.m. on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026.