

## **Waterfront Patients Participation Group Meeting**

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2023: 11.00 am – 12.00 pm**

### **Attendees:**

- Louise Bunce, Practice Manager
- Chris Beddall
- Clive Spicer
- Chris Swaithes
- Jane Spicer
- Sylvia Swaithes

### **Apologies:**

- Joan Allen, Treasurer

### **Matters Arising**

#### **Brierley Hill Project (BHP)**

Sylvia reported that the BHP had seen increasing demand over the past month and continues to struggle for food donations for those in genuine need. A number of examples were given of people in need who used the Food Bank. Louise noted that the Waterfront Practice had seen an increase in voucher requests from patients, Chris S outlined the challenges faced by those living in the socially deprived areas of the town.

#### **Did Not Attend (DNA) Review**

Louise informed the meeting that the December DNA numbers were about the same as November (297) with the majority continuing to be DNAs for the Nurse in respect of flu/COVID injections. The Practice has recently “switched on” appointment reminders, which is a text sent on the day the appointment is made and two days before the due date but this only applies to face-to-face appointments so it will be interesting to see what impact this has on DNAs in the future.

The PPG then discussed in detail the current challenges of trying to meet the demand for appointments. Louise explained that if a patient is under 5 or over 70 the Practice does try to accommodate them. Demand for appointments is increasing and is very difficult to manage, with appointments being filled very quickly after the phone lines open each morning. There had been a problem with booking appointments in advance but this is now being managed. If patients do not have to pay for prescriptions then they can use the pharmacy for minor ailments and health checks. Louise gave recent examples of patients abusing reception staff when they had not been able to find on the day appointments. Clive asked how the Waterfront dealt with challenging patients, even allowing for those who might be unwell, have substance abuse or mental health issues, it was not acceptable for staff doing their best to be verbally abused. Louise explained that a carefully worded letter would be issued always bearing in mind the patient’s issues.

#### **Waterfront Website**

Louise advised that the website might be changing and referred to the text system funded by Dudley Integrated Health and Care (DIHC) which is a system that can do so much more as a website. It would have greater functionality and would link to the NHS App. Chris S commented that it sounded like a much more ‘joined up’ system than the present one. There would be a cost to the Practice but it would be part-funded by the DIHC. The practice now needed to evaluate the benefits against the cost, make a decision by the end of January and if agreed it could be installed by the end of March. Louise hope to be able to update the PPG at the next meeting in February.

#### **Prescription Ordering Direct Service (POD)**

Louise advised the meeting that the POD is being discontinued by Dudley Integrated Health and Care (DIHC). It was thought that the POD will shut down at the end of March (now confirmed as 28<sup>th</sup> April).

Only 14 of the 47 GP Practices in the Dudley area subscribe to the POD and the financial implications of continuing it without Dudley Integrated Health and Care (DIHC) funding were too great.

Louise went on to say that the implications of the closure of the POD were discussed at yesterday's Waterfront Practice Meeting, although no firm conclusions were reached. Clearly in recent years NHS England has encouraged patients to use digital options (Patient Access, Waterfront website) to order repeat medication even though for many the phone is still the favoured means of requesting long term medication. Chris B recommended and demonstrated the NHS App which she had found to be very useful and easy to use. Jane asked how those without access to the internet were going to order prescriptions and also obtain reassurance that their request was being processed? Louise intends to encourage patients who come into the Practice to consider ordering medication online whilst reviewing all possible options which would be discussed at the next PPG meeting.

### **PPG 2023 Patient Survey**

Item deferred to the next meeting - Louise confirmed that the NHS GP National Survey 2023 has now been sent out to randomly selected patients.

### **PPG Waterfront Newsletter**

Clive reviewed the draft PPG Newsletter which will once again be published quarterly after being disrupted by the Covid pandemic in 2020. Following the announcement about the POD's closure Louise considered that this should be included in the Newsletter and Clive agreed to produce a draft article to be discussed at the next PPG meeting in February.

### **Autumn Covid Booster**

The Covid Booster/Flu clinic run by the Practice on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2022 went well. The practice has now finished vaccinating all house bound patients. JHoots Pharmacy is still offering Covid jabs and the practice still has some flu vaccinations available in-house.

### **Treasurer's Report**

In Joan's absence Louise updated the PPG that as discussed at the previous meeting she had gone to The Works and purchased two posters and £20 worth of books which had been placed in the waiting area. It is intended to label the books as some have already 'disappeared.'

### **Staffing Update**

Louise updated the meeting about the two new Primary Care Network (PCN) staff who will each be based at the Waterfront practice one day a week:

Jenny Ford Barnett, Podiatrist will be starting in two weeks although her role does not include cutting toenails

Sue Fox, First Contact Mental Health Practitioner, who started seeing patients on Friday three weeks ago. Initially she will be using telephone calls but will move towards more face-to-face appointments – she books slots two weeks in advance.

As mentioned at the last PPG meeting name badges had been ordered for everyone before Christmas, however they had not yet arrived. Louise will reorder.

Louise talked about the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS) which is designed to take the pressure off GPs, however staff in these roles will still require supervising and need to liaise with GPs which adds a different pressure. Louise said that many patients still want to see a GP rather than a different form of medical professional with whom they are not familiar. Chris S said that it all hinges around effective triage.

### **Any Other Business**

Louise advised that Shamane Morris is on maternity leave until July/August 2023 and has now qualified as a Nurse Associate. During her leave of absence where patients have not been able to have routine blood tests at the Waterfront they have been referred to the High Oak Surgery, presently at the Waterfront, which offers blood tests on a Saturday and there is also a clinic at the Merry Hill Centre. The PPG discussed the effectiveness of the Merry Hill 'Drop In' clinic.

Chris S. asked to put on record the PPG's appreciation for how well the Waterfront Practice had dealt with things during a very hectic, pressured Christmas and the New Year.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled for 11 a.m. on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2023 at the Waterfront but will now be held at 11 a.m. on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2023.