

PPG Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday 11th August 2020 at 6.30pm

Attendance: Pamela Slater, Dr Amy Gall, Emma (Practice Secretary), XXX, XXX

Minutes

Action points from last meeting: Nil

Staffing

Pam advised the following:

Chris, Reception Team Leader, retired at the end of December as planned. A PPG member suggested, prior to the meeting, that not many patients were aware of her retirement therefore were unable to wish her well and congratulate her on her contribution to the practice. In hindsight it may be a good idea to place such notices in reception and on our website and this is something we will consider going forward.

Dr Alison George has now left the practice. This was a temporary arrangement.

Dr Danielle Robinson is now on maternity leave.

Dr Catriona Hall is currently consulting remotely from home. She undertakes telephone and virtual consultations as well as administrative work.

Dr Hayley Wallace, Salaried GP, started in January and works four sessions per week.

Locum GP, Dr Chitra Pandilwar started in May and works four sessions per week to cover Dr Robinson's maternity leave .

Megan Ramsey, Primary Care Navigator works one day per week. She is employed by NGPS (Newcastle GP Services) and is contracted to us through the Primary Care Network (PCN). Megan provides social help to patients such as support with form completion, housing etc.

Leslyanne Watson, Social Prescribing link worker, works one day per week and is also employed by the NGPS. She is contracted to us through the PCN network. Leslyanne signposts patients to various services and undertakes more complex social support.

Vince, Medical Receptionist, started in December 2019.

Jennifer Ridley, Career Start Nurse, started working with us this week. She is shared with Thornfield and St Anthony's Practices also.

Medical Student teaching is due to start again in September 2020 with four students, one day per week.

Covid 19

Amy advised the following:

Working environment – safety for both staff and patients.

The covid-19 pandemic has impacted hugely on general practice . On the 18th March we received an email to close the surgery doors for patient and staff safety purposes. This was unexpected and led to rapid changes with regards to how we managed our workload and consulted with patients. We needed to arrange extra phone lines, both incoming and outgoing, in order to manage the volume of telephone consultations we were suddenly required to undertake. Telephone consultations and video consultations are now undertaken routinely. Since the closure of the practice door we have prearranged face to face appointments for patients who require blood tests, immunisations, vitamin B12 injections, childhood immunisations, antenatal checks and any patients who we were unable to assess via telephone or video.

Amy asked for any feedback from a patients perspective.

XXX advised some patients are under the impression that their surgeries aren't seeing patients and they therefore contact 111 rather than their GP surgery.

Amy advised that we are open behind the closed door. We are aware that trying to get through on the telephone may be difficult but we have always strived to be accessible. Our answering machine provides up to date information, as does our website and there are information notices on the front door of the surgery. We were also open on Good Friday and Bank holiday Monday to provide ongoing care. Amy also explained the last few weeks have been exceptionally busy due to patient demand and holidays etc. Some patients are directed to 111 if the triage urgent list is full however we have been doing our best to safely manage as much as possible each day. In addition to the urgent triage list patients can usually book telephone appointments a week in advance or they can complete an e-Consult via our Practice website where they will receive a response by the end of the next working day.

Staff working

Risk assessments have been carried out for all staff and appropriate measures put in place. Arrangements have been made for some staff members to work from home.

PPE is worn by clinicians for face to face appointments and PPE is also advised for moderate/high risk staff members. All staff have been advised regarding holidays outside of the UK and isolation guidelines.

Closing of waiting room & reception area.

Amy advised that the waiting area is too small to ensure adequate social distancing and therefore the safety of staff and patients.

New ways of working due to covid-19:

Prescriptions

Amy advised that the practice has been actively promoting the ordering of prescriptions via the NHS app or Patient Access. There is also a dedicated phone recording line and a post box outside of the surgery for patients still wishing to post prescription requests.

All prescriptions are now sent to pharmacies directly via electronic prescribing and repeat dispensing is arranged where possible, meaning batch prescriptions are organised.

Interpreters

- We have arranged for three way telephone interpreters for patients who require interpreting services.

IT

During the recent Covid-19 pandemic we have relied heavily on IT services.

We have used AccuRx text messaging service for receipt of photographs from patients (ie skin lesions, lumps etc) We also forward sick notes and general advice to patients via AccuRx message.

We have signed up for a messaging service called Mjog which allows us to send bulk text messages to patients. This will be invaluable for notifying patients of our flu clinic.

New Patients are able to download registration forms via the practice website and email or post them to the practice.

We heavily promote the NHS app for requesting repeat prescriptions, accessing aspects of medical records and booking appointments. Unfortunately there are no online appointments available via online services at the present time as we need to ensure that appointments are managed via their requirements. Pam advised that no input is required by the practice with regards to the authorisation of the NHS app and that patients can complete online access applications online.

The Patient Access app, which many patients currently use, has recently been advertising private consultations and this is concerning.

Patients have been encouraged to use e-Consult to consult with the surgery. This is accessible via our practice website. Patients receive a response by the next evening. It provides patients with information and also enables them to become proactive in their own care.

New practice website:

Pam advised the following:

An updated practice website was required as our old website was clunky, hard to use and no longer met the needs of our patients or the practice. As such we have spent lots of time and money on a new website which we hope meets our patient's needs and expectations. The new website is visually improved and user friendly. It is easier to navigate and contains accurate up to date information.

Pam advised the group about the 'self-help' page and self-referral links available which we hope will empower patients to become proactive in their own care.

The website also contains links to the NHS App, Patient Access and e-Consult.

There is also a latest news section where the latest practice news is readily available to patients via the home page. The news is in rolling date order so please don't interpret it as being out of date. The latest news item will always be at the top of the news section.

We aim to encourage patient use with regards to the NHS app, Patient Access, e-Consult and the self-help section which will in turn reduce telephone calls to the surgery. Keeping telephone lines free for patients in need or without internet access.

PCN update

Amy advised the group that the PCN:

- Have just employed 5 Pharmacists to work across the network, starting in the Autumn
- Are in discussions about what job roles to employ next – possibly more prescribing link workers to help patients with complex needs, mental health workers for short term interventions and/or paramedics for home visits.
- Are standardising how all the surgeries in the network function and if we are going to share staff we need to align our ways of working

- Looking into which projects we can fund and provide across the whole network

Flu Campaign

Pam advised the group:

We will be delivering our flu clinics at Thornfield Medical Practice which is based at the Molineux NHS Centre as they have a larger waiting room and entry and exit doors. Clinics are likely to be held on weekdays however this has not been confirmed as yet. We are likely to hold more flu clinics which will also take longer due to Covid-19 safety precautions. We also need to cater for patients aged 50 upwards therefore the organisation required is more complex than in previous years.

AOB.

XXX advised he had an unexpected visit from a lady wearing PPE. Amy explained it may be due to catch up in patient care but that she will look into it. Ideally XXX should have received notification of this visit in advance and Amy apologised for this. Unfortunately the practice is not always aware when health care professionals will visit a patient.