

Patient Participation Group (PPG)



Minutes of Meeting – 14th April 2023

ATTENDEES:

Spencer Oates – Practice Manager (SLO)
Chris Fowler – Chair (CF)
Peter Holmes (PH)
Christine Lewis (CL)
Yvonne Bottom (YB)
Carol Caudwell (CC)

APOLOGIES:

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Reception sign at Whiston.

A member of the group advised that the reception sign in Whiston car park had not been put up yet. Spencer advised he would chase this up and ensure it was put up asap.

2. Rotherham Hub Service

YB advised that they had recently contacted the surgery for an appointment and had been offered an appointment at Broom Lane Surgery as part of the Rotherham Hub Services. They were not aware that these appointments were available but found this appointment to be more suitable to her needs in terms of date and time. PH asked if the surgery could advertise that these services were available. Spencer advised that posters were already on display in the waiting rooms to inform patients regarding these services. A conversation took place regarding what extra information patients may want in terms of advertising these services. PH advised that it may be beneficial to patients for small leaflets to be produced advising patients that when they are offered an appointment it may be at a local hub site rather than Brinsworth or Whiston Medical Centres. Spencer advised that the wording of any such advertising needs to be vague enough to not need changing every time a new service is launched, yet specific enough to not cause an increase in questioning to the already busy reception team. Spencer would look at this and draft something for the next meeting.

3. COVID Spring Boosters

YB asked what the current situation was regarding COVID Spring Booster vaccinations. The current cohorts, identified as a national priority, were patients aged over 75, under 75 immunosuppressed, and patients in registered care homes. Spencer advised that 2 clinicians had been fully booked, all day, for the 21st April 2023. As YB fell into one of the above categories they asked when more appointments would be added. Spencer advised that

appointment availability was limited by vaccine obtainability. We are allocated an amount of vaccines based on our patient cohort sizes when compared with other practices within Raven PCN. As soon as more vaccines were delivered we would plan further clinics, this would more than likely be within the next couple of weeks.

4. Telephone System

CF advised that he had personal experience of using the new call-back system built into the telephone system and found this to be a very positive experience. He contacted the surgery and was given the option on the telephone system to 'press 1' and the practice would call him back when he reached the front of the queue. CF advised that this worked extremely well and was an excellent system. Spencer asked what the group thought of the current telephone system, and whether anyone had used it recently whilst contacting the surgery. All members reported that they were very happy with the telephone system and found that their calls were answered very quickly.

5. Empty Waiting Rooms

PH informed the group that he had been approached by a couple of patients wanting to know why they could not get a routine appointment for over 3 weeks, yet when they attended the waiting rooms were always empty. Spencer explained that the practice was still offering a choice of either telephone or face-to-face appointments to patients when they contact the surgery to book a routine appointment. Approximately 40% of appointments remained as telephone consultations by choice. It was advised that the waiting rooms may have been empty at the times of patient attendance due to a combination of telephone appointments being skewed towards that time, appointment DNAs, and naturally quiet appointment periods, such as lunch time or later on in the day. It is very difficult to say exactly why there are so few people in the waiting room at any particular time, without knowing further information. Spencer did assure the group that this was absolutely not due to a reduction in the number of appointments available, and in fact very often the waiting can become very full at both sites.

6. Feedback from a patient

CF reported that he had been talking to a patient who was newly registered at the surgery and was very impressed with the efficiency and support they had received from the practice, during this period of time and subsequent appointments.

7. Whiston Extension Project

Members of the group asked for an update on the progression of the Whiston Extension Project. Spencer advised that this was still in the planning stage, and had received no objection from local residents or council to prevent it going ahead. As the project is a huge undertaking there were many areas that needed to be considered and planned in, to ensure smooth building work. As soon as further information was available this would be shared with the PPG. The PPG expressed that they were looking forward to the building work being completed and the end product of an extended Whiston Medical Centre.

Date of Next PPG meeting: Next meeting scheduled as follows:

Whiston Medical Centre
Friday 2nd June 2023 at 13:00