**BUXTED, EAST HOATHLY & HORAM PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP (PPG)**

**Minutes of PPG meeting held on Thursday 22nd July 2021**

**2pm by Video Call**

**Present**: Linda Pugsley (LP – Chair), Norman Pugsley, Stephanie Newman, Sylvia Shilliam,, Carol Sweetland, Pat Linfield, Vanessa Biggs, Stephanie McKenzie-Hilland John Wenham, Jonathan Walker, and Quentin Burch

**Surgery Staff – Sue Trenchard and Dr Sarah Perry**

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|  | **TOPIC** | **ACTION**  **BY** |
| 1. | **Apologies for absence:**  Sara Sawyer, Fiona Thorpe, Lynne Fraser, Alison Ledward, Julie Meredith and Bob Ruthven |  |
| 2. | **Adoption of Minutes of Last Meeting held on 27th May 2021:**  Minutes were agreed as a correct record. |  |
| 3. | **Matters arising from last meeting:**  None as most covered on the agenda. |  |
| 4. | **News from the Surgery:**  **4.1 Patient Access Group and Improving availability of patient appointments:**  Dr Perry updated the group on what is both a local and national problem at the moment in terms of demand, is this a ‘surge’ or is this here for the future?  GPs in the Local Medical Committee (LMC) and at national level have raised their concerns with the British Medical Association, (BMA), and to the Royal College of General Practitioners.  Our practice has set up an internal Access group meeting which has met recently to look at the issue of supply and demand of appointments in detail, looking at ways to mitigate these difficulties and to improve patient access.  Stephanie Newman (SN) was asked to attend as a Buxted patient representative and further representation was agreed. ‘A representative from the nurse, management, GP and patient group. 3 patients should be enough for the group and just one representative from the PPG from each site’. As stated in the Access Group Minutes.  SN was happy to be the PPG rep as well as the Buxted patient rep or allow for another member to be that rep. Linda agreed that as the surgery had asked Stephanie to attend as a patient rep. she should remain in that role and a PPG member will be chosen from each surgery to attend these meetings in the future.  **Action:** PPG members from Horam, East Hoathly and Buxted to let LP know if they wish to attend as PPG representatives.  **Action:** SN was given permission by Dr Perry to share the minutes of the Access meeting with this group.  The group looked at the limitations to the appointment system and access, the current Covid pandemic surge issues, and other factors including infection control measures and staffing levels.  Although lockdown is easing Covid cases are rising.  Workforce issues, especially recruitment of staff is difficult, there are also high sickness and absence levels and a national shortage of GPs and locum GPs.  The group is reviewing the data around the current recommendations in terms of appointments required to support the patient population size and the staffing required to support this.  The number of calls and availability of appointments was reviewed for the past few years.  During 2019/20 the practice averaged around 220 appointments per day, calls averaged 200 a day, so we were at capacity but meeting the demand.  In addition 50 emails a day were arriving some requiring appointments.  In 2021 there were still around 200 appointments a day on average, with only 170 available due to sickness and absence. However, call volumes have doubled from 200 to 400, with emails going from 50 to 2-300 per day including requests for appointments.  Nationally it should be 70 appointments per 1000 patient population, leading to 217 appointments per day.  Looking at the current practice list size, it hasn't increased greatly, only by 5% to a population of 15,200 patients.  There are 7 whole time equivalent (wte) GPs in place currently; therefore, we require 9.5 wte for the population of 15,200.  The Practice is looking to increase GP capacity, 2 wte have been recruited, so we will be at 9 wte and looking to continue recruiting.  Dr Perry has set up an audit of the incoming emails to evaluate and check that the patients are being seen in the right place, and by the right practitioner. This was suggested by the PPG in the April meeting this year.  SN said it had been a positive meeting and was impressed with the commitment of staff to improving the situation both short and longer term. The data gathering to date was extremely helpful in order to evaluate the demand.  Training of the reception staff was key to ensure appropriate triage and sign-posting to services.  SN also stated the impact of long Covid has not yet been quantified but the surge could also be caused by this and would need to be monitored and mitigated.  SN also said the Access group was reviewing if the telephone call provider could phone the patient back rather than the patient having to wait in line in the queue.  Vanessa Biggs (VB) voiced her concern on the impact of nurses leaving putting more pressure into the system; she had also noticed a shortage of Doctors at East Hoathly and Horam.  VB said she knew that 2 patients left the practice and have gone elsewhere as they were unhappy about how the receptionists had spoken to them. VB had also experienced this herself.  