**Sunbury Health Centre Group Practice (SHCGP)**

**Patient Participation Group (PPG)**

**Minutes of the Core Group Meeting held on**

**Tuesday 6 July 2021, 3.30 pm**

**Agenda**

**Present:**

**SHC:** Richard Fryer (RF) Dave Gill (DG) and Sasha Thurgood (ST).

**PPG Core Group:** David Butler (DB), Polly Healey (PH), Neil Huntingford (NH Chair), Diana Huntingford (DH), Alison Richardson (AR) and Paul Thompson (PT).

1. **Welcome** and **apologies** for absence

NH welcomed everyone to the last meeting of the Core Group before the summer break. He explained that as usual RF & DG would update the group on how the Practice was working in the pandemic. In addition RF & DG would answer any questions that had been submitted in advance.

Jenny Downes (JD) and Dorothy Linter sent their apologies.

**2. Update from the Practice**

RF began his update by reporting that a lot of the staff at SHCGP are being affected by the number of their children who are being sent home from school due to potential exposure to the virus.

RF explained that the Practice had been notified about an issue with the telephone system. This has now been resolved. As this matter was being investigated the staff involved realised that when patients telephoned the Practice, they were being given too many options, more than necessary. As a result, the number of options is now two-thirds shorter than previously. It is hoped that this will solve the issues that patients have been experiencing.

RF reported that the Practice is uncertain if the removal of the final Covid restrictions on 19 July will have any impact on the SHCGP. It has already been agreed that the One Way system will remain in place because it has improved the flow of the patients in the building. There are still discussions to take place about what other features, introduced as a consequence of the pandemic, will remain.

RF was pleased to report that there have been very few staff changes since the last meeting:

* Charlotte Budkiewicz, theNurse Manager, is leaving the Practice, RF explained that she has built up a very strong team and therefore he is very pleased that an internal appointment has been made, Rachel Payne, will replace Charlotte.
* Dr Amy Baker, currently an ST3 Trainee Doctor, will join the Practice permanently once her training is completed at the end of August.
* Lorna Hanna has been appointed as the third Clinical Pharmacist and takes up her post in a few weeks.

RF explained that the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS), mentioned at the last meeting, which is providing the funding for additional roles to support the development of bespoke multi-disciplinary teams. Lorna’s appointment is funded through this scheme. The Practice is also hoping to recruit Care Coordinators, again funded through this scheme.

RF reported that the recent Training Day had been very successful, and that although the Practice was shut the telephones were still answered. He explained that the focus of the training was on cancer care across Surrey Heartlands and there were a lot of learning points for the team. RF added that it was also a good team building opportunity for the staff at the Practice who, due to the Covid restrictions in place, tend to work in silos and rarely get an opportunity to meet together. The training session was funded by the CCG and RF hopes that there are similar opportunities will become available.

RF had previously discussed with NH & PT the bid that has been made to the Council to fund improvements. He updated the group that a meeting is taking place in July and therefore is pleased that this matter is being considered by the Council.

RF has discussed with PH & NH the need for some updates to the PPG website to reflect those that have been made to the Practice website. He added that Cassie Robinson is keeping the SHCGP FaceBook (FB) page up-to-date and that this is working well and is proving to a successful way of sharing information about the practice.

DG informed the group that the Practice is busier now than it has been in a long time, due to patients having ‘saved up’ conditions during the lockdowns. He reported that the Practice is aware that a winter Covid booster vaccination is being discussed and that they are waiting further guidance. Due to the size of the programme required he is certain that it will be administered via the Federation, as with the current Covid vaccinations.

He explained that both ST3 doctors Dr Amy Baker and Dr Priyanka Shaunak will be completing their placement soon. Although as previously discussed Dr Baker will be staying with the Practice. Dr Jopling is hoping that a new trainee will soon join the Practice.

DG reported that the number of patients attending appointments at SHC for blood pressure and other chronic health issues was increasing. It is hoped that once the Care Coordinators are appointed they can help ease the load on the Nursing Team.

RF reported that the SHC is beginning to open up services again, the Social Prescriber will be returning soon and the Drug & Alcohol Clinic is due to begin on 10 August.

RF explained that he is in the process of making more changes to speed up the response time to requests, however last week 930 prescriptions were prescribed. In addition to 1,460 telephone calls had been received and 1,272 enquiries had been received via the website.

