DRAFT ONLY

Biggar Medical Practice Patient Group (PG) Meeting

Friday 14 January 2022
Minutes

In attendance: Sarah Sinclair (Chair) (SS), Barbara Duffner (BD), Beth Anderson (BA) Jean Elliot (JE) Gordon Cunningham (GC) Tracey Forrest (TF) Kirsty Hutchinson (KH) and Donald Stewart (DS)

1. **Introduction and Welcome**

Sarah welcomed Kirsty to the meeting.

2. **Apologies:** Audrey Gillespie and Kevin Hynes-Evangelista

3. **Minutes from meeting on 1 December 2021 and Matters Arising**

These were agreed.

3a Ambulance Service: Action - DS to contact Mr Philip Meechan McAleer for possible dates February / March 2022

3b Breast Screening Service: Sarah confirmed an email had been received the day after the last Patient Group meeting in December from the Business Manager's secretary stating the Director was unwell and would be in contact early in the New Year regarding the setting up of the short-life working group. **The WG will keep an eye on this matter.**

3c Booster and Flu Vaccination Delivery: Donald reported that there had been many more Covid Booster than Flu jabs among Patients in the Practice. All housebound patients have had their vaccinations. Those working in other areas such as Edinburgh, had been able to get their vaccinations near to their place of work. There had been no particular issues on booster vaccinations.

3d New telephone system: the new system was now working. Dr Stewart reads a message which is about 2 minutes long, giving options to press, like repeat prescriptions, sick (fitness to work) notes before being put through to the patient adviser. Several Patients had complained about the time it was taking to speak to an Advisor. The 'new' system was like that adopted by many organisations; it enabled the medical staff to place outgoing calls at all times (under the old system there were occasions when all lines were busy). The repeat prescription box in the surgery has been retained. **Donald asked all members to feedback any comments. Afternote:** The massage has been updated after feedback and message time is now reduced.

4. **Practice Away Day 4 December 2021:** Donald reported that the away day had been very useful, and the meeting had discussed the suggestions made by the Patient Group. Summarised suggestions and response|:

- Explanation by patient adviser why patient is asked the reason for phone call- i.e. make sure passed to the right health care staff. *Response* - staff have been trained to explain, but this will be re-emphasised.
- Waiting outside - concern about mothers with young children waiting outside particularly in poor weather and therefore asked whether a temporary shelter could be erected. *Response* - unfortunately not possible as will result in people not maintaining the required distance. This is also the reason why people who have not come by car

are not all invited into the waiting room. Staff keep an eye out to see if it is possible to invite someone in when the weather is poor. Trying to ensure the medical centre does not enable covid to be spread within the centre is a major concern. **Afternote:** Please see enclosed response to the community council on this subject

- Signage outside - confusion with too many notices on the windows of the centre. *Response* - all but one has been removed to ensure clarity.
- Clear messaging by GP as to what patient should do on arrival at the medical centre having been invited over the phone for a face to face appointment. *Response* Yes this will be emphasised to ensure all staff are clear about what patients need to do outside the centre.
- Phone back - Given scam phone calls can a particular number be visible as coming from the Practice when the Triage doctor phones back and if this could be made known so people add to their contact list. *Response* - under new telephone system this will be possible.
- Some young mothers sometimes felt unhappy not being offered an appointment for their child when phoned back and did not have the confidence to say they were still worried about their child. Suggestion - at the end of the call could the doctor ask something like: are you okay with the advice I have given - is there something else you would like to say? *Response* - the GPs were concerned that a mother would feel this way as they stated they understood concerns about a sick child and would always want to ensure that a face-to-face consultation is offered in such circumstance. GPs said they will reflect on this when speaking to parents with young children.
- Some people were unaware of the different roles and that it may not always be necessary to see a GP. *Response* - the new website will have a section detailing this information.

5. **Hospital Discharges – Frail Patients:** Sarah confirmed that she had written to NHS Borders on behalf of the Group to express concerns about the apparent absence of suitable arrangements for discharge of frail patients within NHS Borders and that an acknowledgement had been received from Ralph Roberts the CEO with a detailed response awaited.

