

THE TOLLGATE PRACTICE

PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 6th NOVEMBER 2024 AT 1.00 PM

ATTENDEES

Surgery/ NHS Staff: Melanie Williams (MW) Amanda Green (AG)

Patient Members: Chairman -David Mills (DM) Secretary - Michael Vass (MV) Christopher Dowsett (CD) Pamela Hurcomb (PH)

- 1. Welcome.** DM welcomed everyone to the meeting in particular MW (Deputy Practice Manager) who was attending her first meeting having only joined the practice earlier this year. MW is also currently acting as the practice manager following Lisa Maddox's departure - Lisa is still providing ad hoc support. The meeting was also joined by AG (Advanced Nurse Practitioner) who provided the members with an overview of her previous experience as well as information about her current role.
- 2. Apologies.** MV reported that apologies had been received from Rosemary James, Peter Walker, Susan Spice, Lorraine Feakes and Angela Young
- 3. Minutes of the last meeting** held on the 19th July 2024 were unanimously approved.
- 4. Matters Arising.** MV circulated a copy of the Patient Satisfaction Survey that had been noted at the last meeting and which provided good ratings for the practice. DM commented on smooth and efficient operation of the "Flu Vaccination" clinic and MW thanked the PPG for their help.
- 5. Practice News.**
 - a) Clinical Staff.** MW said that although there had been some changes within the clinical team the practice was well staffed. Drs Abeysundara & Bopitiya remained as the practice partners. Other doctors working at the surgery were listed. The clinical team also listed including Amanda Green & Laura Watterson (Advanced Nurse Practitioners), Rebecaa Bexley (Diabetes Nurse) Sharon Walters (Healthcare Assistant), and Ruth Yates (Social Prescriber).
 - b) Administrative Staff.** The meeting was told that the recruitment of experienced admin staff remained difficult and this was currently causing some problems. MW indicated that at this time she was not intending to apply for the role of Practice Manager, wishing to gain further experience in her current role; recruitment for a new Practice Manager position was underway. The good news was that two new experienced receptionists would be joining the practice very shortly and a new Prescriptions Manager (Sarah) was now in place. CD asked why the level of staff turnover was so high. MW explained that, in particular, people working in reception found it a stressful role and that other surgeries suffered with similar turnover levels. In addition, a number of staff had moved with Annette Bloomfield (ex-Practice Manager) when she left to join another surgery.
 - c) Telephone & Appointment Systems** MV indicated that he had been asked to raise the problems still being experienced with the telephone system and lack of appointments. MW said that she understood the frustration that this caused – it was a real challenge to meet the demand for appointments but that the Advanced Nurse

Practitioners were helping to free up doctor appointments. MW also said that the demand on services might lead, for a limited period, to a closure of "Patient Lists" although this would be a last resort. Regarding telephones - progress was now being made with an updated system which should be in operation by the end of November. The new system will provide "queuing technology" plus recorded information on the availability of appointments with alternative assistance options when all current appointments are taken.

- 6. Mental Health Support.** MW & AG commented on the growth in mental health issues and the meeting was told that Ann Bradshaw was providing support for the surgery in dealing with children's mental health problems. It was also noted that ADHA (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) referrals had now been delegated to schools who (it is claimed) are better placed to take a view on when specialist help is needed. Further discussion on mental health support was left open until the next meeting when hopefully Peter Walker, who had initially raised this subject, will be able to attend.
- 7. AOB**
 - a) DNA's & NHS Recording Systems.** CD & PH raised queries on the workings of the NHS recording systems which led to a wide discussion. PH reported that after having to cancel a hospital appointment, (as she would be away from home on the date given), she was initially refused a replacement due to a previous cancellation – notified as some years earlier in 2017! Apparently two cancellations and you are "out" until your situation is reviewed - when PH's appointment was reinstated she was told she would be going to the back of the queue. Both MW & AG said this must be a mistake and suggested she should make a formal complaint and request that her hospital records are corrected,
- 8. Next Meeting.** Will be held on Wednesday 19th February 2025 at 1.00pm at the surgery.

The meeting closed at 2.10pm.