

## **CAVERSHAM PATIENTS' PARTICIPATION GROUP – Draft minutes of meeting on 13 July 2023 at the Caversham & online**

PRESENT Practice representatives: Fay Saunders (Practice Manager - FS), Dr Steve Amiel (SA), Dr Alex Warner (AW), Gina McCluskie.

Members: Roderick Allison (RA), Mick Farrant (MF), Margaret Harvey, Kate Harwood, Ruth Hawthorn (RH), Cynthia Jensen, John Lipetz, Robert MacGibbon, Elizabeth Monck, Diane & Simon Pearson, Judith Philo. Via Teams: Kathy Elliott, Ruth Appleton, Sally Donati, Frances Lefford, Ann Rafti, Annette Thomas, David (surname not given).

1. The PPG welcomed Gina McCluskie **Project Manager**. Gina has worked at the practice for a number of years as a Practice Assistant, her new role involves project managing specific activities e.g. building maintenance works, research trails, PPG support.

2. **NHS industrial action**. Some of the practice's junior doctors were taking part in the junior doctors' strike action. This inevitably affected the availability of appointments, though non-junior doctors continued to provide cover.

3. The PPG strongly supported the junior doctors' action. Despite the short-term inconvenience, it was essential for all NHS staff to have decent pay and decent working conditions. It was agreed that the PPG should write to the local press expressing their support, with a copy to the Secretary of State for Health, and that the letter should be posted up in the practice for junior doctors and patients to see. Please see the attached document "Wording of letters to Ham&High, CNJ July 2023" for the wording of the letter and a photograph of what appeared in the Camden New Journal.

4. **Participation in research studies** FS said the practice was an eager participant in research studies and keen to encourage patients to take part, and would publicise this by newsletter. The PPG welcomed this. Feedback to participating patients on the outcome of studies was important; even if the outcome was negative, that in itself was useful information. MF pointed out that when invitations to participate offered further information if desired, it was important that the further information should be available in large print for those who needed it. SA added that the practice did not accept invitations offering "freebies" designed to promote commercial interests. The practice research partner is Noclor <https://www.noclor.nhs.uk/>

5. **Mental health** In discussion of the increasing need for mental health support, FS said the practice was fully committed to "Wellness" initiatives to improve patients' social and mental well-being. The next social event, a River of Hope party in the Listening Space Garden, would be on 9 September. The practice was keen to work with community organisations; a representative of Voluntary Action Camden attends the waiting room on Wednesday mornings to talk to patients and help those interested in community activities to get in touch with the right organisation.

6. RH asked about psychotherapy referrals, SA said practice doctors were well aware of the procedures; the obstacle was the serious shortage of psychotherapy resources.

7. **Microsuction** RH raised the difficulty of obtaining microsuction to remove wax from ears. She had experienced poor and even unhygienic practices from some of the private providers. It would be much better if GP practices could provide this service. FS & SA confirmed that ear syringing, that was commonly done previously, was not recommended anymore, but the practice would be interested in scoping out the potential to offer the service if it was possible to do so, perhaps for groups of practices on a primary care network basis. If patients experienced poor service from private providers, this should be reported to the commissioners of the service or to the Care Quality Commission.

8. **Extended access service** FS outlined the extended access service offered by Camden Health Partners. Weekdays 6:30-8pm and Saturdays 9am-5pm hosted across several sites including the practice on Wednesday and Friday PMs.

9. **Inclisiran** There were no plans for any Camden GP practice to provide Inclisiran injections for high cholesterol levels.

10. **Blood test forms** Patients needing blood tests have to collect a form from Reception and take it with them to the blood test centre. It was pointed out that it would be simpler for the form to be emailed direct from the practice to the blood test centre. The problem is that the form has sticky labels on it which can't be emailed, but the arrangements are being looked at with a view to making them more efficient by the labs.

11. **Practice's solar panels** These were working well.

12. **Problems arising from relocation of services from St Pancras Hospital** The PPG had previously discussed concerns arising from the possibility that St Pancras Hospital services might be relocated to the Peckwater Centre next door to the Caversham.

13. There were two causes for concern:

- Any services so relocated ought to be community services such as community nurses or the mental health care team, to facilitate their integration with the primary care system - not unrelated services such as the dialysis unit
- There was a danger of a "land grab" for part of the Caversham's own premises, e.g., the garden or the car park.

No decision had been announced, nor had there been any public engagement. More information was expected to emerge during the summer.

14. The PPG strongly supported the practice's concerns. The NHS was committed to the importance of primary care. It would be deplorable if relocation decisions were made on the basis of penny-pinching and administrative convenience in a way which harmed a first-rate practice and missed an opportunity for better integration of community services with the primary care sector .

15. The PPG agreed as a first step to seek to raise its concerns with LBC's Health & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee.

16. **Next meeting** would be arranged in October or November, unless the relocation issue (paras12-15 ) made an earlier meeting necessary.

17. A short brief explaining the River of Hope Party has been prepared and is attached for representative's information.

**End of draft minutes**