He stressed that together with ST they are constantly reviewing staffing levels to ensure that the Practice is able to respond to demand.

NH asked if the patients who visit Reception were invited to do so.

DG replied that more patients are now visiting the Practice due to the increase in the number of patients who are being examined at SHC. However, he did add that a number of the patients could still have sent their request remotely rather than visiting SHC in person. He added that a lot of prescriptions are still being dropped off in the box outside the Centre.

DG explained that his day is a lot busier because the patients he is seeing really need to do so. He said that the Practice is much more efficient than previously and that approximately only a quarter of the patients are seen in face:face appointments, the rest are either spoken to on the phone or via a video link.

RF reported that there has been a lot of positive feedback about the changes to the systems at the Practice.

NH asked for more information about where the recent Training Day had taken place.

DG explained that training occurs across the network twice a year; it is usually an afternoon session and involves all 43 Practices across NW Surrey. DG remarked that he thought it was a good style of professional development because all of the Doctor and Healthcare staff can attend. At the sessions the staff are given local information and statistics about the focus of the training.

The other team also have access to bespoke training.

Four questions had been submitted in advance:

1. *Some people have reported difficulty accessing the Patient Access facility via their Smartphone - is the Practice aware of any issues?*

The Practice is not aware of any issues, however since this is a national programme it is unable to help resolve the issues. The NHS App is more user-friendly and the Practice would prefer that patients used this rather than Patient Access. RF agreed to speak with Cassie about creating an awareness campaign about the advantages of using the NHS App.

1. *There is still confusion about how to make/request appointments on-line in the absence of an Appointments button.*

PH added that the PPG website receives at least two/three messages a week from patients who are unable to work out how to request an appointment.

RF explained that the website is not configured by the Practice and therefore it is not possible for them to make changes, however the Practice can request changes to be made by the system developer. NH suggested that the Practice could use FB to help patients who are having difficulties. RF agreed to speak with the developers of the website and ask if ‘*Request an Appointment*’ button could be added to the front page of the website. RF did stress that such a request would mean that patients would be triaged to the most appropriate health professional, which might not be a Doctor but another member of the Multi-Disciplinary Team including Nurse Practitioners, Paramedics or a Pharmacist.

1. *The website is only available during working hours - could this be left open for people who would have difficulty accessing it during commuting/working hours*?

RF explained that there are parts of the website that are available 24hours a day. However there are certain parts that do close in order that the team are not overwhelmed by a large number of requests to respond to first thing in the morning, the staff do need to have time to respond to all the requests. The website is switched on at 6am for patients to leave a request, something not offered by other local practices. RF added that the peak for enquiries by the Website is 10am, rather than first thing in the morning via the phone.

NH suggested that it is important for patients to be informed that some parts of the website are switched off for their safety. And that when one system closes another (Livi or 111) is available.

RF agreed that it would be useful to consider a new communication for patients similar to that produced when the Appointments System changed.

1. *Whilst patients requesting an appointment may receive a call back at some point during the day, those worried and/or who feel their condition merits urgent attention may well resort to going to A&E. What would be the best way to share advice to patients about what to do in such circumstances?*

RF replied that the website makes it clear that this is not the way to deal with emergency requests.

It was agreed that this was a further indication that a communication campaign is needed to ensure that patients are fully aware of their options.

NH & RF agreed that this something to action in September.

**3. Dates for PPG Meetings September 2021- July 2022**

Prior to the meeting DH had circulated a draft set of meeting dates based on the meeting dates for this year. Everyone confirmed that the dates for PPG Core Meetings were convenient and that is was advisable to schedule dates for the Open Meetings even though they are to be confirmed.

NH repeated his wish to have face:face meetings again as soon as possible.

1. **AOB**

DH informed the meeting that after seven years as the PPG secretary she has decided to step down from the Core Group. She explained that her work as an Education Consultant was keeping her very busy and in addition she is now going to be looking after her granddaughter a day a week. DH stated that she would continue to support SHCGP in whatever ways she can and wished the PPG continued success.

**The date of the next PPG Core Meeting is Tuesday 28 September 2021.**

**The date of the next PPG Open Meeting is to proposed to be on**

**Monday 11 October 2021, however this will be confirmed closer to the date.**