

## Dr Castle & Partners, Sole Bay Care Fund Patient Participation Group (PPG)

### Minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023

PRESENT:	Patch area represented	Name of Representative
	Reydon -	Sarah Britten (SB) (Chair of PPG)
	Southwold -	Practice identifying representative
	Walberswick -	Rita Woodcraft (RW)
	Wenhaston -	Cathy Ryan (sent apologies)
	Blythburgh -	Practice identifying representative
	Sole Bay HC -	Rigby Whittaker (PM) (Practice Manager)

A question had been raised by a member of the community with the Practice Manager about the role of the PPG and its profile in the local community. They had also suggested that minutes of meetings be published on the practice website. This was discussed by the PPG.

PPG member feedback, patient satisfaction surveys, correspondence received at the practice and online feedback were just some of the variety of ways the Practice receives feedback about its services. The feedback was overwhelmingly supportive and the local community had indicated that they felt lucky to receive such a high level of service from the Practice. Patch members reported that members of the public had relayed to them that, despite the pandemic and the impact of higher staff absence as a result of covid and wanting to protect patients, the level of satisfaction both with the care received and access to surgery in times of need was very high.

The PPG members were happy to help the surgery in any way the surgery felt they could. PM thanked the PPG members for their continued support and the helpful feedback they were able to provide from the respective patches about the quality of care and also about any issues affecting their patch.

While it was agreed by the group that every effort should be taken to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy, to focus on key local initiatives and exchanging news of any potential changes to services, for the sake of clarity it was agreed that a brief constitution governing the scope and role of the PPG may be useful for both those on the group and also for those unfamiliar with the workings of the group. The following constitution was discussed and agreed:

1. The role of the PPG was to support the needs of the GP Practice;
2. PPG members to be selected by the Practice to ensure that the membership represented both the geographic patch of the Practice, but also, whenever possible, that members had links with other groups/agencies within that/the Practice patch. This would assist in more effective communication about local and practice initiatives and ensure any news reached the widest audience. It would also facilitate a more cohesive and integrated approach to supporting the needs of the local community and the Practice;
3. The PPG members would help facilitate the dissemination of information from the Practice as well as using their position in their local communities to provide useful feedback and updates to the Practice. This would, along with a range of other sources of feedback, help the practice continue to refine and improve the services it offered if the Practice felt it was appropriate and able to do so.

The PPG agreed to have their names shown and the patch they covered. The PPG agreed to publish a record of the meeting minutes on the Practice website.

#### Update from the Practice:

System wide pressures within the NHS had a direct impact on the services delivered by the Practice, such as:

- Patient concerns during covid caused delay to them accessing services;
- Patient concerns about covid and also vaccine overload/apathy had made the flu call/recall system much more time consuming and labour intensive with lower patient response rates;

- Higher than normal rates of staff absence. The Practice has mitigated against this whenever possible by recruiting more staff and providing more staff overtime, but short notice cover issues had placed a strain on the remaining team at times. As the Practice continued to offer face to face appointments throughout the pandemic and beyond, by the very nature of certain roles being predominantly hands on with patients it was inevitable that this would result in higher-than-normal rates of absence. The priority of the Practice was always to protect patients and the staff concerned.
- Increased work resulting from the covid vaccination and larger flu vaccination cohorts resulting in a reduction/postponement of long-term condition (LTC) recalls as there was pressure on Practice Nurse and health Care Assistant appointments. The staff resource used for LTC is also that tasked with delivering the vaccination programme;
- Patients present with multiple problems and conditions more serious than they would have been had they presented earlier;
- Ambulance delays result in the Practice receiving calls and responding to incidents in the community that traditionally would have been the preserve of the ambulance crews/paramedics. Staff who respond often then stay with patients in community for much longer. This in turn affects capacity at the surgery.

The local Voluntary Help Centre team were keen for more volunteer drivers to come forward as they could assist in the driving of those patients who were deemed safe to be transported to hospital rather than having to wait for extended periods for an ambulance.

**New service - Enhanced Access (EA)** - Dr Castle & Partners were the lead practice for the Primary Care Network (PCN) wide initiative called Enhanced Access. What this meant for patients was that there were now additional telephone and face to face appointments available to all South Waveney Area practices, including Sole Bay, outside of the previous core hours of the practice. Appointments are available to book between 1830-2000hrs Monday to Friday and 0900-1700hrs on a Saturday. A range of additional clinics tailored to local demands is provided and will be extended in the coming months with the addition of a coils/implants clinic on a Saturday morning. The EA initiative had resulted in a large increase in available appointments to patients as well as providing access to patients who struggled to get in during the regular working day.

**Admiral Nurse Update** – The practice was celebrating a significant milestone, it was now five years since the appointment of Mindy Mortimer, the Admiral Dementia Support Nurse, perhaps the first, and possibly only, one in the country directly employed in General Practice. During this time Mindy's caseload has grown considerably and Mindy provides an enormous amount of support to families caring for someone with dementia. Their contribution has been recognised in the excellent feedback from families about the service.

**Social Prescriber** – The PM was asked how the Practice employed Social Prescriber interacted with other local agencies. The Social Prescriber was at Sole Bay one day per week. They had their own caseload and they received referrals from the clinicians. They could offer a wide range of support to patients and had extensive knowledge of what services were available locally and how to access these resources.

**On-line appointments** – General Practices are being asked to make more on-line bookable appointments available to patients. While this did potentially give patients another way of accessing services and managing their appointments, without clarity over who could be seen for what, it could also potentially result in appointments being booked with clinicians inappropriately. It could also potentially delay access to the particular treatment a patient may require.

The Practice had grown significantly and now employed a much wider range of skilled staff, specialists such as Physiotherapists, Clinical Pharmacists, Paramedics, Social Prescribers, Pharmacy Technicians and soon they will be joined by a mental health nurse. This is far removed from the time when patients only real option when booking an appointment was to book with a GP, a Practice Nurse or a Health Care Assistant. Patients are asked to provide reception with an idea of the problem to enable the Practice to ensure patients are booked with the appropriate specialist. For this reason, and to ensure patients receive the necessary information they require to utilise the appointments effectively, online appointments will be for specific purposes and patients will be informed when they may wish to use this option.