

MINUTES OF PPG MEETING JANUARY 15th 2025

PRESENT:

PPG: John Poland **JP** Alan Granger **AG** Richard Taylor **RT** Marj Thomas **MT** Jenny Smith **JS** Jill Campbell **JC** Ken Sutton **KS** Rachel Brown **RB** Mark Bradley **MB** Vikki Sant **VS**

From Practice: Craig Lapka **CL**

APOLOGIES: None received

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS:

JP welcomed all to the Meeting (which also was on this occasion the Charity AGM), which commenced at 1pm, and then invited **CL** to present recent developments at the Practice.

PRACTICE UPDATE:

CL opened by advising that the Practice are currently recruiting a new secretary to replace Hayley Maniura, who is taking up a new role within the Eden Practice Network involved in cancer support.

Also a new Practice Nurse to replace Catherine Meyfroidt, who is leaving.

In response to a question from **JC**, **CL** confirmed that as the government have now announced an amendment to the GP Practice Contract, it is believed that the concerns expressed at the last Meeting relating to the financial pressure arising from the forthcoming increases in Employers NI costs will not apply.

CL then announced that the Practice were looking to extend the current lead time for the dispensing of repeat prescriptions only (ie: not for prescriptions prescribed by doctor's for treatment of a new or immediate diagnosis ie: 'acute') from the current 3 days, to 4 days.

CL stated that the current 3 day turnaround time is unrealistic, is a shorter lead time than most other Practices, and that this is placing an unfair burden on the dispensary team, who are experiencing high levels of stress, tiredness, and including abuse from patients. The volume of activity is necessitating 6 day per week working.

There followed extensive round table discussion and debate of this issue, the consensus amongst the PPG members present that this would be a detrimental adverse step, particularly given that the lead time for availability of prescriptions to patients had been extended to 3 days (versus the previous 2 days) effective from July 2019.

The following key points were made during the discussion:

KS asserted that this would be a deterioration in service to patients which could result in the loss of a proportion of the current prescription business, which he believes is of vital and significant financial benefit to the Practice.

MB asked how the proposed step could increase the efficiency of this service?

MT expressed her view that many patients would simply collect their repeat prescriptions from eg Tesco / Morrisons / alternative sources.

RT inquired what percentage of patients currently got their prescriptions through the Practice, CL responding that most did.

JP (and All) fully supported the need to 'protect the team' and ensure the wellbeing of staff, but suggested that there could be alternative approaches to ensuring an adequate level of staffing to provide the service?

KS expressed his sympathy relating to the general environment within GP Practice and that 'it is on its knees'.

CL stated that the Practice has not had the benefit of a full team for the past 2 months, due to staff sickness and absence.

AG stated that whilst the PPG were committed to supporting the Practice within the wider community, it could be difficult to do so in respect of this issue in the absence of a full understanding of the complexity of the problems facing the Practice. Had the Practice had the opportunity to fully map the process flow relating to the production of prescriptions and whether there may be opportunities to improve the efficiency through such analysis, eg: identify volume changes /eliminate 'choke points', match resources to the process steps etc, in order to reduce pressures on specific staff members?

In response to a question **CL** confirmed that there is currently no problem relating to the supply of drugs to the Practice (so this issue does not relate to the non, or partial, availability of drugs).

CL indicated that he could provide data relating to this issue to the PPG to assist members understanding.

MT reported an instance when she had observed a staff member responding to a patient in a manner suggesting that the staff member was under some stress, it being subsequently suggested within the meeting that a facility could maybe be provided so that potentially fraught discussions could take place in private out of public view eg: a side room?

After this extensive discussion **CL** confirmed that at this stage, there is no planned implementation date for the introduction of the proposed 4 day lead time, at this point.

In response to a question from **JP**, **CL** confirmed that two patients have been removed from the Practice Register as a result of abusive behaviour being displayed towards staff.

The Meeting was then joined by the new Practice GP, Dr Jenny McIntyre, who introduced herself to the PPG members and gave a brief summary of her background. **ALL** welcomed her to the Practice with their best wishes.

Re Identity Cards for the Prescription Delivery Service drivers **CL** requested that photographs be provided of each driver so that laminated identity cards can be produced.

In response to a question from **AG** relating to the potential purchase of a centrifuge, issue carried forward from last meeting, it was agreed that this will be carried forward to the next meeting, as operational changes are being made that may remove the need for such investment.

In conclusion, **JP** expressed his congratulations to Nicola White on her recent achievement of qualifying as a 'Nursing Associate' within the Practice.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

The Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 20/11/24 were accepted as an accurate record, together with the 'Trustees Report to 31st December 2024' document (as distributed with the e-mail to Members, from John Poland, dated 8th January 2025, at 16.01hrs).

MATTERS ARISING:

None other than those referred to below or elsewhere within these Minutes.

CL requested that the date of the PPG Meeting scheduled for 17th September be changed to 24th September.

Re the Defibrillator machine at the Salutation, **AG** advised that the green 'power on' light was not currently illuminated, should this be followed up with the NWAS, given that they had acknowledged responsibility for the maintenance of the machine?

FINANCIAL REPORTS:

RB summarised the Financial Report for the full year to 31.12.24, as per the 'PPG Accounts 12 months to 31st December 2024' document (distributed with the e-mail to Members, from John Poland, dated 8th January 2025, at 16.01hrs).

JP commented that the PPG may need to consider raising additional funds in due course.

VS commented that she has numerous contact details from previous rounds of fundraising efforts.

PRESCRIPTION DELIVERY SERVICE:

RT reported that the PDS service is satisfactorily covered at present. He went on to comment that there have been limited instances where drivers have not been able to fulfil deliveries because no one has apparently been at home, and that in such instances it has been difficult to raise anyone at the Surgery in order to clarify what should be done with the delivery, and/or request the Surgery to phone the patient contact number. **CL** to consider issue.

NEXT SEMINAR 'FOOD':

JP confirmed the date as being **Thursday 20th March 2025**, the subject matter being around Food, healthy eating and nutrition. Dr Anderson and Dr O'Hare have agreed to present, it being likely that Kelly Mitchell (Wellbeing Co-ordinator) also to be available. **JP** requested volunteers for a sub committee to liaise and progress the organisation of the event.

MT, JS and **AG** volunteered, [**Action Point:** to liaise initially with **CL**.]

FUTURE EQUIPMENT NEEDS OF THE PRACTICE:

One of the ECG machines has become unserviceable and is not repairable.

CL indicated that replacement options are currently being evaluated, either on a monthly subscription basis (£60 per month), or a one off purchase (£1800).

CL will report back in due course.

ROAD SAFETY UPDATE:

As per previous Minutes.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

CL advised that the new 'self check-in' machine is working well.

JC wished her thanks to be recorded for the excellent support provided to her by Dr Alana Goddard.

JP reiterated the need for members to seek to recruit further new members for the PPG.

NEXT MEETING:

The meeting concluded at 2.35pm and it was confirmed that the next PPG meeting would take place at **1pm** on **Wednesday 12th March 2025**.

Please note the Meeting dates for the remainder of 2025 are now:

- **12th March**
- **4th June**
- **24th September**
- **19th November**