

Minutes of Meeting: 21 November 2024

Present	Colin Berthelsen (Chair) Dr Liz Hermaszewska Sharon Pink (Minutes) Shami Devani Caroline Field Gerry Kurzon Susan Smee	Apologies	Mary Egan John Grossman Ginny Nevill Stefan Sieradzki
----------------	--	------------------	--

Note: explanatory notes for regularly used acronyms are provided at the end of the Minutes.

Welcoming Shami

The attendees were pleased to welcome Shami Devani back to the PPG. Shami has a background in care services and while his current working patterns mean he may not be able to attend all meetings, he is keen to be an active participant and we welcome his input.

Updates from Dr Liz on Mountwood matters since last meeting

Staffing

Two Registrars have returned to the practice, Rebecca and Fatima; both are here now for another year.

The new phlebotomist Victoria has started work. She also does ECGs.

The other phlebotomist Sylvia is now also taking a day-release course training to become a Nursing Assistant.

Receptionist Christine who has been with MW for 14 years will be retiring this month. A new receptionist has been recruited who has considerable experience in GP practices.

Supporting medical teaching

Mountwood is currently hosting 3 groups of Brunel University Year 1 and Year 2 medical students. A focus of their study is the impact of chronic conditions on day-to-day living, taking a person-centred approach and looking at how these conditions make people's lives difficult, with a holistic view on the social, medical and psychological factors. Primarily this aims to examine not so much what is wrong with the patient but more about how it affects them.

Travel vaccination service

MW now has a number of nurses trained in travel vaccines and is able once again to offer this as a limited service to patients. They can only administer the NHS free vaccines, being the ones that practices are obliged to offer. There will also only be a limited number of appointments

available as this is a very time-consuming service: each patient has to go through their travel itinerary and the nurse will need to identify the jabs required for the specific trip.

Statutory entry and vaccination requirements can differ not just by individual country visited but also by the countries you may have passed through on the way and which ones you come in from. Also depending on the requirements, vaccines may need to be ordered in. So any patient requiring this service needs to book an appointment in good time. Local pharmacies do offer all the NHS vaccines as well as additional vaccines.

RSV vaccine applicability and availability

Speaking of vaccines, we asked Dr Liz why the RSV vaccine is stated as only available for patients under 80. This is for two reasons: firstly the effectiveness of the body's immune response to the vaccine diminishes with age and secondly the national production capability is limited.

Impact of Government increasing National Insurance payments from employers

The increase in National Insurance costs for employers, as announced in the October Budget, will affect Mountwood as a business. This is because while GPs are self-employed for tax purposes, they are paid through the NHS so this is a slightly anomalous situation. GP practices were supposed to have been protected from this kind of financial measure but currently are not in the way it has been announced by the Treasury. This may ultimately go to a Judicial Review to try and have GP practices excluded from the increased obligation.

The financial impact will be significant to MW, especially as staff are obviously entitled to annual pay rises and when they go into a higher clinical grade role as their careers progress.

Family & Friends feedback

Dr Liz explained that the patient feedback recorded in the Family & Friends forms, either the paper forms completed at the practice or online after patients have visited, is very positive as to the patient experience. She recognises, however, that any results from this come with an inbuilt bias because it is feedback from people who are on site having an appointment, so are clearly not going to be complaining about not being able to get one....

Dr Liz also acknowledged that Google reviews for the practice do tend to be, in her own words, terrible, with a low average satisfaction rating. She points out, however, that there are only 90 reviews online about MW whereas some other local surgeries have more 1,000 reviews. She would be keen for patients to put more reviews up online and would like the PPG to encourage this more. She explained that the Google algorithms look for keywords such as "receptionist" and "appointment" so will bring those reviews into more prominence.

Some patients have raised a concern with us that Friends & Family, which is heavily emphasised as a primary feedback mechanism being on the home page of the website at the moment, only relates to patients who have a direct experience of visiting the surgery. Some people are then asking well how do they send in a concern about not being able to get appointments. Dr Liz said that the "Have your say" page on the website is for that. However, as this is within the Practice Info sub-menu, it is clearly not getting the same level of visibility. We think this needs to be highlighted more directly on the website.

PCN recent patient survey

We discussed the survey that was sent out by the PCN. Results are being collated by the PCN and circulating to participating practices so we are putting together a separate update to our members about this.