Dr Perry thanked VB for her feedback, and reiterated demand outstripping supply causes frustration and it is important that patients are treated with respect and that this is mutual, recognising the receptionists are on the front-line and they do face very frustrated patients.  Stephanie McKenzie-Hill voiced her own experience regarding a hearing referral which had been a positive experience.  Norman Pugsley (NP) asked if the number of appointments mentioned above, included nursing staff appointments.  Dr Perry said the data includes GP & Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) appointments, which was seen as the priority.  NP asked how the surgery can be more proactive with test results where a patient then needs to have a follow up appointment.  Dr Perry said they are aware of the issue but with demand exceeding supply it is causing difficulties at the moment.  However, there will be an increase in GP capacity by September and this could help to support e-consult, triage and results/result follow up appointments.  The surgeries are also looking to increase pre-bookable appointments.  Dr Perry added in terms of nursing staff they are in the middle of a recruitment process now, looking for additional staff.  Carol Sweetland told the group that in regard to call volumes she described how it took 8 contacts to get the result of an x-ray, and told to ring back next day to get an appointment for the result and wasn't able to get an appointment.  Jonathan Walker raised a concern on follow up appointments and the difficulty in obtaining one.  He asked ‘How do we follow up those patients who don't access appointments on the day, could a member of reception staff be available to call those patients back?’  Sue Trenchard (ST) raised that this would just possibly cause more upset, as once the appointments have gone it is difficult to help.  SN raised that communication is important, we need to ensure patients are aware what their options are if they cannot access an appointment on the same day. Is the appointment urgent? If so contact 111. If life threatening, A&E.  NP raised the importance of self care and needs to be encouraged - what can patients do to help support themselves.  **Action:** Dr Perry to look at the issues with routine appointments.  **4.2 Progress with e-consult/digital first**  Dr Perry described how the e-mail traffic has also increased; they are discussing with the Primary Care Network the e-consult system, to look to introduce this in a controlled way. They are now looking to bring this forward implementation as the email traffic is leading to referrals, but not in a controlled way. The PCN have met with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to discuss this.  They have also discussed with the CCG how to further support practices in the area of resilience.  Brighton and Hove GPs use a remote consultation service to support the practices known as ‘Practice Assist’. The PCN are reviewing if this could also help to support with the current rise in demand, but the introduction of this system would have an impact on the practice workforce.  **4.3 New Business Manager – update**  Rebecca Slattery-Kavanagh will be joining the practice; we will invite her to the next meeting.  Business Manager to also meet with LP & NP, Chair and Vice Chair.  Action: Invite the New Business Manager to the next PPG meeting and to meet with LP and NP asap. | **ALL**  **SN**  LP  Dr Perry |
| 5. | **A.O.B**  The PPG now has a social media Facebook page to promote self-care alongside other health awareness information supported by National charities i.e. Asthma UK, British Heart Foundation and including the Self Care Forum.  Dr Perry said that to improve awareness of Healthy Living the PCN has arranged through East Sussex County Council, the employment of Health coaches 4 days a week across the 3 sites to support this.  **Action:** Invite the Health Coach to a future PPG meeting.   * LP asked what the current status with the Care Quality Commission is. Dr Perry stated it remains the same following the last visit we would need a re-inspection to change the status. * Both sides of the PPG notice board are now available for use by the PPG in the surgery. LP asked if handouts/brochures to accompany the health topics are now allowed. ST replied unfortunately not as yet as infection control is still a high priority .It will be reintroduced when they are allowed. This also applies to the reintroduction of the Friends and Family test, which is also on paper.   **Covid Update**  Dr Perry said there are ongoing discussions within the PCN, GPs are being asked to do the Covid immunisation booster jabs, however, this is not yet confirmed, and also it is not yet confirmed if both flu and the Covid booster can be given together. | LP/Dr Perry |
| 6. | **ACTIONS:**  SN was given permission by Dr Perry to share the minutes of the Access meeting with this group.  PPG members from Buxted, Horam and East Hoathly to let LP know if they wish to attend as a PPG representative  Dr Perry to look at the issues with routine appointments.  Invite the new Health Coach to a future PPG meeting.  Invite the New Business Manager to the PPG meeting and to meet with LP and NP  Newsletter input ideas for the next one and for future ones, to include ‘News from the surgery’ to LP by the beginning of September | SN  Completed  22/07/21  ALL  LP/Dr Perry  LP/Dr Perry  ALL  Dr Perry |
| 7. | **Date of next meeting:**  **Thursday 23rd September 4.30pm** |  |