

# MERSEA ISLAND MEDICAL PRACTICE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP MINUTES

14<sup>th</sup> January 2025

## In attendance:

Maureen Phillips	David Cooper	Maggie Whittaker
Sue Rhys Jones	Sarah Hurley	Geoff Whittaker
Martin Westley	Barbara Peters	Pamela Wright
Linda Westley	Jenny Chalkin	Christine Cheetham
Richard Rusell-Grant	Alan Mogridge	John Akker
Karen McGiver-Jones	Peter Clements	Rosie Brown

Kris Culmer joined from the GP Surgery. Dr Patel was Duty Doctor and unable to join the meeting this time.

Two Speakers due to join the meeting later were Julie Harris – New Social Prescriber for the Practice and Belinda White from 111.

**Apologies for Absence:** Roy Chamberlain, Martin Sellens and Malcolm Ede.

Maureen welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded everyone of the agreed conduct and content of the meeting.

**Declarations of Interest:** There have been no declarations of interest.

**Minutes:** The 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024 minutes were agreed.

## Action Points from the meeting:

Progress on surgery development – Kris will cover this

NHS App Update – Maureen to pick this up in Patient Participation Group (PPG) report

## Practice Update

It has been a very busy period for the practice with the usual winter pressures and significant respiratory illnesses this year.

Vacancies: The practice are currently advertising for an additional secretary to add to the team and have received a very good response – interviews will take place over the next couple of weeks.

Training: Currently up to date.

Barfield Road: No update

New Phone System Upgrade: The practice have recently had a telephone system upgrade, the patient now has the option of a call back without losing their place in the queue. So for example, if a patient is number 10 in the queue, and requests a

call back, that will happen when that point in the queue is reached. The phone will ring automatically at the practice side then it says please wait to be connected and starts ringing the patient.

### Available Services

*Physio Assessment Appointments* - Anyone with joint pain can ask for an assessment through reception.

*Care Advisor* - They can help with filling in forms, helping to find out eligibility of any financial help, Mobility equipment, Blue badges, contact reception who can put you in touch.

*Extended Access* - Appointments are available from 6.30pm – 8.00pm Monday to Friday and 8.00am – 5.00pm on a Saturday in addition to normal surgery hours at the following surgeries: Rowhedge, Tiptree, Walton and Riverside.

### Flu Vaccinations

*Housebound Flu Vaccinations:* These have now been completed.

*Flu vaccinations :* Flu vaccinations are still available at the surgery for the over 65s. Anyone who still needs a flu vaccination should contact the practice to make an appointment

Complaints/Compliments: No written complaints have been received recently by the practice.

Christmas Gifts of Chocolates, Biscuits and Cakes: The Practice would like to thank patients for all their kind gifts, these were much appreciated by the staff.

Practice Website: this is being updated and the new version should go live at the end of January.

### **Questions**

A member asked about the about progress on Barfield Road. Kris confirmed there had been no further progress, that the list was still closed to new patient registrations and was being rolled onwards on a monthly basis until such time as the work was completed to provide additional accommodation.

There was a question referring to the increasing demand at the hospital at the moment and whether the practice had details of the increased numbers of patients with chest/respiratory issues. Kris responded that this is not reported on separately and whilst it would be possible to run a system search to find the details, it would be extra work and not likely to be of benefit, the practice focus is on treating patients.

It was agreed it was disappointing that there had not been more progress with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) on Barfield Road, but Kris felt that addressing the increasing demand issues at the hospital could be taking up a lot of time at the ICB.

A member raised the issue of several different options of new premises that had not been taken forward, and asked what level of lease payment the practice would be willing to commit to. Kris answered briefly that this was a business matter for the partners and she did not feel comfortable answering this type of question. Maureen went on to explain some of the issues regarding GMS funding, lack of long term guarantees for the practice and that not all costs are reimbursed.

A member suggested that these issues keep being raised at meetings, even though they are addressed and answered, where appropriate, they still get raised time and time again. Perhaps a briefing note specifically on these matters would improve members understanding and save time in subsequent meetings. **ACTION**: Maureen to address and include some background on funding priorities for new buildings.

### **PPG Update**

Membership continues to increase since the community event in the Autumn, so it is suggested the PPG should continue to take part in this event.

Newsletter : this was circulated prior to Christmas and a member had suggested that a list of issues with website links would provide members with the option to read further on matters of interest to them. In addition to newsletters being sent to PPG members, copies are also available on the Practice website and in the Library. Some other suggestions were to have some at the Town Council Offices and perhaps at the Church Pantry. **ACTION** : Maureen and Barbara

NHS App Update: funding has now been received by the practice and the new PPG leaflet is being updated for printing and hopefully distribution in February/March. A couple of further leaflets are being worked on - one for Proxy Access and a further Practice Leaflet with instructions for using the NHS App based on the handout developed for the NHS App support events on Mersea. Two further support events at the Mersea Library (28<sup>th</sup> January and 18<sup>th</sup> February) have been organised and are starting to get booked and it is planned to hold an online event on 5<sup>th</sup> February which is also starting to get booked.

