

Waterfront Practice Patients Participation Group Meeting

Thursday 11th June, 2026: 11.00 a.m. – 12.15 pm

Attendees:

- Louise Bunce, Practice Manager
- Chris Beddall
- Chris Swaithes
- Joan Allen, Treasurer
- Jane Spicer
- Sylvia Swaithes

Apologies

- Clive Spicer
- Dawn Fellows

Matters Arising

Jim of juststraighttalk.org

Jim has run an IT Surgery in the Waterfront Reception to support and help patients in accessing on-line services since the last PPG meeting. The practice is still trying to encourage patients to sign up for online access. Louise will be 'running a report' to establish which patients do, or do not have online access.

Triage Assessment

Louise confirmed that the Triage Assessment System continues to go well. That said, there has been no update on the SOS Dashboard data and it continues to be monitored carefully by the practice.

Patient Personal Information

The PPG recognises and strongly supports the attempts by the Waterfront to ensure that all patients keep personal information up to date such as phone numbers, email addresses etc. in case the practice needs to contact them as matter of urgency.

Did Not Attend (DNA) Review

Louise reported there had been a small reduction in GP DNAs from 39 in February 2026 to 35 in March, then a more significant fall to 26 in April and 27 in May which was encouraging. Overall DNAs for the practice were 179 DNAs in March, 167 in April and 168 in May.

A receptionist had sent a message to all patients with appointments on a specific day, asking if they still required their appointment and this had resulted in three cancellations. Louise confirmed that this systematic approach will be repeated.

Waterfront Website + NHS App

Louise noted that up to 50% of Waterfront patients have access to the NHS App and that the practice continues to try to encourage patient use of the NHS App where possible as the earlier minute 'Jim of juststraighttalk.org' indicates.

Jane reported a notice in a local pharmacy stating that with effect from 1st June, 2026, they are no longer able to order prescriptions on patients' behalf. Louise said that this was the Patient Led Ordering Policy from the Black Country Integrated Care Board (ICB) and was intended to reduce waste, stockpiling of medicines and time spent dealing with telephone requests. All patients (who can do so) are required to order prescriptions directly from the GP practice: ideally using the NHS App. where possible, or Patients Access. Louise reassured the PPG that vulnerable patients would be supported as appropriate.

Treasurer's Report

Joan advised the meeting that the PPG Account remained in credit though interest rates had been reduced.

Waterfront Surgery Staffing Updates

Louise confirmed that Sue Goodman's official last day is 24th June 2026.

Following an interview process, Poppy from Reception was the successful candidate for the post to assist in "data analysis" and "managing diabetic patients". She has started in her new role with her initial focus being on the diabetic patients though the data analysis remit might widen in the future. The practice has also appointed another apprentice in Reception - Tigan has been in post for about a month and is settling in well.

Any Other Business

NHS England Improvement of Online Communications for Patients.

There were no updates for this item as are waiting for future government changes. Louise advised the meeting that there is a focus on health inequalities and identifying major health issues in areas, as an example, in Dudley key concerns are diabetes, weight and smoking. According to some surveys Dudley Metropolitan Borough has the highest percentage of takeaways per mile in the country.

Inspection Visits

Louise confirmed that the Practice is still waiting to be contacted by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in respect of the new inspection regime that came into effect on 1st April, 2026.

Friends and Family Test

The practice remains at a creditable 4.48 on the Friends and Family ratings.

Future PPG meetings

Lesley Rubery was unable to attend this PPG Meeting but hopes to come to the next meeting. In the interim she sent handout for members to review.

Up-date on Health and Wellbeing Coach

Louise had no update as to when Ram, Health and Wellbeing Coach, will return to the Practice to deliver further mini health check sessions.

NHS Patient Survey and PPG Patient Survey 2026

The PPG Patient Survey 2026 has been running for just over a month and to date there have been 257 responses of which 73 were from patients in Reception filling in questionnaires. Jane thanked Joan, Chris and Sylvia for their efforts in Reception and assisting patients to complete the survey - all had enjoyed the experience and found it very rewarding.

Jane and Clive had not received a link to the Patients Survey, despite both having had appointments in the last fortnight. Louise asked if other members of the PPG had experienced the same issue? Both Chris B and Chris S had not received links to the survey following healthcare appointments. Louise thanked members for their feedback and explained that she had researched this issue and discovered that Jane had not given consent for text messages on her registration form which had been completed some time ago. Those patients who had signed up before texts and emails became a key part of NHS communications may therefore not be receiving invitations to complete the survey.

Louise has asked IT for assistance to explore the issue further since there may be other patients who will not be receiving the link to the questionnaire. She hopes to resolve the issue to ensure all patients who can have access.

Jane distributed two sets of summary tables showing the results to date and comparing them to 2024 and 2025 results which were generally positive. After some discussion it was agreed that:

- The online survey would run until at least the next PPG Meeting in July.
- Joan, Chris and Sylvia would return to Reception to assist patients in completing the hard copy version of the survey.
- Jane would produce updated results for the next meeting.
- A decision on the way forward would be made at the next PPG Meeting.

Waterfront Health Board

Louise highlighted an initiative that the practice is running with a board in Reception that focuses on major health issues for patients. Last month it was Mental Health and this month Cervical Screening; Lauren is scheduling the topics, with practice staff involved in activities to promote each topic as well as fundraising where possible. Rebecca Price is scheduling a week this month, when she will block off her appointments to allow for unappointed cervical tests.

Car parking

Joan raised the challenges of parking at the Health Centre, particularly for those with mobility or serious health problems - there was general agreement that it was a significant issue but one with no obvious solution. All the patients of the Waterfront and High Oak surgeries, and clients visiting the various health services from Audiology to Podiatry in the centre, are faced with the same problem.

Food Bank

Sylvia asked Louise to ensure that Reception staff are aware of the importance of selecting the reason the voucher has been issued. The challenges that the Food Bank is facing were identified by Chris S and Sylvia – demand is presently so high that at times it has been running out of food.

Patient Participation Groups

There was no update on this item.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 11.00 a.m. on Thursday 9th July, 2026.