

**Draft Minutes of Wivenhoe Medical Centre Patient Participation Group Meeting
Monday 20 May 20224 at Wivenhoe Medical Centre, Philip Road, Wivenhoe**

Present: Karl Douzier, Clare Hawkins, Peter Hill, Julie Selley, Pauline Rendall, Sue, Southey, Brian Taylor, Sue Whytock, Sally Wilcox, Tim Wood (Chair)

1. Apologies: None
2. Appointment of Minute Secretary : Clare Hawkins
3. Membership of PPG. New members: Pauline Rendall was welcomed.
4. Minutes of the last meeting held on 5.2.24 were agreed.
5. Update by Julie Selley, Wivenhoe Medical Centre:

Staffing changes: The changes to the roles of staff managing Diabetes care seem to be working effectively.

Dr Cope has retired as a partner but is continuing to offer appointments 3 days per week, reducing to 1 day when the new appointment, Dr Soares, starts in June 2 days per week.

There are 4 full-time equivalent doctors, 3 partners plus Dr Cope/Dr Soares

Did not attends: There have been 91 since 1st April, for all clinicians.

Patients can cancel appointments by telephone, online or by email. These methods are indicated on notices in the health centre reception and on the website. Text message reminders of appointments are issued the day before, with a link on the message for the option to cancel. However it was acknowledged that some patients were unsure about how to cancel. Discussion focused on the suggestion of following up DNAs by letter, email or survey, to ascertain the reasons for non-appearance. It was agreed that any 'follow up request' should seek information as to reasons rather than appear to be interrogatory or punitive. TW offered to assist with draft of survey request note if it was decided that this would be a good idea.

Other issues: Staff shortage in reception: This has arisen because of the resignation of a newly-trained member of staff, with one week's notice. A replacement is undergoing training. Another staff member has been off work following a knee operation. This has placed a strain on remaining staff.

Shortages of medications: National shortages of certain essential medications have been reported in the press. This has occurred occasionally in the practice, but is not a major problem as alternative medications have been available.

6. Situation with Boots/Free prescription delivery services

The problem of long queues at Boots seems to have improved. A query about a GP referral to a pharmacist for medication was raised. Under the new Government 'Pharmacy First' scheme for direct access to pharmacies for certain conditions,

prescription medications are supplied free of charge to those who are not required to pay, although this solely applies to 'prescription only' medicine and other items that would normally be supplied by a pharmacist on a 'paid for' basis would still need to be paid for.

Free delivery of medication is provided by Hythe Pharmacy but not at the moment by Boots.

7. Colte Partnership PPG Group Meetings

Two recent Zoom meetings have been attended by representatives of Wivenhoe PPG (SW and CH), with others from 2 GP practices. The purpose of meetings is for PPGs to exchange information, good practice and collaborate on health/well-being initiatives. Activities such as free 'training' sessions in using the NHS App have already taken place at the practice. The possibility of GP practices offering future events, based on themes from the health awareness calendar of activities, will be discussed at the next meeting on 10th July. Other information discussed included: involvement of PPGs in the Compassionate City Colchester scheme (end-of-life care), and explanations of medical acronyms on the NHS website.

8. Communication with Patients

The available methods of informing patients about the PPG - website, newsletter, social media – were listed. It was pointed out that some practices hold sessions explaining the role of the PPG. TW agreed to write the next article for Wivenhoe News.

9. Wivenhoe Medical Centre Non Urgent Appointments Protocol

Discussion focused on the mismatch between the government requirement for GP practices to provide a facility to book non-urgent appointments for a period of in excess of two weeks away, and the reality of patients' experiences at Wivenhoe Medical Centre. At the moment the Wivenhoe Medical Centre position is that non urgent appointments for routine matters such as blood tests etc can only be booked by joining the '8am telephone queue' with those needing urgent appointments for that day.

The difficulties and complications encountered by patients trying to make non-urgent and routine appointments are the main sources of complaint about services. There was much discussion about the disconnect between Department of Health aspirations and the experience of those 'at the coalface'.

There is to be a review of the booking system by the Medical Centre staff in an effort to improve it. It was strongly suggested that online bookings should be made available for all non-urgent and routine appointments. Various comparisons were offered of systems used by other practices, which will be considered. It was recognised that alternatives to telephone bookings are urgently needed to ease the pressure on the system.

It was mentioned that some other medical centres had successfully used 'Zoom' type technology for consultations. JS agreed to bring this up at the next partners meeting.

Online ordering of repeat prescriptions is available and a separate telephone line for queries on prescriptions, although telephone ordering of repeat prescriptions is not yet available. It was recognised that these may not be known about by some patients. TW said that this would be mentioned in his next article for Wivenhoe News and JS said she would advise him of the phone number (Note subsequent to meeting – now received).

It was agreed that this was an important topic and should be included on the PPG Agenda on a regular basis.

10. **AOB: Dementia Support:** There are 87 people diagnosed with dementia in Wivenhoe. Peter Hill has distributed information leaflets about the Wivenhoe Dementia Support Group to the Wivenhoe Health Centre, the Library, Council Offices. The leaflet lists a range of services for those with dementia and their carers. The Friendly Club also offers support.

Date of the Next Meeting : Monday 23rd September 2024