

PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP (PPG) – MEETING MINUTES

Practice: Heartwood Medical Practice **Date/Time:** Wednesday 25 March, 6:00pm

1. Welcome & Introductions

The meeting was opened at 6:00pm and attendees were welcomed. Introductions were made where required. It was noted that several members did not attend. In attendance:

- Michelle Hurley – Practice Manager
- Graham Joynes – PPG Chair
- Dawn Joynes – PPG member
- Steven Nall – PPG member

A significant update was shared regarding the PPG Chair position and that he will be standing down. The group expressed enormous thanks to Graham Joynes for his many years of commitment and leadership in supporting the PPG.

Steven Nall was introduced as the new Chair. Members expressed their appreciation and support, and Steven confirmed he was pleased to take on the role.

2. Purpose of the PPG

It was reiterated that, although PPGs are not contractually required, the practice is committed to maintaining the group as a valuable forum for patient feedback and community engagement.

Graham confirmed he will continue to contribute to the group by providing updates relating to mental health, drawing on his involvement with wider mental health services.

3. Ground Rules

Following the previous meeting disruption of personal feedback complaints, the group was reminded of the agreed principles:

- Not a forum for individual complaints or personal cases
 - Focus on service improvement and wider patient benefit
 - Aim to suggest solutions, not just problems
 - Allow everyone the opportunity to contribute
 - Individual issues to be addressed outside the meeting
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4. Practice Update

The practice shared the following updates:

- **Recruitment:** Ongoing recruitment for a new Advanced Clinical Practitioner (ACP).
- **Patient List Size:** The practice continues to grow and, like all other practices, would be typically unable to cap its patient list, as the ICB requires practices to continue accepting new patients unless there is a critical staffing issue, which is not currently the case.
- **Premises Expansion:** The practice has continued to expand within the building by repurposing and converting rooms to accommodate additional clinical and administrative staff.

- **Future Development:** A proposal has been submitted for funding to create three additional clinical rooms, aimed at supporting future growth and demand.
 - **GP Contract:** The new GP contract was briefly discussed. Concerns were noted regarding funding levels from NHS England, and it was highlighted that the BMA is opposing the changes on the basis of patient safety and workload pressures.
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5. Patient Experience Snapshot

Feedback from members included:

- **Walking group** still going strong, thank you to Dawn Joynes for volunteering her time as walk leader alongside Helen, our Health and Wellbeing Coach.
- **Online Appointments:**
Patients reported difficulty accessing online appointments, noting that availability is limited and often not visible via the app.

It was discussed that many online appointments had previously been linked to a GP who has since left the practice, but that it was planned to continue offering online appointments through other GPs. As a result, the practice will review how online appointments are made available moving forward.

- **New Appointment Request System:**
The practice outlined the newer system whereby patients submit a non-urgent request via an online form on the practice website. Following review, patients receive a link to book an appointment with the most appropriate clinician.

Benefits discussed:

- Improved clinical triage
- Patients directed to the most suitable clinician
- Avoids inappropriate bookings which were common under the previous system
- **Patient Experience Issue:**
A PPG member shared a poor experience using the new system. After being advised to submit a website request, they were later informed that no appointments were available due to rotas not being in place and were asked to call back.

The practice confirmed this case is being reviewed to:

- Identify what went wrong
 - Understand any gaps in process or communication
 - Determine whether additional staff training is required
 - Prevent recurrence
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6. Any Other Business (AOB)

- No additional items raised beyond those discussed
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7. Close

The meeting closed at approximately 7:00pm.

Next meeting: To be confirmed.