

MERSEA ISLAND MEDICAL PRACTICE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP MINUTES

8th July 2025

In attendance:

Maureen Phillips	David Cooper	Maggie Whittaker
Su Rhys Jones	Sarah Hurley	Geoff Whittaker
Martin Westley	Harry Sharp	Pamela Wright
Linda Westley	Daniel Bonner	Jessica Dally
Hubert Seifert	Malcolm Ede	

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

Two guest speakers from Essex Healthwatch joined the meeting Sara Poole and Tim Beighton.

Apologies for Absence: Martin and Hilary Sellens, Karen McIver-Jones, Julie Pearson, Rosie Brown, Richard Russell-Grant, Jenny Chalkin, Ian and Janice Tucker

1. Welcome : Maureen welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded members of the agreed conduct and content of the meeting.

2. Healthwatch Presentation

Sara provided an overview of the work of Healthwatch work including their telephone response service, research work, and work undertaken with several different health condition groups. Tim provided details of some of the activities with Carers.

Maureen and the members thanked Sara and Tim for an excellent presentation and there was some discussion regarding the disbanding of Healthwatch under the new NHS plan proposals and whether the PPG could write to anyone to show their support for Healthwatch. It was felt it was too early to do anything, as it was not clear exactly what would be happening in the future at this point.

ACTION : presentation attached

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

4. Minutes: The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

5. Action Points from the meeting:

John Akker had offered to liaise with Mersea Refresh to see about flowers for outside the surgery.

ACTION : Maureen to check on progress

The guidance around PPG membership is very clear - only registered patients are allowed to join (see guidance attached from the GMS contract). Residents who aim to join the Mersea Practice once the list reopens have been offered the option of

joining the PPG email list so that they can stay up to date on what is happening with the PPG and the practice.

ACTION: Maureen to include PPG section from GMS contract in the Membership pack

All other action points to be picked up as part of the Practice or PPG update.

6. Practice Update

All mandatory staff training has been completed. The practice have welcomed Kerry Miller to the practice as the replacement for Hilary Body.

Anima is the new platform for making contact with the practice, and has taken over from the various contact forms that were available on the previous website. Any contact via Anima is saved to individual patient records, so is really helpful. There was a general discussion regarding access for people who are not digitally enabled and the need to stand up for those people. Kris demonstrated how to set up Anima, and this is very easy to use, accessed via the links on the website and that will direct you to the Anima system. The Practice website is for information only.

Kris gave an update on the premises. There are regular meetings between the practice and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) about the developments. **Barfield Road** – the practice still have concerns about patient confidentiality due to the thin walls, this is still under discussion. **Kingsland Road** – the new owner has received planning permission from the Colchester Town Council to build an extension, but this is only the first step. An 'expression of interest form' has been submitted for consideration by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and if agreed guidance will be issued regarding the requirements for NHS primary care premises. This is at a very early stage and may take some time to agree a final design that meets both the needs of the practice and the NHS criteria for GP surgery specifications.

There were several questions raised by members, and there was general agreement that the question of confidentiality during patient consultations is very important. The discussion included problems with the current design for Kingsland Road that has received planning consent.

Shutdown afternoon for all practices will be Tuesday 29th July 2025.

Available services: Physio is now self-referral only; Information available in reception and Kris to check if posters are available in the waiting room with contact information. Care adviser still available can help patients with filling in forms, and eligibility for different support services – contact reception for further information. Extended Access appointments available 6.30-8pm Monday to Friday, 8am-1pm on a Saturday in addition to normal surgery hours, appointments for extended access are available at Rowhedge, Tiptree, Walton and Riverside [details on the Colte PCN website]. Social prescriber – Jackie will help with a range of services.

10 compliments about service provision in the last week. Negative feedback has been about people not being able to register at the practice due to the temporary list closure. The Friends and Family responses come in every month, around 300 regularly, these are then submitted each month to the Department of Health.

ACTION : Kris to check on information for patients on the physio service –

Self referral – www.physioselfrefer.co.uk/snee - 03330433966

Registrars who have passed their exams will be moving on and new registrars will join in August.

ACTION : Names to be added to the notes when available

7. Questions from patients

1. Are there circumstances where a patient can join the practice even though the list is closed? Patients can contact the Integrated Care Board for advice in these instances.
2. Test results can now be viewed on the NHS App – there was a question about printing these. Kris explained the practice were going paperless and were no longer providing print-outs. Kris explained how to take a screen shot from the app and attach it to an email or print the page.

ACTION : Guidance will be attached to these minutes – If you copy them and paste into an email you should be able to print from this

3. A patient mentioned problems in seeing their full medical record on the App. Kris will check to ensure all relevant options have been selected on patient records for patients who raise this issue.
4. Physio – this is now by self-referral only to the physio service in Colchester by phone, and there is a very long wait. The previous in-house service on the Island had been funded via the Colte Partnership and is no longer being funded due to cost constraints.

