

MERSEA ISLAND MEDICAL PRACTICE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP MINUTES

11th November 2025

In attendance:

Maureen Phillips - Chair	David Cooper	John Akker
Martin Westley - MT	Linda Westley	P Bakdwub
Pamela Wright - MT	Maggie Whittaker	Tonya Baldwin
Geoff Whittaker - MT	Rosie Bird	Caroline Parkinson
Dehlia McNair	Malcolm Ede	Jenny Chalklin
Chris McNair	Paula Dunning	Patricia Tucker
Alan Tucker	Barbara Glynn	John Lamont
Jessica Dally	Helena Heanue-Travers	Alan Mogridge
Nigel Hinderwell		

Apologies for Absence: Kris Culmer, Dr Patel, Julie Pearson, Lorraine Carter, Mel Daniels, Rosemary Brown, Teresa Webster, Sarah Hurley, Terry Tarttelin, Barbara Peter, Patricia Robinson, Susan Rhys-Jones, Cheryl Neill

Maureen welcomed members to the meeting, with a special welcome for the new members attending for the first time. The meeting is really informal but members were asked to raise their hand if they wanted to make a comment/raise a question etc., to ensure everyone gets a chance to be heard.

Maureen introduced Jessica Dally, who was to talk about her experience of the American Insurance based Healthcare system.

Presentation

The presentation began with some brief information about the NHS (presentation attached).

The second part was delivered by Jessica and focused on the American system, how to navigate the insurance options, what is covered, what isn't, examples of costs. She then moved on to cover some of the difficulties around cover, the cost of family cover, the impact of changing employment on insurance cover and the difficulties of starting a business and how large organisations benefit over smaller businesses due the risk criteria applied to larger employee pools. (See presentation and hand-out attached).

Some of the key points of interest were the limited availability of GPs – where they are available, waiting times for appointments are around three months. Patients need to seek out specialists for any health issues they identify. Patient Health information is not held centrally, each health episode requires the patient to provide their health information in full each time. Insurance providers can decide whether

they want to provide insurance to individuals, a number of things are not covered, and like any insurance, the patient pays a certain amount even if they are insured.

Cost of medication is expensive and, unlike the NHS, there is no central organisation that can buy in bulk to reduce costs to patients. The information on medication for individual patients is not joined up between providers, it is relatively easy for an individual to get the same prescription from several different sources, which has been identified as increasing the drug use/addiction across the country.

This was an excellent and very informative presentation and the meeting thanked Jessica with a round of applause.

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

Minutes: The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

Action Points: There were no action points from the last minutes.

Practice Update:

The practice are currently advertising for a new receptionist to join the team, and the two new staff members who joined last month are receiving their training. The practice continue their discussions with the ICB in regard to the Barfield Road premises and there is not further news regarding Kingsland Road at this point (see update from the PPG below following discussion with Andrew West at the ICB this week).

Flu vaccination clinics have now been completed and the practice has thanked the PPG for all their help. Home visits for the housebound flu vaccination programme will start mid-November. Update provided on the Practice website.

There has been an increase in use of the NHS App and the practice would like to thank the PPG for promoting this.

Dr Russell is leading on the support for veterans (the practice is accredited as a Veteran Friendly Practice). The practice recognise that Remembrance Day can be an especially difficult time for Veterans and are able to support people who may be silently struggling with their health.

The practice is a Park Run practice – staff and volunteers often take part, and PPG members are invited to take part as well if they would like to do so.

Available services

- *Physio Assessment Appointments*
This service is now self-referral – patients can get details from reception. Information cards available from reception.
- *Care Advisor*

They are still available and 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. Contact reception.

- *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. Poster in waiting room.

- *Colchester Frontline*

You can find local help easily as there is a new service available called Colchester Frontline. Their service covers addiction, advice, disability, family, mental health, older people, neurodiversity, young people and wellbeing (*leaflet attached*).

Several compliments received by the practice, no complaints.

Patient Questions

Messages from Pharmaceutical Adviser at the Practice regarding cholesterol levels and statins. The initial question had been about whether this message was indeed from the practice or if it was a scam. It was confirmed that it was from the practice and Imogen had been asked to revise the message to make it clearer. This question then raised a number of issues amongst those attending the meeting. The message appears to have been issued quite widely amongst older patients, without previous blood tests to indicate raised cholesterol. There were questions about how decisions were being made to contact individual patients, whether there were any clinical indicators, if a GP was making a clinical decision and if not, would that open the practice to potential litigation if it were found not to be based on clinical need.

