

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

**Tuesday, 17 November 2020
12:15 to 13:15
On-line**

Attendees

Patients

John Keidan – Chair
Frances Angell
Ann Howarth
Aiysha Saleemi
Roger Stocker
Alison Stone

Practice

Jacqueline Henty – Practice Manager
Dr Ravi Sharma - GP
Colin Stears – Managing Partner, The Lewisham Care Partnership

1.	Welcome and Introductions The Chair welcomed all attendees and a brief round of introductions took place.
2.	Apologies Apologies were received from Symon Knightswood, Doreen and Richard Sutton. Stephen Locke has left the Practice and therefore the PPG. Stephen has been thanked for his participation and work.
3.	Minutes of 15 September 2020 meeting The minutes were accepted.
4.	Update Report from the Practice COVID-19 vaccine Colin gave an update on the Pfizer vaccine: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Expectations for the vaccine are high and work at a Practice level will be extremely challenging. At present, the Practice does not have the full details of how to deliver the vaccine, which has not yet been licensed. Despite this, and without a contract to deliver the vaccinations, the Practice has to lay out the delivery plan which must be up and running the first week in December.- The transportation of the vaccine is extremely challenging, as it only has a shelf life of five days, once it no longer is kept below -70°C. The five-day shelf life means the vaccine is unlikely to be suitable for home visits. The vaccines will be delivered to the Practice in whole batches (in trays). There are 975 vaccines in a tray and they come in 5 dose vials. On delivery, the whole batch of vaccine doses will defrost and must be utilised within 5 days, although otherwise kept refrigerated.- The Practice has been instructed that wastage must be minimal and 950 vaccines from each tray must be delivered. Vaccination requires two injections separated by a minimum of 21 days.- Patients who over 80 are likely to be the first cohort to receive the vaccine. There are 1,334 in this cohort, within the Partnership. The second cohort is likely to be patients who are over 65.

- It is likely that the vaccinations will take place at St Johns Medical Practice and it is hoped that this will be seven days a week, between 09:00 and 14:00.
- Hilly Fields Practice has to continue with business as usual. If St Johns Medical Practice is carrying out the vaccinations, they may have to significantly reduce business as usual.
- Immunisers, rather than medical practitioners, will give the vaccine and the training course for this will be two hours. Two immunisers will carry out approximately 240 vaccinations a day. The vaccine will need to be drawn up by registered medical practitioners.
- To assist with the logistics of a large amount of patients arriving for the vaccine, the PPG may be asked to assist by sign-posting people. Colin confirmed that PPG volunteers would receive the vaccination.
- If general practice does not deliver the vaccinations, the programme could be outsourced to the private sector and, going forward, this could then be on an annual basis. The flu vaccine is then likely to be outsourced too. The Practice has to think about the commercial risk and the loss of care risk to its patients.
- Dr Sharma added that the Practice will be looking at delivering 1,000 vaccinations a day and it is a huge challenge.
- In response to a question about safety for the Practice, with lots of people coming in, Colin agreed that this is a concern. The Practice thinks that they can deliver a vaccination in five minutes. Prior to the vaccine there will be a lot of communications to patients, to explain the procedure and the importance of attending. It is a real logistical challenge.

PPG responses to the update:

- John thanked Colin for the very helpful information. He offered the PPG's help with wording the crucial communications to patients and confirmed the PPG could provide a rapid turn-around time on this.
- Different patients will need different information i.e. someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable will need very specific information.
- It's important that when attending for vaccinations patients understand what two metres actually is; the markings outside Hilly Fields are very helpful.
- It is of concern that there isn't a national strategy for delivery. Most people over 80 will be afraid of leaving their home. Would it be possible to hire cabs to drive to people's homes? Use community volunteers and the goodwill of the public? Lots of people would be willing to come in at short notice, to avoid the wastage. We need to push every single thing at this.
- If a more accessible vaccine is an option, it would be worth sharing that information with patients, so they can make an informed choice.

Colin responded:

- With needing to deliver approximately 40,000 vaccines, taxis are unrealistic. The Practice cannot do things in isolation; as a borough we need to deliver across the spectrum in a consistent manner. In addition, we do not yet know what will happen restriction wise, when the current lockdown ends on 2 December. Which tier we will be in will have an enormous impact.
- The Practice will be told (by NHS England) how to communicate. They were told they had to open on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. It now looks as though this might be relaxed.

- It may be possible to let patients book their appointments directly into the App. The Practice has to split cohort groups into those with or without phones. The phone bill for the Practice will go through the roof. Colin needs to understand the labour resource required. There is some money coming in, via a PCN (Primary Care Network) bid and this must be used wisely.
- Dr Sharma added that the biggest challenge is the need to maintain the cold chain and it will be crucial to streamline the timing of patients coming in. It is essential to ensure that patients who say they are coming for vaccination are actually coming. The flu vaccine was a real challenge but was managed successfully.

Further key points about the vaccine:

- At present there is no clear guidance on whether the vaccine would protect a patient who contracts COVID-19 on the way to their vaccination appointment. Dr Sharma believes the vaccine will offer some protection in this situation, but there is no definite answer at the moment.
- The COVID-19 vaccination can only be carried out seven days after any flu vaccination.
- Choosing the vaccine is a Lewisham wide decision. The Practice is desperately waiting and hoping for an easier vaccine to deliver.
- Care home vaccination delivery is a difficult area and the Practice is unsure how the vaccine will be delivered to those in care homes.
- Apart from medical emergencies, the vaccine is the priority. There might be some slimming down of services. John offered the PPG's help in sharing the messaging about the priority of the vaccine with the Practice's patients. Colin confirmed that most of the information will be communicated by telephone or electronically, as letters are too expensive. The Practice will probably telephone 70% of the patients who are over 80.