8. PPG Update

Jargon Buster : The NHS is full of acronyms which can make it difficult to understand NHS publications or presentations. We have therefore produced a short 1 sheet of the most common ones to help our members.

ACTION : circulate with minutes and provide for all new members

The revised PPG newsletter was issued in May, many thanks to Geoff, one of our committee members to his support in getting this up and running and to the practice for making this a truly collaborative effort. There have been lots of very positive comments and we are trying to find ways to make this more accessible to a wider number of Mersea patients. The next issue is under development. We are trying to keep this to two sheets and produce it every couple of months or so. If members have ideas of subjects they would like us to cover, please get in touch.

Membership Pack - Annual review completed and amended to reflect changes – will be issued to new members when completed.

Diabetes Event : A really worthwhile event. North East Essex Diabetes Service (NEEDS) have offered to support a local self-help group on Mersea and we have been trying to find a free venue. I also have a list of self-referral events run by NEEDS which again will be circulated with the minutes.

ACTION : circulate with the minutes.

Community Engagement: The first of our community talks took place on 12th June for the Ladies Luncheon Club at the Yacht Club. The talk was well received and generated a lot of questions and positive feedback for the practice. The event reinforced our view that community engagement is very worthwhile and can raise the profile of the PPG.

PPG Awareness Week : This took place in June. A number of PPGs worked with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) to promote the week. In addition to a support pack some PPG chairs were asked to provide a short piece for YouTube about why they joined their PPG and to promote raise awareness. The Mersea contribution can be viewed on YouTube.

NHS App Support Events : We have helped approximately 70 patients to load the NHS App or fix problems they were having. A few people have needed more help and assistance from either the support videos or the NHS Support Desk.

ACTION : Poster attached

NHS App Update : Maureen and Martin attended this online event in the morning. It was agreed that they tried to cram too much into an hour and used far too many acronyms which people did not understand. Key issues – they will need to integrate the requirements from the 10 year plan issued last week to their workstream. Digital First is the current thinking, there were several questions about those who are not digitally enabled or unable to use the technology. There is a strong belief that digital first will provide significant time and cost savings through providing information via the App. However, there is also a very strong commitment to support those unable to use the technology, it is clear there is zero interest in creating a two-tier system. So quite a lot of work to do. The road map that outlines the work is available on www.digital.nhs.uk This will need to be updated to incorporate a raft of ideas from the NHS Plan.

ACTION : Maureen to provide more detailed update when details are available from the presentations

NHS Changes : 10 Year Plan for the NHS delivered last Thursday. The full plan is 168 pages long, the executive summary is more readable at 11 pages, which will be circulated with the minutes. The plan is to focus on creation of a new model of care, but still based on the founding principles of the NHS : universal care, free at the point

of delivery, based on need and funded through general taxation. The three key shifts are to be

- **Hospital to Community** - the development of a neighbourhood health service – bringing health care into local communities – reducing the need to travel to hospitals for many diagnostic tests and for some treatments that can be delivered locally. The planned neighbourhood centres will in time be open 12 hours a day and 6 days a week. Initial emphasis will be in areas of higher deprivation, poor access and lower life expectancy.
- **Analogue to Digital** – for those who can use the technology developing the NHS App to become a ‘doctor in the pocket’ – ensuring rapid access to advice, guidance and support and freeing up physical access for those with the most complex needs.
- **Sickness to Prevention** – people are living too long with ill health and the gap in healthy life expectancy is widening across the country. Areas of high deprivation are seeing shorter lives, poor health for longer and poor access to medical care. 1 in 5 of our children are leaving primary school with Obesity which sets them on the path towards ill health.

ACTION : Maureen to attach copy of Executive Summary to the minutes

New potential project : In addition to promoting the PPG and increasing membership, the Management Team have been discussing how to make the PPG membership more representative of the practice population. In discussion with the practice we have identified Carers as a group who might benefit from being involved with the PPG. However, accessibility has been identified as a key issue due to their caring responsibilities. We are exploring what we can offer and how to go about it.

A member questioned whether there were any other support for carers on the Island, this is going to be something we need to find out more about what is available locally.

There was general agreement amongst members to Maureen’s question about if this was felt to be the right direction for the PPG, to get more involved with the wider community through engagement activities and identifying what would help patients locally.

The Meeting closed at approximately 7pm

Date of Next Meeting: 9th September 2025 at the Community Support Hall 5.30-7pm – Dr Patel will be the speaker and will give another of her excellent health updates.

Contact Maureen Phillips for more information about joining the PPG or joining the email list; MerseaPPG@hotmail.com