



West Area Health Forum

Wednesday 18 November 2020, 10-11:30 via Zoom (online meeting)

1. Welcome and introductions

There were 29 people in attendance. Apologies were received from Martyn Yeats (Links Road Patient Participation Group (PPG) and Brighton and Hove PPG Network member and Health Representative for this Forum

Please contact Forum facilitator Joanna on joanna.martindale@hkproject.org.uk or 01273 881446 at any time with agenda ideas, comments, feedback or questions.

2. Updates and news from partner Practices, representatives and Patient Participation Groups (PPGs)

Wish Park Medical Centre

Greg (Practice Manager) reported the Practice:

- Had vaccinated 80%+ of people aged 65+ who were eligible for a 'flu vaccination; with 1,344 patients vaccinated/offered one and they declined.
- Had done 454 of 475 'flu vaccinations for people with long term conditions who were more at risk (e.g. people with diabetes).
- Had maintained staffing capacity, and was still completing GP training, but taking on new staff was incredibly difficult due to the logistics of arranging training and somewhere for them to sit in line with social distancing requirements.
- Had several GPs interested in joining their team, but there were no vacancies.
- Had a new Pharmacist and new Occupational Therapist (OT) starting the following week; who would primarily support the 7 care homes they were now managing.
- Had experienced very few staff Covid cases, and absences remained low; but he was concerned about burn out in the winter as staff had not been able to have a proper break over the summer.
- Had received notice of resignation (for 2021) from one Nurse.
- Was still offering the majority of usual services including physiotherapy, hearing, daily health clinics, and mental health support.
- Now had a fairly stable patient list of c7,500 people (following a slight drop at the start of the first lockdown because they were unable to register new people).
- Was experiencing low cases of Covid amongst patients given its list size.
- Was working with a GP in Haywards Health (through its partnership with Sussex Community Foundation Trust (SCFT)) to complete dedicated health checks for people with Learning Disabilities.
- Had seen a spike in mental health cases in all age groups (with one GP doing 5 referrals for serious mental health issues on one particular day, compared to a

historic average of 1 a month), due to additional stresses such as home working or lockdown in abusive environments. This is also affecting GPs' time and wellbeing.

- Had seen an increase in complaints, including in areas outside of its control (such as increased waits for hospital referrals, due to the Covid backlog), and a general feeling of frustration with the NHS.
- Needed patients to be supportive during these uncertain times, with increasing demand due to winter and Covid-related pressures, and not to contact the Surgery unnecessarily (e.g. to chase hospital referrals) as this could affect capacity for other people's care.

Links Road Surgery

Steve (Practice Manager) reported the Practice:

- Had seen a steep increase in daily positive Covid results over the last few weeks, but numbers were still generally low.
- Had repurposed a Nursing room as a "hot room" facility, with direct access from outside for people with Covid symptoms/diagnosis who still need medical attention.
- Was finding it challenging to manage the risk of staff catching Covid in such a small building, including finding enough space to run all necessary clinics, and may need to explore home working for some staff in the future.
- Had seen one Nurse (Una) retire after 25 years.
- Had a new, highly-skilled, almost full-time Healthcare Assistant (HCA) doing a lot of Nurse activity (e.g. dressings).
- Had a new Receptionist starting in December to partially fill a vacancy that had been held since March (due to Covid).
- Had a first contact Physiotherapist starting soon, running 1 session a week.
- Had a part-time Pharmacist in place via the Primary Care Network (PCN).
- Had been given approval from Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group (B&H CCG), via the PCN, to upskill a staff member to become a Social Prescriber.
- Was receiving an overwhelming number of phone calls, and had ordered a new phone system (the same as Portslade Health Centre's) for 2021 as Reception was struggling to cope with the volume of calls.
- May look at setting up an off-site phone service across Practices in the future.
- Was seeing a large increase in mental health concerns, across all age groups.
- Was seeing very high expectations and demands from patients, despite activity being busier than ever before; which was making staff feel caught in the middle.
- Was keen to increase its list size, but couldn't do so for the foreseeable future due to the current lack of premises to expand into.
- Had done 1,100 'flu vaccinations already (their most ever) and still had more to do.
- Was keen to support the Covid vaccination programme; including the proposal to set up a vaccination base at Portslade Health Centre.

