

Minutes of the Wivenhoe Medical Centre Patient Participation Group Meeting

Wednesday 26 July 2023 at Wivenhoe Medical Centre, Philip Road, Wivenhoe

Present: Zoe Cronin, Carolina Garriga, Dave Harrison, Clare Hawkins, Peter Hill (Chair), Penny Kraft, Sue Southey

1. Apologies: Karl Douzier, Brian Taylor, Sally Wilcox
2. Appointment of Minutes Secretary: Clare Hawkins
3. Membership of the PPG: Tricia Garwood is retiring from the PPG. Sally Wilcox will not be able to attend on Wednesdays. It was therefore agreed that meetings should be moved to Mondays from October. The next meeting will be either Monday 30th October or Monday 6th November, depending on the availability of other members of the group.
4. The Minutes of the last meeting 3 May 2023 were agreed.
5. Matters arising: No progress has been made with the University about the proposal to stage weekly Parkruns. It was suggested that the Registrar, Bryn Morris, should be contacted (registrar@essex.ac.uk tel: 01206 873000)

6. Update by Zoe Cronin, Practice Manager, Wivenhoe Medical Centre

- a) **Staffing:** There is still a vacancy for a full-time nurse and very few appropriate applications have been received. The current post holder is not due to leave until March, so advertising will continue. There is a general shortage of medical professionals locally and nationally. Dr Crook has returned from maternity leave and Dr Jenkinson, the locum, has left. Dr Jenkinson has been a great asset to the practice. The newly appointed GP assistant is due to start on 1st August. This is an all-round role to cover administrative and reception duties. A tea party was held for staff to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the NHS.
- b) **Did not attend:** There were 81 in June. It was suggested that a text reminder should be sent to patients closer to the date of the appointment. Now that patients can only book two weeks ahead, it is hoped that they will be less likely to forget appointments. One reminder close to the appointment will be considered as a possibility. There is insufficient staffing to undertake telephone reminders. Phone calls previously made to patients attending appointments for fasting blood tests are to be discontinued to reduce pressure on administrative staff. Any negative effects of this will be reviewed.
- c) **Flu jab clinics** have been arranged for 23rd and 30th September. The ACCUTRX text messaging system will send a link to patients to enable them to book flu jab appointments on these dates. They can also be booked by phone. This system is already used successfully by doctors for contacting patients. A team of volunteer helpers will manage arrivals by car and advise disabled patients to stay in their cars to

avoid hold ups. The time allowed for jabs has been increased to 2 minutes per person to prevent large queues forming.

d) A concern has been raised by a group of patients that confidential conversations can be overheard by others in the reception area. It was pointed out that a private room is available on request for those who wish a private discussion. A notice to this effect is displayed. This will be notified to the complainants.

e) An online consultation tool using AI is to be introduced, to enable patients seeking appointments to be triaged by completing a series of questions on a computer screen and referred for appointments with the appropriate health professional. Appointments will still be possible in person or by phone, although system's set questions will be used to process the enquiry.

7. **Boots Pharmacy:** Anecdotal experience of the service is variable. Some people have reported quick responses and efficient service, while others have found it less satisfactory. Good customer service has been observed to be lacking in the attitude of some staff. It was agreed that the Wivenhoe News report on the Medical Centre should contain information about other local pharmacy services.

8. **Communication with Patients:** The Wivenhoe Medical Centre website is accessible via a link on the COLTE website <https://www.coltepartnership.com/>

There have been no further complaints on social media or other fora about the closure for staff training on Wednesday afternoons.

9. AOB

Additional members of the PPG. Having lost two members of the group, a query was raised about whether new members should be sought. There is no specified number for the group, but any patients keen to join should be considered.

A request was made about the proportion of dnas out of the appointments. There are approximately 1000 appointments per week and 60 – 80 dnas.

The possibility of a strike by GPs was discussed, though the contractual obligations of GPs would make this more difficult than for hospital doctors.

Date of next meeting: Monday 30th October or Monday 6th November