A patient asked about some issues she is having with proxy access for her mum around medication, Kris suggested she comes into the practice and speak to reception, it may be something that needs authorisation at the practice first.

There is some work being taken forward more generally with Libraries providing support for the NHS App. It looks like this is primarily going to be for those without mobile phones who can use Library computers and some health signposting work. It is early days and at a recent meeting initial focus seems to be around hospital libraries, moving out into some community libraries over the coming months.

Diabetes Event : this has been arranged for 11<sup>th</sup> May at the Community Support Hall in Melrose Road, and will be for patients with Type 2 Diabetes. North East Essex Diabetes Service (NEEDS) will be running the event for us. Attendance will be

limited due to capacity at the hall, and we are working NEEDS and the practice to invite patients who might benefit from the event. The focus will be on management of Diabetes, diet and exercise and answering any questions that patients may have. It is planned to have additional information about eye screening etc., available on the day.

Healthwatch Essex are currently undertaking a consultation exercise on young carers. We have invited Healthwatch Essex along to our July meeting to provide an update and more details on the work they do and how the PPG might become involved.

West Yorkshire ICB have developed an app for unpaid carers. It is generally recognised that there are a huge number of unpaid carers and this app is designed to provide help and support, not just about services but about looking after their own health as well. Carers are a huge support to the people they help and to the NHS and their contribution often goes unrecognised. I have asked Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (SNEE ICB) to see if this App is something that could be replicated in this area.

Change NHS Consultation : This consultation is active and Maureen asked if members could go to the site and like her comments on the role of PPGs (see link below). A member asked about whether there were any group responses from PPGs. Maureen confirmed there were two others she is aware of from other PPG collaborations. The PPG Chairs Collaborative and PPGUKnews. Maureen provided some background on the consultation and suggested that members take a look at some of the ideas on the site. A member shared that comments had been disabled, but it is still possible to tick 'like'. There are several really innovative and thoughtful ideas on the site, worth a look if members are interested. Link to NHS Change website : [Change NHS](#) Link to Maureen's submission on valuing PPGs [Input: Patient Participation Groups | Change NHS](#) There is an additional link for a PPGUK submission on the value of PPGs – here is the link: [submission](#)

Whilst comments on ideas have been closed, the process for gathering information from service users continues and work is taking place to encourage 'hard to reach groups' to take part in workshops to give their opinions. SNEE are running two workshops, one for deaf/hearing impaired patients and their carers and another for people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, transgender, non-binary or questioning their gender identity or sexuality, intersex people, and any other LGBTQIA+ identities, as well as their family/carers. (please see information circulated to members on 1.01.25)

### **Social Prescribing Presentation:**

Julie Harris joined the meeting and explained her role (see handout for more detail and contact details). She supports bereavement, healthy lifestyle and supports people with social isolation and directs people to other services that might be of

value. Julie has been spending time finding out about Mersea services etc and commented Mersea is really well served for different things going on. She is building a list and has asked for people to let her know if they belong to any clubs etc not currently listed. Julie covers Mersea, Rowhedge and the University and Tiptree and the rest of her time is spent at the Hospital, she works Monday to Thursday. There was a question about the role and what the prescribing element meant, its not medication, for example someone may be isolated and risk depression, but if they get support to get involved within the community, that risk is reduced.

**Belinda White, Regional Manager for Practice Plus Group – 111 Presentation:**

Belinda joined the meeting and gave a presentation on the work of 111 (see slides previously distributed). They deliver the Integrated Urgent Care Service for Suffolk and North East Essex area, for non-emergency urgent care, to advise and support people to get the right support and help they need. There are three elements to this – the 111 Service, the clinical assessment service and the GP out of hours service. Busiest when practices are closed, every month they provide advice and support for around 30,000 people in the Suffolk and North East Essex area. She explained about the extensive training for the phone operators and the teams of clinicians they work with. Access is available on line and on the telephone. The main reasons for contact last month (December), were dental problems, prescriptions, and breathing problems. The busiest day of the year is boxing day.

There was a question about falls and fractures, Belinda confirmed that if it is a fracture it needs to be an ambulance, but there is a falls service 111 can contact if necessary. There was a question about the pathway and when does it become obvious that the health advisor need to pass the call to a clinician. There are several points at which the process flags the need for clinical advice.

They support patients in emergencies and can assist with CPR guidance over the phone until help arrives. They can assist with arrival times for the Urgent Care Centre. They can access a range of services for people who may ring for an ambulance but where community support can be provided instead.

The Meeting closed at approximately 7pm

**Date of Next Meeting:** The AGM will be on 11<sup>th</sup> March at the Community Support Hall 5.30-7pm

Contact Maureen Phillips for more information about joining the PPG or joining the email list; [MerseaPPG@hotmail.com](mailto:MerseaPPG@hotmail.com)