

Riverside Health Centre

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Minutes

Meeting on Monday 17th February 2025 at 1300

Present: Jill Clarkson, Jill Farmer, Hugh Cronin, Deirdre Conn (Chair), Anne Walker, Iris Marr, Carmel Lo, Gus Fidgett, Hannah Mark, Katie Byford.

Apologies: were received from Jan McDonald, Pam Gibbons, Susan Wootten, Joy Baker, Zoe Cronin. Gill Benson no longer wants to be a member of the group.

1. **Welcome and introductions by new members.** Deirdre welcomed the group and the new members and explained the purpose of the Terms of Reference. The members then introduced themselves.
2. **Minutes of the meeting** on 29 November and any outstanding items were on the agenda.
3. **Position of Chair for the PPG** - Iris, the current Chair, advised that she would be standing down as Chair due to health reasons. Deirdre asked the group if there was anyone who would like to stand. Anne nominated Deirdre, as she had been standing in for Iris for the past few months, and had been doing a very good job. Anne then volunteered to be secretary and take notes and write up the minutes. The group agreed to these proposals.
4. **SNEE Network Meetings** - Anne gave an overview on the last two on-line Let's Talk SNEE (Suffolk and North East Essex) sessions she had been attending, advising that some of the meetings were very useful and some were not. The last meeting was predominantly welcoming new members and going over the Terms of Reference.

However the previous meetings she felt were interesting as they advised on the various initiatives currently being promoted and in progress, including Pharmacy First and virtual wards. Anne described her own personal experience of a virtual ward by outlining the problems that her husband faced when being assigned to one recently. These mainly included hospital staff being unaware of what a virtual ward was, and the lack of continuity of care.

Anne spoke of the possibility of a member of staff from St Helena Hospice attending the next PPG meeting to give a short talk on compassionate conversations. She explained that it could be difficult to know what to say to a person, possibly receiving end of life care, or having treatment. The group agreed that they would appreciate a visit and advice on this subject.

5. **News from the Practice** - Katie advised the group that there would shortly be a bike rack outside the surgery which would be useful. She then explained that Sophie, the practices Social Prescriber had left the practice in December, and had been replaced with two new members of the team -

Yvonne who would work remotely and Amber who would have a Friday pm clinic. Their work would include low level mental health, bereavement and weight control. Katie further advised that there was a proposed SOS bus coming to Manningtree which would include services such as physio, bowel screening and MIND to name but a few. If anyone in the PPG would like to volunteer to be on the bus then they should contact Katie.

The group were given an update from Katie on the new GP appointment web based system called Anima which went live at the practice on the 29th January 2025. A concern was raised around the problems patients could face if they did not have a computer or a smart phone or were possibly illiterate. Katie explained that the staff would always be able to help patients access services if necessary. The practice had hosted digital support sessions on a weekly basis, which had been accessed by many patients. The patients requests were triaged by the GPs and directed to the most appropriate person or service. Same day appointments could be available if the GPs felt this was necessary. Alternatively a future appointment could be given.

Jill enquired as to whether 15 minute appointments were still the norm and would this now be a regular thing, or would the practice revert back to 10 minute appointments. Katie explained that the 15 minute appointment scheme was agreed by the Colte Partnership, and there were no plans to change the system back at this time.

6. **Training for PPG members** - Deirdre told the group that there was an on line training opportunity for PPG members which was free of charge. The course ' Working with People to Improve General Practice in Primary Care' is a two week, 6 hour course, and Deirdre advised that she would send out the link to all PPG members.
7. **Any other business** - The group discussed the possibility for a medic to attend the meetings, but it was confirmed by Katie that due to high workloads, no-one had the time to give to the meetings. It was felt that, as the main topics were administration, and Katie was the practice representative, that GP attendance, although useful, was not really necessary.

Anne asked if there was anything that the PPG could do to help the practice in any way i.e. at a previous meeting it was discussed that the surgery would like to expand or move to larger premises, but that this has been refused by the council. Anne suggested a petition could be organised and overseen by the PPG, if it was felt that this could help. Anne asked Katie if she could feed this back to the GPs, as there may be other areas in which the PPG could help.

8. **Dates of meetings for 2025** - there was a short discussion as to the best weekday to have the PPG meetings. It was decided that for 2025 the group would continue to meet on Mondays.

Therefore meetings for 2025 (all on Mondays) would be 28th April, 30th June, 22nd September, 24th November

The meeting then closed with agreement that the next meeting would be on Monday 28th April at 1pm at 1300 in the Reception.