PATCHS

We discussed more about the use and value of PATCHS. While PATCHS is the online service adopted across the PCN, it is for requesting non-urgent appointments and this is now made clearer on the website. Clearly there are still concerns about using any online system and many patients are not comfortable with the level of detail requested within PATCHS. From the doctors' perspective, extending availability of PATCHS throughout the day has definitely enabled a wider range of people to be able to access GP services. It is not mandatory for patients to use any online service though, and MW patients are always welcome to phone or come to the surgery to report a problem. PATCHS is open from 8-am to 6pm. Emergency appointment requests are taken from 8-11am and 2-5pm and the phone system is open from 8am to 12.30 and 1.30 to 6.30 for routine appointments and all other enquiries. The newer appointments system and PATCHS extended opening times are being promoted on the website and on the Waiting Room presentation system.

Phone services

Dr Liz asked our views on the information provided on the phone system on-hold service. If anyone has any feedback please do send this to us.

Workshop presentations to patients

Dr Liz thanked the PPG on behalf of the Practice for all the support to the MyHealth workshops programme this year, with a special mention to **Stefan** which we are delighted to pass on!

A suggestion following the workshops is that attendees may be interested to form self-help groups for example in WhatsApp to support each other and share experiences. Dr Liz has written to Sophie who runs the MyHealth programmes to ask if she could facilitate setting up some of these groups.

We continued the discussion about planning topics for workshops for next year. The 2025 programme will commence on 22 January with a workshop on falls prevention. Dr Liz will set up a self-booking system once the workshop is announced.

As before, we welcome suggestions from the PPG mailing list recipients as to any topic you are interested in. The current list is shown in the table below.

Patient workshops programme		
Delivered	Diabetes	Hypertension & Cholesterol
	Alzheimer's/Dementia	Multiple Sclerosis
	Menopause	Parkinson's disease
	Northwood Live at Home	COPD/Asthma – 9 October
Scheduled	Falls prevention 22 January 2025	

Suggested	Arthritis	Stroke	Osteoporosis
	Coronary Care/Heart Disease		
	Irritable/inflammatory bowel disease		
	Prostate conditions and cancer		
	Mental health issues: depression, bi-polar, ADHD		
	Lung/respiratory tract cancers Cirrhosis and liver conditions		

Waiting Room on-screen messaging and PPG Noticeboard

As always, we welcome suggestions from patients as to additional information you would like to see on the Waiting Room information screen.

We are making a series of new posters for the PPG Board and Shami will be updating the main PPG 'join us' poster which he designed originally a few years ago!

Next meeting – welcome to 2025!

The next meeting will be on **Thursday 16 January at 2.30pm.**

Meetings are held at the surgery on the upper floor,
either in the conference room if it is available or in the library.

Definitions and Explanatory Notes

Integrated Care System (ICS) – partnerships that bring together NHS organisations, local authorities and others to take collective responsibility for planning services, improving health and reducing inequalities across geographical areas.

Integrated Care Board (ICB) - planning and funding health and care services in the area they cover i.e. primary health care, doctors, dentists, chemists and secondary care being hospitals, rehabilitation etc.

There are 42 Integrated Care Boards (ICB) in England, with around 1,250 Primary Care Networks (PCN) reporting to them.

There is one **ICB** in each **ICS** area.

For Mountwood our ICB is London North West, known as NWLICB. It includes 8 London boroughs: Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington & Chelsea, Westminster), responsible for over 2.1 million patients.

NWLICB has 45 PCNs reporting to it.

Primary Care Network (PCN) – The aim of a PCN is to build on existing primary care services and enable greater provision of proactive, personalised, coordinated and more integrated health and social care for people close to home.

Our PCN is North Connect and covers the following surgeries in addition to Mountwood:

- Acre Surgery and Carepoint Practice (both based at Northwood Health Centre);
- Acrefield Surgery in South Ruislip;
- Devonshire Lodge in Eastcote;
- Eastbury Practice in Northwood;
- The Harefield Practice
- Mountwood Surgery, which is the largest practice with over 11,000 patients.

The PCN is based in the same building as Eastbury Practice and works with the seven surgeries to organise the sharing of services and provide support to Practices – including support to Patient Participation Groups (PPGs).

Our PCN has recruited a growing workforce of pharmacists, mental health workers, health and wellbeing coaches, social prescribers, physiotherapists and other clinical roles that will deliver services for patients across the neighbourhood and help them if they need to access other health or social services if needed.

Care Quality Commission (CQC) – the independent regulator of health and social care services and organisations in England.

British Medical Association (BMA) – this is the industry body for doctors and medical students. They say “The BMA represents, supports and negotiates on behalf of all UK doctors

and medical students. We are member-run and led, fighting for the best terms and conditions as well as lobbying and campaigning on the issues impacting the medical profession.”