Benfield Valley Healthcare Hub (BVHH) (including Burwash Surgery)

Louise (Deputy Practice Manager) reported the Practice:

- Had introduced an online appointment-booking service in April; which sent GPs the information directly, and freed up phones for people who couldn't get online. Louise encouraged anyone who was able to get online to start using this service.
- Was still open and offering face-to-face appointments (based on a triage by a GP, and a risk assessment of each person's circumstances), despite media messages of Practices closing lockdown (which had caused concern for patients).
- Had unfortunately had to cancel or reschedule some Nursing appointments due to several Nurses needing to isolate due to Covid. Louise apologised for this.
- Had two GPs leaving in the next month (Dr Bamford and Dr Larsson), and two GPs currently on maternity leave (with Dr Baiyat due back in January 2021).
- Was continue to use Dr Nash as a Locum for 3 days a week.
- Was finding it difficult to interview and train new staff due to Covid restrictions, but had recruited a new Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) and a Nurse who was a recognised specialist in sexual health.
- Was also seeing very high patient expectations, despite staff trying their best.
- Had vaccinated most 65+ year olds against 'flu, including all housebound patients, and was awaiting national guidance regarding vaccinating people aged 50-64.

Hove Medical Centre

Richard (Practice Manager) apologised for missing the last Forum and reported:

- The Practice had done more 'flu vaccinations than previous years (with nearly all stock used already); but the Government's announcement that 50-64 year olds were now eligible had been difficult to manage, as people had assumed they were immediately available (the vaccines usually have a 12 month lead-in order time).
- Dr Naush Husain had joined as a salaried GP in March (just before the lockdown).
- Dr Ruth Skipper (GP Registrar) and Kirsty Bush (Nurse Practitioner) were both currently on maternity leave.
- Two new GP Registrars had joined (Dr Jessie Drake and Dr Brian Mudamburi).
- The new Practice Nurse (Mary Zaloumis) was part-time, as she also worked at the hospital.
- Florence Ashaye (Physicians Associate) was currently being trained.
- Nabiha Butt (Clinical Pharmacist) was being trained to become a Prescriber.
- They were holding video interviews for a new Receptionist, as two reception staff had left (one due to early retirement and one for childcare reasons).
- All staff were working flat out, and had adapted well to the new ways of working; but he was concerned about staff morale, despite them all working well together, due to increased pressures across Primary and Secondary Care (i.e. hospitals).
- B&H CCG had been incredibly supportive around all of the Covid-related changes.
- The Practice has seen an increase in workload this year, and is still seeing same number of patients via video or face-to-face appointments. Staff are overloaded.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of patient complaints (but without any general themes).
- The low number of Covid cases amongst staff (two to date) indicated that the PPE and infection control processes are working. Patient infection rates are also low.

The Forum discussed the anticipated increases in substance misuse, mental health issues and loneliness due to the impact of the lockdown. Andy Crosby said Headway had seen a significant increase in mental health and substance misuse issues amongst the people it worked with (who had brain injuries). Dawn Newman-Shelley confirmed this was also the case for the Healthy Living Team's clients. The Practice Managers noted they were unable to provide any associated statistics for this without completing some research. Jo noted all HKP staff had completed suicide awareness training, as we at HKP have had contact with several people with suicidal ideations in the community.

Several people reported hearing positive feedback and support from local residents about Practices continuing to deliver excellent services, including managing 'flu vaccinations and supporting people with brain injuries, despite the Covid pandemic. Bob Deschene offered Healthwatch's assistance to help Practices explain to patients that they were still very busy, to combat the negative public view from the media.

Roger raised a concern about a woman in her 80s who had forgotten to take a mask to her appointment in her Practice (due to anxiety about her booked procedure) being sent away from the Surgery to buy a mask from a local shop before they would admit her. It was suggested that all Surgeries should have spare masks available for people who forgot one (e.g. due to anxiety).