ACTION : Maureen to discuss with Kris

A member asked about the 'My Chart App' recently introduced by the local hospital. This was launched in October, and we were lucky to have a member from the ICB IT department attending who was able to clarify what it is and why it was launched. Some hospitals have moved to a new patient record system called EPIC and 'My Chart' is the patient portal into the system. It provides patients with access to all their hospital information, test results, appointments, etc., more quickly. It is being integrated with the NHS App, and some patients can already access it through the NHS App, further work is taking place to make sure it joins seamlessly in the future, this may take a little time. It is used by many of the London Hospitals and works really well in providing patient information. Nationally the intention is that by 2029 the digital front door for patients will be via the NHS App. A lot of work is underway to join up some existing information resources to the NHS App so that it works seamlessly.

Flu Vaccination for Housebound Patients. We received several enquiries from housebound patients who were concerned they did not know when the flu vaccination visits for the housebound would take place. Maureen discussed with Kris and it was agreed to provide information on the practice website to clarify this. Maureen drafted something that she hopes will alleviate concerns from housebound patients which is now on the website. The practice will contact patients individually and arrange home visits by the nursing team to give the vaccination if patients agree.

There followed some more general discussion about the needs of housebound patients and whether the PPG should focus on understanding their needs more.

ACTION : Maureen to discuss with Kris

Update from PPG

Newsletter: the last issue has been well received and Geoff and Maureen are working on the next one, planned for issue in January. It is hoped to issue these between PPG meetings. Maureen has been discussing newsletters at the PPG Collaborative (for Suffolk and NE Essex) and this has resulted in a working party being suggested to develop templates and content for all PPGs to share.

Increasing Membership : It has been a busy time for the PPG, the practice asked if we would be willing to support the recent flu clinics, and we were able to put together a team so that two people were able to attend each clinic to talk to patients about the PPG and the NHS App. (**NB. addition to the minutes** – A thank you from Maureen to the Management Team – Martin, Pam and Geoff and to volunteers Martin S, Rosemary B, and Danial B for their help and support).

The PPG also had a stand at the Community Open Day at the MICA in October.

These combined events have generated a lot of interest in the PPG, and we have recruited an additional 41 members, including 5 more to join our volunteer group and a list of people who want NHS App support, plus a large number who would like the PPG newsletter emailed to them. This increased interest in the PPG has improved our representation of patients registered with the practice.

Update from meeting with Anthony West on 10th November. Maureen had an online meeting with Anthony and two of the team working on the Barfield Road project. The PPG had requested an update on the position regarding the Section 106e monies, which has now been handed over by the developers to Colchester City Council and is now in the hands of the ICB. There has been considerable discussion about how the building will be developed and this will now include a revision of the reception area as well as additional consulting room. The ICB hope to be in a position to start work in late February and work will take 14 weeks, the building will remain in use during the construction work, which is why this will take some time to complete. St Cedd's Church has agreed to provide access for site workers through

their grounds and in principle are willing to consider a long-term solution for patient parking, this will have cost implications and will need to go through the ICB business case process first. We also discussed the Kingsland Road proposals to extend the building by the owners. This was felt to be a longer-term issue. Planning permission has been granted, the practice submitted their interest to the ICB and the plans have been reviewed and some alterations are being made in order to meet NHS Primary Care Premises requirements, and one of the changes has been the addition of a lift.

There was some concern raised that the ICB had not updated the local council on what was happening, there appears to have been some confusion as Anthony had said he was meeting Mersea Councillors last week. It was decided that this may have been Colchester Councillors, not specifically Mersea Council.

Type 2 Diabetes Support Group – this is developing slowly and the next meeting will be the last Wednesday of the month, the next meeting is on Wednesday 26th November at 2pm at the Mersea Council Offices.

Thank you: One of the members thanked Maureen for all her work to develop the PPG and the collaborative work with the Practice.

The Meeting closed at approximately 7pm

Date of Next Meeting: The next meeting will be on 10th March 2026 - AGM at the Community Support Hall 5.30-7pm

NB: There may be additional meetings during the year on specific subjects such as training for volunteers to support NHS App awareness amongst Mersea Patients.

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