6. **Practice Update:**

7a Donald stated that currently the covid numbers are high in the Biggar area and the highest in NHS Lanarkshire per 100,000. Donald reported that this week - 10 01 22- one GP is off and one member of staff also with covid and one getting tested. The previous week had been particularly challenging. One GP came in on the Bank Holiday to cover the ward round at Kello Hospital so this would not need to be done later in the week when we are short staffed. Others have worked on their annual leave and non-working days to cover absences.

7b The practice was open last Saturday morning and the next for urgent care appointments to reduce demand on NHS 24 and A and E due to recognised post-Christmas demand. **Donald was asked to convey to the Practice the BMPG's appreciation of all that had been done to support Patients.**

7c Recruitment of GPs. The recent GP recruitment round had been successful. A new partner (Dr Jo McCrone) will be starting in April 2022 working 3 days per week. A salaried doctor (Scott Ferguson) has also been recruited working 2 days a week. Another

good GP candidate unfortunately had to be turned down due to the lack of space at the centre.

7d New Website: Donald said that a new website was being developed, it would include more information for patients. **Action: Donald to send link for members to view the website and to provide feedback**

7e Community Link Worker: Donald advised that the new Community Link Worker initially spend 0.5 days per week in the Physio Building. This is a non-medical role. The Link Worker will have the skills and knowledge to refer patients to other areas of social support.

7. **Any Other Business:**

Donald explained the need to switch to Microsoft Teams from zoom and asked members who need a tutorial should contact him prior to the next meeting.

8. **Dates for Meetings 2022: Thursday 24 February 2022 at 6.00pm to enable members who are working to attend.**

Enclosure:

A. Email to the Community Council by the Chair of the Patient Group. Enclosure below.

Enclosure A

Email to the Community Council by the Chair of the Patient Group

Thank you for the Community Council's email concerning waiting arrangements.

We had discussed this matter at the Patient Group on 14th January 2022, as it was something we had raised for the Practice to discuss at their away-day last month.

The feedback we received was as follows:

The GPs agreed that these arrangements are not ideal, also time spent by clinicians collecting patients from outside is not a great use of their time and skills.

The practice was therefore proactive and successful in bidding for funding from the government's Kickstart Scheme, with the aim to employ two facilitators over the winter period. The duties of the new post holders were to control patient flow in and out of the waiting room, ensuing everyone maintained a safe distance with chairs, handles etc. wiped down throughout the day. However, the practice has been unsuccessful in recruiting. They are unable allocate these tasks to current staffing, especially with high levels of absence due to the current isolation rules, which has seen on occasions the practice struggling to maintain its services.

In the meantime, doctors and staff opportunistically offer vulnerable patients who arrive without a car the opportunity to wait inside, however due to the space limitations of the waiting area it is not possible to have unrestricted and unsupervised entry.

Due to changes in the covid pathway, there are patients who may have covid now attending the practice. It is therefore important that ill and vulnerable patients are not exposed to covid while attending for an appointment. Since the Omicron variant, this has become more important as the numbers of infections in the local area have at times been particularly high.

As you will know the GP or nurse comes to find the patient waiting in the car so that as many people as possible are not out in the elements, but they realise this is not ideal for all patients waiting for their GP or nurse appointment, nor for the clinicians as stated above.

Currently all practices and health Centres in Clydesdale have a closed waiting room policy. To provide a consistent approach, the locality management team have agreed that all waiting rooms should open up at the same time, after risk assessment and trials. Prior to the Omicron Variant, trials started in Lanark but were abandoned when cases increased with the new variant. I have been informed that the trails are recommencing commencing the week 14th February 2022. If successful a date will be agreed for all waiting rooms to be open. However, for the reason provided above, local constraints and risk assessments, there may still be some restrictions imposed.

If the practice had been able to recruit two facilitators, they would have been able to overcome the restrictions imposed in the above paragraph and opened in advance of the rest of Clydesdale.

With regard to Donald Stewart not replying to your two further emails, he has stated he has not received them, he has checked all his mail folders with no success. If you can send copies to the practice email address he will ask NHSL IT department to investigate. He is also happy for you to phone him direct, if you have any concerns you wish to raise in the future. His new direct dial number is 01698 755283.

This is a lengthy reply but reflects the discussion we had and I hope helps to explain why people cannot be admitted to the waiting room in the numbers which may sometimes arise.

Thank you again for your email and suggestion from the Community Council, which we welcomed as we do any comments, concerns or suggestions.

Kind regards

Sarah Sinclair

Chairperson Patient Group