5. GP patient survey and proposed newsletter

Symon and Jacqui have been liaising about follow-up work for the GP patient survey. A newsletter from the PPG could be very helpful to promote the survey to patients. Going forward, Ann volunteered to work on the newsletter, with Jacqui. As a starter, Ann will look at the newsletter that has just been produced for this quarter. Ann will seek direction from Jacqui as needed.

Roger asked if it would be possible to do a very quick survey of Practice staff – as they are the people who know the patients well.

Dr Sharma felt the survey should be considered, though he felt there were two aspects to this area. Involving the PPG in obtaining patient feedback and contributing to the newsletter will help with the survey. Practice staff may know the views of patients, to some extent, but this is only half of it – the patients have their own views too.

ACTIONS:

- **Ann will assist the Practice with the newsletter, with the aim of promoting the GP patient survey to patients and engendering as high a response as possible.**
- **Dr Sharma and the Practice will consider the suggestion of a short survey of Practice staff, to obtain their perspectives of patients' viewpoints.**

6. **Receiving care through the pandemic - patient members' feedback:**

- **blood pressure monitoring**
- **answerphone messaging**

Blood pressure monitoring

John raised this, on behalf of patients who need blood pressure machines.

John was told to buy a blood pressure machine and this led to concern for patients who may not be able to afford to do this. Is it still the case that patients are required to buy machines?

Dr Sharma highlighted the challenge that patients coming into the Practice are at risk of infection. Therefore, trying to reduce the footfall is key. The Practice understands that some patients cannot afford equipment. Some patients do need to be seen in person. Patients are assessed via a telephone call and, if need be, they are brought in. In Dr Sharma's experience all patients who require it, have had their pressure checked, or received the right advice.

John asked if, for those patients who need to buy a machine, they could receive advice on buying, via email. Dr Sharma asked if the PPG could write this. It is important that the information does not include a recommendation. Aiysha added that the British Heart Foundation website has some very good information and Colin will look at adding a link on the website.

Frances emphasised that she very impressed by the way that the Practice has decided if appointments will be face to face, or not. The triaging has been excellent. She would like to see more insistence on visitors to the Practice wearing face masks.

ACTION:

- **The Practice will consider sending guidance to patients who need to buy a blood pressure monitoring machine.**
- **Aiysha will send Colin the details of the Heart Foundation website.**
- **Colin will consider adding a link to the website, of information on the British Heart Foundation's website.**

Answerphone messaging

John gave feedback on the Practice's answerphone system. The message is a long, helpful message, which is repeated and there is loud music. It does not inform callers if they are moving up the queue.

Jacqui explained that the music comes with the package and unfortunately cannot be changed. It was the best of a bad selection. A lot of patients drop out of the wait, as the long message signposts them to another service. The system cannot advise callers of their place in the queue, but a new system is coming.

Colin confirmed he hopes to sign off on a new telephone system this week. This system will tell you where you are in the queue. It will save a huge amount of time, as it will use your telephone number to point towards your clinical record.

Dr Sharma added that, from a patient perspective, the best option is to know where you are in the queue and have the option to be called back. The partnership is progressing towards making it as easy as possible for the patient.

<p>7.</p>	<p>Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PPG pages on Hilly Fields Website ▪ Revised Ways of Working Document - for approval <p>This item was not covered, due to lack of time.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Reception</p> <p>Aiysha raised a concern about the Practice receptionists and the manner in which they sometimes ask questions. In relation to patients waiting outside the Practice to be seen, it is essential for there to be confidentiality when staff speak with patients.</p> <p>Jacqui confirmed that there has been extensive training and that this is an ongoing process. The receptionists are doing the best they can and hopefully improvement has been seen. There was confirmation by the PPG members of some improvement and, also, an understanding of the pressure that staff are under. It is crucial that all health care professionals think about the best way possible to communicate with people.</p> <p>Dr Sharma emphasised that it's our NHS and we are all in it together. If you feel as a patient that you are not being treated as you should be, by admin or medical staff, the Practice needs that feedback. This is high on the Practice's agenda, including for reception staff to have the training they need to deal with difficult conversations.</p> <p>The PPG mentioned that it is sometimes hard to hear the reception staff, when at the reception desk, to the staff wearing masks. It would really help if receptionists at the desk could possibly speak louder or more clearly.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Future dates</p> <p>John proposed meetings in 2021 are on the second Tuesday of the Month in January, March, May, July, September and November. This means meeting more frequently, but for less time.</p> <p>The meeting on the second Tuesday of January was agreed, subject to the impact of COVID-19.</p> <p>Colin said that, by that date, he hopes to have written a draft constitution for The Lewisham Care Partnership (TLCP) PPG. The Clinical Commissioning Group is looking at proposals to merge the practices. No formal consultation is required for this.</p> <p>Hilly Fields and Honor Oak will join their back-office functions. There will be a survey about services going forward and how we would like to see them configured.</p> <p>Dr Sharma emphasised that the merger will not affect patients' interface within the TLCP practices. It will give patients more choice. The merger only affects the back-office function.</p> <p>John emphasised that that the PPG is here to help in a constructive way and thanked the Practice staff for their time.</p>