**Patient Forum Minutes – 31.10.2022**

**Attendees: David Burton, Mr & Mrs Parsons, Sheila Harris, Alan Prior, Joyce Lambert, Iris Connaughton, Patricia Thomsett-Jones, Linda Chapman**

**Lesley Betts – Practice Manager**

**Rebecca Seaman – Assistant Practice Manager**

**Apologies: Patricia Binsted, Steve Mahoney, Susan Falconer, Adrian Rudge, John Surridge, Edwina Russell**

1. **Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting**
2. **Planning Permission**

Since the last meeting, Lesley told the group that she has met with the Portfolio Manager who works for the company who own the surgery. He asked for Lesley’s thoughts on the development of the third floor. She informed them that the practice would not support this. She said that she thinks that without the practice’s support, they will not now develop the third floor, but Lesley will continue to monitor the planning applications that go to the local council and if they do, we will inform the patient forum group and we will be informing the residents who live in close proximity to the practice.

1. **Results of our Annual Patient Satisfaction Survey**

In August we handed out our Annual Patient Satisfaction Survey and the patient forum members were given a copy of the results. Becky explained that this year, we had changed the questions of the questionnaire. She continued to tell the group that the practice is very aware of the issues that patients are facing getting through on our telephones, and accessing an appointment. This is something that we are constantly trying to improve, but at the moment there is a National GP Recruitment Crisis in General Practice and sadly we are not immune to this. Becky is currently writing our next newsletter, and she was thinking of including a section in this about access to appointments. We want to make it clear to patients, that we do not want to deny patient an appointment, but we simply don’t have enough to cater for the demand that we are receiving, and we are not an emergency service. We also aim to remind patients that if a receptionist asks for further information from the patient, it is not because they want to know what is wrong with you, but rather they need this information to process your call most efficiently. The group that it was a good idea to include some information about appointment access in the next newsletter.

Becky said that the questions that we included, were actually based on things that we may be able to do something about. The results showed that 24.1% of patients have not visited our website, and 24.1% of patients have visited our website and did not find it informative. We thought that to improve the number of patients who have visited our website, it would be good to text all patients for whom we hold a mobile number for, to promote the website and also to tell them that they can register for the Practice Newsletter via this site. The group agreed with this plan. The management team will also review the content on the website to ensure that it is an informative as we can be. One of the other actions that we thought that we could take, is to promote the PCN Social Prescribers. The questionnaire results showed that only 19% of respondents were aware of the social prescriber. Becky explained the role of a social prescriber to the group, and how useful are. She added that with increased financial pressures this year, people may be more in need of their help this year. The group thought that promotion of the social prescriber would be good, as some of them were unsure of what this role involved. Becky will include some information about this role in the next newsletter and we will promote this on our website.

Becky told the group that the annual patient survey is not the only way that we receive feedback from patients. We also send the NHS Friends and Family Survey to our patients after they are seen. This survey asks the patient if they would rate the service to their friends and family, and gives patients the opportunity to leave feedback. The results of this are sent to the whole practice team each month. We also have suggestion box in our waiting room.

1. **Covid-19: How we have responded and our current appointment system**

We have a variety of pre bookable appointments now available, and patients are able to choose if they would like their appointment face to face or via the telephone. We have found that telephone appointments suited a lot of patients, and therefore we have kept this as an option. We are now telling patients the time of their appointment. However, the GPs have noticed that face to face appointments are taking longer than pre pandemic, so whilst patients expecting a telephone appointment are told a time, they are told that it will be around this time, it may not be precisely at the time they are given.

Now that we are offering timed appointments, Lesley told the group that we have now resumed online appointment booking. This also includes some nurse appointments (smears, influenza appointments, and blood test booking).

Whilst Lesley was discussing our current appointment system, a member of the group asked why it had taken them so long to book a blood test appointment. Lesley said that unfortunately there is a slight wait for blood tests at the moment, as our HCAs are also running flu clinics, and we also have a new HCA who has had to undergo training and is not up to full speed yet. However, she reminded the group that when Deal Hospital ceased to offer a blood test service, we had no knowledge that this was going to happen. Therefore we had to increase our service very quickly with the staff and rooms that we have available and also still provide our other nursing services that we are contractually obliged to do. Lesley added that before we started flu clinics, we were usually able to offer an urgent blood test slot the next day, and a routine in a couple of days, so hopefully this will resume once the flu clinics have finished.

