

**Patient Participation Group (PPG)  
Hilly Fields Medical Centre**

**Tuesday, 15 September 2020  
12:15 to 13:15  
On-line**

**Attendees**

Patients

John Keidan – Chair  
Symon Knightswood – Vice Chair  
Frances Angell  
Peter Hall  
Stephen Locke  
Aiysha Saleemi  
Roger Stocker  
Alison Stone

Practice

Fiona Burke – Senior Administrator  
Jacqueline Henty – Practice Manager  
Dr Olayinka Oduwaiye  
Colin Stears – Managing Partner, The Lewisham Care Partnership

<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>  The Chair welcomed all attendees.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Apologies</b>  Apologies were received from Annette Jeanes and Richard Sutton.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Increasing Patient Participation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>Revising pages on Practice website</b><p>Symon and Stephen have been preparing a revision of the PPG pages on the Practice website. This is needed as some of the pages on the website are out of date and need a stronger emphasis on welcoming patient input. Information on the PPG's background and how it runs, plus basic principles of operation are required, alongside details of PPG activities and roles and crucially, how to join.</p><p>Symon and Stephen's draft revision is now ready for circulation to the PPG in the first instance. It will then be sent to the Practice for their input and consideration.</p><p>Colin advised that NHS Digital has sent information regarding updating the website. Our website is to be standardised, alongside the other practices within The Lewisham Care Partnership. Furthermore, within ten months we will not have individual practices; the five practices will merge into one, with one contract under NHS England. This merger will result in one 58,000 patient practice, which will be called The Lewisham Care Partnership. Patients will be able to move between sites within the Partnership. Staff will not be expected to work across more than two sites, recognising that working across more than two sites could be very disrupting and isolating for them. There will be a consultation, which will begin in October.</p><p>Colin said that, as the Hilly Fields PPG is really interested in communication, he wants to use us, ahead of the merger. There will be a need for communication at site level, but there will be need for a more uniform approach across the sites.</p></li></ul>

	<p>John requested that information of the scope and importance of the merger is sent to the PPG a few days ahead of meetings. This would give the PPG time to review, consider and prepare questions, ahead of meeting.</p> <p>It is clear that, despite these forthcoming changes, the PPG pages of the website do still need to be modified. On the subject of trying to join the PPG, Aiysha added that it took her three attempts to join the PPG; it was really difficult. Colin expressed concern about the difficulties Aiysha had experienced and will take this forward, with Jacqui.</p> <p>Frances said we could become a victim of our own success in trying to expand the PPG, emphasising the importance of good engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Former virtual PPG group</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Contacting PPG members</b></li> </ul> <p>These two items were not discussed, due to time.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Recruitment of female doctors to the practice</b></p> <p>Three female GPs are starting at Hilly Fields, imminently. They will be working three days per week (this is the norm for 75% of GPs).</p> <p>The PPG asked if the website could be updated with the details of the new GPs. Colin advised this will be done in due course. The reason for waiting is that it is more cost effective to do bulk updates.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Appointment system</b></p> <p>There is now a telephone appointment, bookable online, with a designated time and doctor. 40% of patients use on-line booking and that system has now been put back into practice, over the last week.</p> <p>Daily there are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eight GPs seeing patients via telephone appointments and each GP has 30 appointments</li> <li>- One GP who sees face to face patients.</li> </ul> <p>Within the current system, patients are told they will be called within half an hour of the appointment time given, unless there is an emergency. Jacqui expects this system to continue.</p> <p>PPG members expressed concern about how difficult it has been/still seems to be, to book appointments and relayed personal experiences about this to emphasise the difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Frances has never succeeded booking an appointment on-line, or via telephone and she emphasised concern about the impact on frail or vulnerable patients. Frances also said that triage is via someone without medical expertise – very concerned about this being the decision-making process.</li> <li>- Stephen felt that this is a serious problem, which has not yet been resolved. On-line appointments are via a box called ‘telephone triage’ – although the website says you can book on-line, in practical terms it’s very different. He recognised that the Practice has had to deal with the COVID-19 emergency, but after six months and looking ahead to the next six months, there needs to be a different system.</li> <li>- Aiysha and family have experienced many issues, trying via the telephone and the app.</li> </ul>

- John and Peter said that the telephone system does not let you know when you are moving up the queue.

