

PPG meeting 6th December
Park Pavilion 2.15pm

Present MMC : Fiona Gardner, Dr Nadeeja Koralage, Ben Notley

PPG: Kath Calver (Chair) Rita Rossini (Secretary) Mick Verrier. Tony Whitmarsh, Sheena Parsons, Ann Coogens, Linda Bradnum, Maureen Townsend, Marilyn Jones, Graham Green

- 1. Apologies:** Louise Yaxley, James Grange, Michael Wyatt, Geoff Smith Patricia Paxon, Julie Kinnon, Lousie Armstrong, Jenny Whitmarsh, Valerie Harper.
- 2. The minutes from the previous meeting** were accepted as correct.
- 3. Matters Arising:** Kath apologised that the agenda might not be followed in order as Dr Koralage was delayed in attending due to making home visits and needed to leave early. Kath commented on the need for more face to face doctors' appointments, and reminded the MMC about the possible move to the 'Ask my GP' scheme for additional telephone consultations.
- 4. Various Matters from the Chair:** Kath Calver gave some feedback on the reply from the CQC to the PPG's letter which had expressed some concerns about the grading of the CQC report. Kath discussed the red and amber concerns of the CQC in relation to appointments and the shortfall in MMR vaccines for children. The CQC report indicated that vulnerable adults were required to ask for check- ups, except in specific instances, eg asthma reviews. The CQC report also mentions other modes of engagement with patients in addition to the PPG.

Kath stated that a letter had been sent to Sir Bernard Jenkin, local MP, to ask for support in filling GP vacancies at the MMC, and she is waiting for a reply.

Kath suggested that patients are provided with a time-line for results when awaiting test results, as if this is not provided at the outset many unnecessary phone calls might take up practice time.

Kath is keen to have the Social Prescriber at the MMC give a talk at a future PPG meeting. The Social Prescriber was not able to attend today as she has been unwell, but hopes to catch up at the next PPG meeting. Caroline (the Pharmacist) and Yvonne (the Social Prescriber) are to talk to a friendship group at the Hub. Fiona is keen for them to reach out to other local groups in the area.

Graham queried the medication review process, and Fiona is to feed back to Caroline the Pharmacist.

Sheena asked if medication reviews are automatic, and Dr Koralage responded that there could be different reasons for medication reviews but stated that she would look into this, and said that feedback from the PPG is

always helpful. Dr K stated that any medication changes would always have to be logged with a doctor.

5. Patient Flow, Accelerate and Appointments

Ben Notley, Head Receptionist, stated that changes had been made to the appointment system with nurses and doctors. Nurse appointments would now be face to face as a recent audit had showed that 80% of 'phone consultations with nurses resulted in a face to face appointment then being made. However, if patient request a 'phone consultation that would be granted. Nurse appointments are bookable on-line, as well as by telephone. Pre-bookable nurse appointments are also available the day before.

Some afternoon appointments are also reserved where people are not able to phone through early on. Routine slots for the following day are also released. Doctors are now doing 50% face to face appointments, and will call back either am or pm at patients' requests.

Duty doctors are also available and may be booked on the day or sometimes in advance.

RR wondered if it is possible to have a later call time (other than 8am) for appointments later in the day, but this was not feasible.

Kath asked if the 2-3 hour call-back for doctors' appointments could be implemented. Fiona responded that this is normally the case except in cases of medical emergencies. Patients may request an am or pm call-back when they phone in.

Graham mentioned an elderly friend who needed help with a large phone bill after calling in for appointments, and waiting on the line.

A member asked if a cancellation line could be made available. Fiona responded that an appointment can be cancelled through the text confirmation, but at present the current telephone system could not support a separate line. Fiona has put information on the MMC facebook page regarding the amount of cancelled appointments; 230 appointments, amounting to 50 hours of clinical time, were cancelled in November 2022. Fiona stated that a letter is sent out if a patient does not turn up to an appointment, and following two missed appointments a phone call is made.

Dr K stated that Saturday and evening appointments (till 8,30pm) are now available. The Saturday appointment venues will rotate between the MMC, Great Bentley and the St James, Clacton practices. But some patients may not have suitable transport to Great Bentley or Clacton. Blood tests and respiratory reviews may also take place in the evening. Kath Calver stressed that there are no additional appointments, but a broader window for appointments to suit patients. Sheena mentioned that the Hospital Hopper might be available for support with transport and offered to look into that possibility. Maureen, a new member, stated that she now understood the MMC systems better, having attended the meeting. Fiona stated that the PPG is very useful in terms of communication with the local community.

Fiona Gardner, the MMC Operations Manager, stated that demand is enormous, but changes have been made to support patient flow. Fiona also

stated that from next week a message is to be added to the telephone line to inform callers when all minor appointments have gone for the day, but callers can still hold and speak to a receptionist. Fiona emphasised that the practice is keen to help wherever possible.

Dr K agreed that there are not enough doctors or appointments for the patient numbers, and said that there are 4000 patients per each full-time GP; she is very concerned for the need for more GPs. There are currently six partners and one GP. The Integrated Care System (Suffolk) is supporting GP recruitment for the area. The practice are employing locum doctors, two on Mondays and Fridays and one Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Kath asked whether a patients would be notified if their doctor changed, and Fiona stated that over-75s would receive a letter in accordance with general medical guidelines. Fiona stated that it would not be cost effective to notify everyone as the MMC is such a large practice.

A member of the PPG queried the use of the minor injuries unit, which has good resources except for staffing resources. Kath Calver is to write again to Bernard Jenkin MP to investigate greater use of the Fryatt hospital and the minor injuries unit.

Fiona commented on the good quality medical and administrative staff at the MMC.

Accelerate: Fiona discussed the Accelerate scheme: the MMC is involved in a Quality Support programme for 20 weeks with Quality Improvement Associates (consultants) and is now in the 3rd week of this scheme, seeking to develop short term and long term improvements.

Fiona discussed the needs of the local community, which is an area of deprivation with a 40% pupil premium in schools (ie 40% pupils eligible for free school meals).

6. **Restructuring:** this item was deferred to the next meeting, as Dr Koralage had to leave.
7. **Long Term Medication Prescriptions:** Fiona stated that batch prescriptions for 6 months could be made up, and these could be provided by the pharmacy or chemists. It was advised to discuss this with your usual chemist as there has been reported that chemist's are having difficulties in the bulk procuring of certain medications. Prescriptions might need to be collected at regular intervals within the 6 months time-frame. Some exceptions to the batch prescriptions could include some inhalers, insulin and some eye-drops. Patients requiring batch prescriptions would need to be on long-term regular medication, have up-to-date medical reviews and blood pressure checks. Fiona stated that the 'pod' in the MMC waiting room could provide height/weight and blood pressure measurements. A token is required to use the pod.

8. GP Recruitment: this item was covered in section 5.

9. Any Other Business: Kath asked members how we might improve the way in which we can communicate with public and would welcome suggestions. Kath also asked for ideas for the letter she was proposing to write to Bernard Jenkin regarding the possibility of the minor injury unit being able to support the MMC practice, with a reminder that he hasn't yet answered the first letter. Fiona suggested we ask Sir Bernard to a future meeting. Graham asked if there is spare money in the practice to offer potential GPs but Fiona said not, as the locums are very expensive to employ and that the practice were already offering a generous package

10. Next Meeting: March 7th 2023.