Lesley said that following feedback from patients, and now that our guidance has been changed, we have removed the covid message on our telephone message and condense the message as much as we can. A lot of patients had informed us that the message was too long, however during the pandemic there was certain information that we had to have on our message, so we have not been able to shorten it until now.

We have done another risk assessment and we have decided that we will still ask staff to wear masks, and we will still encourage patients to do so. One of the reasons that we continue to wear masks, is to try and reduce the number of staff that we have on sick leave. Lesley explained that we don’t have as many clinicians as we used to, so if one of them is unwell, it affects the service that we are able to provide to our patients. Lesley added that we have stopped asking staff to lateral flow test twice a week now, instead they will only lateral flow if they have symptoms suggestive of Covid-19. If a staff member does have Covid-19, they will work from home (or stay at home) until they test negative on days 5 and 6, or until they have isolated for 10 days.

1. **Enhanced Access**

On 1st October Improved Access and Extended Hours became one service called Enhanced Access. The practices in Deal and Sandwich PCN have decided to outsource this to a GP Federation who will provide the service out of Deal Hospital. Patients can access appointments with a GP, Advanced Nurse Practitioner and Physio through this service, Monday to Saturday, and on Saturday and Sunday there is also a nurse clinic as well.

Becky reminded the group that Improved Access was introduced when the Government set out a requirement that General Practices offered a service between 8am – 8pm. The practices in Deal and Sandwich decided that it would be more efficient to offer this service together out of one place and therefore this has been running at Deal Hospital since this was introduced. Practices have been offering extended hours appointments since before this was introduced, and we used offer these on a Monday evening and Wednesday and Friday mornings, at the practice.

Becky explained that the new Enhanced Access service means that we no longer provide extended hours appointments at the surgery.

Patients can book an Enhanced Access appointment via their practice. Each practice has an allocation of appointments based on their list size.

Becky said that the Enhanced Access appointments, are different from the Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) which is also located at Deal Hospital. The UTC is available from 8am-8pm, and can be booked via NHS 111, or patients can present as a walk-in (when capacity allows).

Becky said that we acknowledge that it is very confusing for patients, where they can be seen for an appointment at the moment, and therefore we have produced a handout which we aim to leave in the waiting room, include in our newsletter and put on our television which explains the way that our patients can access primary care. Becky asked the group to let her know if they had any suggestions to improve the leaflet as she wants it to be patient friendly and informative. One member of the group thought that it would be useful to add the telephone numbers to the handout, and Becky will do this.

1. **Partnership Changes**

Lesley told the group that on 30th November, Dr Arvind Singh will be retiring. Dr Singh works five sessions a week. We have been advertising for a replacement GP for some time and at the moment we have not been able to recruit, but we will continue to try. Lesley explained that this is a national problem. In the past, we have been often been able to recruit our Registrars, but unfortunately one of our Registrars did not pass her exam, and therefore she is having to extend her training period.

We have managed to recruit a First Contact Paramedic Practitioner to replace some of the sessions when Dr Sparrow retired. She works in a similar way to our Advanced Nurse Practitioner. She is able to see patients on her own, and if she needs additional support from a GP, she always has a supervisor that she can call in. Both the First Contact Practitioner and the Advanced Nurse Practitioner also have time at the end of their sessions to debrief with a GP as well. Christine, our First Contact Paramedic Practitioner is currently undertaking her advanced clinical practitioner training and will complete her prescribing training in November.

1. **Any other business**
2. **Paydens Chemist not taking repeat orders anymore**

One of the group spoke about Paydens Chemist not ordering repeat medication anymore. Lesley explained that this was not a decision which we were involved in. The chemist is a separate business from us. We informed patients how they could order a repeat prescription themselves and also told them, that as far as we are aware, there are other chemists in Deal that still provide this service.

Date of next meeting – 20th February @ 1.15pm