

MERSEA ISLAND MEDICAL PRACTICE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP MINUTES

12th November 2024

In attendance

Maureen Phillips	Maggie Whittaker	Geoff Whittaker
Su Rhys Jones	Richard Russel-Grant	Karen Mclver-Jones
Martin Sellens	David Cooper	Alan Mogridge
Hilary Sellens	Malcolm Ede	Jenny Chalkin
Martin Westley	John Acker	Christine Cheetham
Linda Westley	Nigel Hinderwell	

Guests : Dr Patel – Mersea Island Medical Practice; Kris Culmer – Operations Manager Mersea Island Medical Practice; Anthony West – Head of Primary Care and Alliance Transformation - Suffolk and North East Essex (SNEE) Integrated Care Board (ICB)

Welcome and Introductions

Maureen welcomed those who had arrived to join the meeting on a dark and chilly night. Anthony West from the Integrated Care Board (ICB) will joined the meeting later, and Christine Cheetham gave a talk on First Responders and the Ambulance Service.

New members who had joined the meeting were welcomed.

Meetings are recorded unless objections given,

Apologies for absence

These were received from Rupert Siefert, Barbera Peter, Pamela Wright and Sarah Hurley.

Conflict of Interest

There were none.

Minutes of the previous meeting 10th September 2024

These were agreed as accurate.

Action Points from the previous meeting

Dates for meetings in 2025 have been booked with the Community Support Hall details have been distributed to members.

All other issues were picked up under the PPG update later in the meeting.

Practice Report

Kris introduced her update, which reflected a busy month for flu vaccinations. Practice staff remain the same, everyone is happy and content. There has been a lot of staff training taking place, including updating safeguarding, travel and health updates, plus immunization courses. Two of the ladies completed a stoma course. Care Co-ordinator training continues. Karen is due to attend a cytology course very soon, and as mentioned Megan is undertaking nurse associate training which she is really enjoying.

The practice is experiencing the normal winter pressures at the moment: coughs, colds, sore throats etc. All Flu clinics are now completed. Feedback on the clinics has been very positive, but the practice do want to hear if anyone has had any bad experiences so that improvements can be made for next time if needed. The staff work really hard, not only during the clinics but also in organising them to make sure things run smoothly.

Housebound flu vaccinations are nearly completed for the year. There has been a massive uptake on the RSV vaccines. Pneumo/shingles are ongoing.

Finally, no complaints at all, lots of compliments about staff and the clinical team. The phones are working OK and people seem to be getting through.

Kris then asked if people had any questions for her.

Kris is Operations Manager and deals with the day to day running of the Practice etc., there is a separate member of staff who undertakes the financial management. There was a question about how advertising around vaccines affects uptake. Generally, uptake on all vaccines is excellent on Mersea. The practice have not been able to offer flu and COVID vaccines together, this option was only available to pharmacies. Despite several attempts, the hospital still uses the name of one of the retired doctors on its letters to the practice. Dr Patel explained this is not really a problem as one of the doctors reviews all letters coming in each day and takes actions as needed. Maureen asked if the PPG could have an information desk at next years' flu clinics.

Feedback from the PPG

Community Event at the MICA – This event was well attended despite poor weather. Maureen thanked Martin, Linda and Chris who helped out on the day. Six new members joined the PPG on the day. Some of our new PPG leaflets were handed out and once the project funding comes through we will get a larger print run and these will be delivered to every home on Mersea via the Mersea Life Magazine. Maureen to check if this can also be made available digitally including QR codes

The NHS App Event – the first event at the Library took place in October, the library was chosen as they have car parking, internet access etc., There will be another event at the library on 28th November, this is now nearly fully booked.

There was some general discussion about the NHS App and Patient Access and whether they are the same or different. They are different and patients can choose what they use. However, the NHS App is developing all the time and more services will be added as time goes on. Patients will continue to have a choice as to whether they use the NHS App or not, but a lot of resources are going into make the App more user friendly. Facial recognition has made it easier to register to use the NHS App without needing a code number from the practice.

There is an option for patients to book some appointments online, and the practice monitor this, it is worth looking as there are often appointments available later in the morning.

Anthony West joined the meeting

Maureen welcomed Anthony to the meeting, and asked him to tell us some more about what we can expect moving forward with our surgery premises questions.

Dr Patel provided some background. There are two sites and the same services are offered at both sites, but there is not enough space to provide services for an increasing number of patients. The Practice felt they had no option but to close their list. The practice are working with the ICB to find a solution.

Anthony confirmed the practice list is closed until January. The ICB are currently looking at the Barfield Road site to provide short, medium and long term solutions to the problem.

Short-term : two additional rooms available in the near future

Medium term: (four to six months) : remainder of Barfield Road site available for the practice to use

Long Term : redevelopment of the Barfield Road site to extend available space

The Estates team are working on a plan to make changes to meet the needs of the practice. Once agreed, the ICB will build a business case to convert the building as needed. The ICB is also going to fund a care-coordinator for 12 months to support the practice in managing on two sites.