Jacqui outlined recent changes to appointments and acknowledged it has been very difficult for patients, and for staff. Part of the reason for the difficulties obtaining appointments has been:

- The lack of GPs, which led to appointments not being timed, as the Practice did not want to promise capacity that they did not have.
- A change in the nature of calls to the Practice. Over the last six months, telephone calls to the Practice have increased in length and, rather than being short calls, are regularly 15-20 minutes long. This is due to the concerns of patients who are calling, typically either the young worried-well or older patients experiencing isolation. The Practice has given each caller as much time as they have needed.

Dr Oduwaiye outlined some of the difficulties with patients' contact details / the nature of calls. He explained that it is difficult to time calls, due to patients not answering their phones, some calls taking longer, some emergencies. There is much pressure on the system – for the patient, doctor and administrator. Dr Oduwaiye emphasised that he does not leave his clinic until all patients on his list have been called.

Some follow-up comments and suggestions from PPG members:

- Aiysha acknowledged the importance of Dr Oduwaiye's presence and input, but said that when timed appointments are not given, it is understandable that patients may miss a call. Perhaps for timed appointments patients could be on standby an hour either side of the appointment? [
- Stephen said that it is not acceptable for patients to be waiting for hours past the appointment time.
- Frances suggested that there could be a middle way, acknowledging the difficulties of the Practice and the patients.
- John suggested that the term "triage" is not clearly understandable and should be replaced by the term "appointments". He also was particularly concerned that, once patients got through to speak to a receptionist, they were expected to be on standby for a telephone call at any time during the day.

Jacqui responded to say that the difficulties of not giving timed appointments were in the COVID-19 emergency period and it was important to be mindful that, during that period, doctors were also going down with COVID-19. The Practice has moved back to timed appointments and we now need to move forward.

It is also important that patients take responsibility and have their telephones with them and do all that they can to be on-hand for the calls.

Colin advised that the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has issued an expectation that practices will revert to timed systems. The DHSC believes that a half hour appointment slot is acceptable. Colin also said that it was appropriate to retain the term "triage" since that was what was taking place.

John clarified that it is the system, rather than individuals, that has provided difficulties for patients. Jacqui emphasised how difficult it has been for Practice staff, including working through bank holidays and working more hours than ever before. It does not feel as though the staff are

	appreciated. In response to this, John confirmed strongly that the hard work of staff is appreciated.
6.	<b>Reception</b> - This item was carried forward to the next meeting.
7.	<b>Face masks</b> - This item was carried forward to the next meeting.
8.	<b>Flu campaign</b> - This item was carried forward to the next meeting.
9.	<b>Patient survey</b> - This item was carried forward to the next meeting.
10.	<b>Contact details permission</b> - This item was carried forward to the next meeting.
11.	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b></p> <p>John advised that the PPG members would like the PPG to meet again in November and proposed 17 November as the date, if that was suitable for the Practice.</p> <p><b>Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Colin will consult with colleagues, to see if the 17 November is suitable to meet with the PPG and will feedback to John.</b></li> </ul>
12.	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><b>Flu clinic</b></p> <p>John reported that Richard Sutton had asked his thanks to be conveyed to the Practice, for the way in which staff had organised and managed the flu clinic the previous Saturday. John asked Colin to pass these thanks on to Jacqui who had, by that stage, needed to leave the meeting.</p> <p><b>News and updates for the PPG</b></p> <p>John said it would be very helpful if Colin was able to circulate news and updates concerning the Practice in advance of PPG meetings. This would hopefully allow more time for discussion of the items in meetings. Colin agreed to so do.</p> <p><b>Using the PPG as a model</b></p> <p>Colin is planning to use the Hilly Fields PPG as a model, which other sites can learn from. This was appreciated by the PPG members. Colin also asked to be kept up abreast of any work the PPG undertakes between PPG meetings.</p> <p><b>Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Colin to pass Richard Sutton's thanks to the Practice, for the way the staff organised and managed the flu clinic on 12 September.</b></li> <li>- <b>Colin will provide news and updates to the PPG, prior to meetings, to enable the PPG to review information ahead of meetings and make the best use of discussion time in meetings.</b></li> <li>- <b>John to update Colin on PPG activity that takes place between formal PPG meetings.</b></li> </ul>