The issue of car parking was first to be addressed and there was a general discussion about the land owned by the Catholic church adjacent to the site, this had been looked at some time ago and there were issues with the land and getting agreement to use part as a car park. Anthony responded this would need to be looked at as part of the longer term business case and costs of making the land fit for use as a car park would form part of that longer term work if agreement could be reached with the church.

There was a wide ranging discussion regarding how the number of new registrations would be calculated in terms of forward planning, and also the make up of the practice population, which according to the last census had risen from 39.9% over sixties to 44.4%, and given this is a retirement area, it was felt that this percentage could continue to rise as more houses are built. There was a discussion about demographics and how this affects the practice workload and the funding arrangements.

Dr Patel raised her concern, which is a concern shared by patients, that the practice has needed more space for many years, there is a history of trying to find an answer to the need for a modern practice premises to meet current demand and future proof for growing population needs. There is a lack of confidence that if all the money is spent on the proposed development at Barfield Road, and there is continued expansion on the Island, the population could be left with further years in accommodation that is not sufficient to meet demand.

One of the PPG members, a previous Town Councillor, raised his concerns, and shared details of some of the long history of lack of action from the predecessors to the Integrated Care Board in taking seriously the need for a modern GP surgery to meet the expanding need on Mersea. He referred to the new local plan that indicates there may be five further housing developments under consideration, there is a major development in Abberton plus the caravan sites that are open 11 months of the year. These all have potential to overload medical provision on Mersea. He was worried that the suggested long term plan would not be sufficient. He had expected the ICB to embrace the new governments' capital expenditure promise to develop a new surgery to meet the needs of the Mersea population. He had produced a petition calling for a summit of interested parties to develop a plan for the future, over 600 signatures of support have been gathered so far. Anthony agreed to review the petition when it was completed and agreed to publish the plan for the future when matters are finalised.

Anthony confirmed the content of the Lord Darzi report and his recommendations on funding needs. However, the NHS 10 year plan and the specifics are not likely to be available until next spring, simply because it's all going to be rolled up with the Spending Review at that point. The ICB does not know what funding there might be and has to work within the budget they currently have. He confirmed that the ICB do respond when the planning department and others ask for responses to applications, unfortunately they are not always taken into consideration. He felt that at the current time the development of the Barfield Road site was the likely outcome, unless things change dramatically.

There was a general discussion about the struggle to develop a new surgery on Mersea over the last 20 years, cost projections for building costs range from 2 million to 6 million pounds, then if the practice is expected to purchase or rent the premises, this all has to be factored in, particularly as the funding is controlled by the NHS and reimbursement funding is subject to change.

Patients who are currently unable to register on Mersea are being helped by the allocations team at the ICB and are offered alternative practices in the Colchester area. There are some situations where the patients may need to be registered with the closest surgery, so the Mersea practice would be legally required to take those patients.

Maureen thanked everyone for taking part in a wide ranging and interesting discussion and thanked Anthony West again for joining the meeting and responding to questions. It was agreed that the discussion and contributions from many of those attending demonstrated the significant support for the practice from the community and the PPG.

PPG Update (continued)

Maureen provided some background on the upheaval within the ICB and the subsequent re-organisation just months after it was established and how this had led to limited support from the ICB to Patient Groups. Things are starting to improve, with training courses being offered and more information provided on the website. Our membership of the independent PPG Chairs Collaborative has been valuable in sharing information, ideas, and details of projects that have taken place in other PPG areas.

A member asked about the practice view of a surgery being developed at the Dawes Lane site. Dr Patel said that wasn't on the table, so she didn't feel it appropriate to comment. There was some general discussion about this being a long way from the village centre, people needing to use a car to get there and if the Barfield Road site could be developed this had the advantage of being in a central position in the village.

Dr Patel also said she would share some information from the BMA Chair Dr Katie Bramwell regarding the impact the changes to employers National Insurance contributions will have on GP Practices. According to the treasury GP surgeries are small private businesses, despite the fact that the service provided is part of the public sector. This paradox puts General Practice in a difficult position, as they are not eligible for any refunds that small businesses get that enable them to stay open. This will have a significant impact on surgeries and staffing unless something is done to mitigate the impact. It seems likely that the BMA pressure will have an impact, but we will wait to see. We had hoped that the budget would have more information about funding for GP practices, who have been struggling.

It was suggested that perhaps the PPG Collaborative could raise this as part of the consultation, Maureen agreed this was a good idea and would include in the submission for discussion.

Presentation on First Responders and the Ambulance Service by Christine Cheetham

This was an excellent and very interesting presentation, please see separate document.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is online, **14th of January 2025**, invitations to come out nearer the time. We will be joined by Belinda White who will speak about the 111 service.