Jo noted Mile Oak's Practice Manager was unable to attend the Forum because he did not work on Wednesdays but that she would explore ways of making sure they were included

3. Track and Trace and Public Tracker

Becky Woodiwiss, Public Health Principal, Public Health shared a presentation about the number of Covid-19 cases in Brighton and Hove, and the NHS Track and Trace public tracker. The slides from this presentation can be found on the HKP website.

Becky noted that people with a positive Covid test result had reported experiencing symptoms ranging in severity from nothing (asymptomatic) through to long-lasting Covid, which can continue to affect people's health for a significant amount of time.

Becky explained the smaller number of cases identified in March and April 2020 was due to the old testing strategy; which only tested people who were ill enough to be admitted to hospital (Pillar 1), and did not include cases in the community (Pillar 2). Current hospital cases are low but increasing; which is highly concerning as the people who experience significant Covid symptoms can become seriously ill.

Becky noted that infection rates (including a breakdown by age group) were one of aspects the Government had used to determine the geographical Tiers of Covid-related restrictions. Rates in Brighton and Hove have increased during autumn, with 513 cases in the 7 days before 11 November 2020 (176.4 cases per 100,000 people).

Becky noted the 0-14 age group was disproportionately weighted because it included anyone whose age hadn't been recorded. The age group with the highest infection rate (15-29) spiked in September and October as it includes secondary school and university students and young people just starting work. The Universities have been working with students to adapt their behaviours, and the rates are starting to reduce.

Becky noted that Public Health was particularly concerned about the high infection rate in people aged 60+ (including those in the community and care home residents), as that group was at most risk of suffering severe affects. It was noted that the local rate was still lower than the national average, but had recently increased significantly.

Becky confirmed Public Health was reviewing all positive cases and taking targeted, positive action in specifically identified areas (such as nursing homes and schools). It was noted that the majority of infection transmissions in workplace settings seemed to be happening during break- and lunchtimes.

Becky explained that anyone experiencing symptoms (a high fever, a new, persistent cough and/or a loss of taste and smell) should immediately isolate themselves at home and register for a test. Currently, only people with symptoms should apply for a test. People without symptoms should not request a test (even if they get a message from Track and Trace). Although Liverpool is currently trialling wide-spread testing for everyone, this will not be done in Brighton until the outcomes of the trial are identified.

You can apply for a home test online, or register to attend a test site. You must register before visiting a test site. Drive-in test sites are at Plumpton Racecourse and Withdean (only on weekdays), and drive-/walk-in sites are at East Brighton Park and the old King's School site in Portslade. Becky confirmed anyone getting a lift to a test site should wear a mask in the car, open the windows, and use hand sanitiser.

Becky stated the Covid test is self-administered, and reassured that it is not as bad as the media suggest. You use a swab to gather cells from the back of your tonsils and then up inside your nose. Most people receive their results in 24 hours, via phone or email. People without internet access can nominate someone to receive their results.

The Forum discussed concerns about people who were not wearing face masks (especially on buses), and staff in supermarkets/on transport not enforcing this rule. Becky confirmed public transport staff were well briefed on the requirements, and Public Health staff were working across the City to remind and encourage people to wear a face covering. Becky confirmed Public Health wanted to work with everyone in the City to share the messages regarding transmission of the virus (through droplets, aerosol, and droplets on surfaces), and thanked all of the people who are wearing masks and keeping the advised distance from others.

It was noted that some people were exempt from wearing face coverings due to a disability or learning difficulty. Steve Cribb invited people who were unable to wear a mask to contact Links Road Surgery, as they had a few surplus plastic visors. Andy

Crosby suggested promoting use of the Sunflower Lanyard scheme for people with a disability, as an easy way to show their exemption from the face mask rule. Becky highlighted the importance of continuing to be kind to each other throughout the pandemic; especially due to the on-going effect on people's mental health.

Becky explained the NHS Test and Trace system includes three Tiers. People who provide their contact details are called by Tier 3 call-handlers to do a risk assessment of the timeframe when they may have been infectious (which can start before symptoms appear), their living arrangements, and anyone they've been in contact with in that time. Tier 2 tracers try and make contact with people who Tier 3 tracers have not been able to contact. Tier 1 call-handlers speak to people in high-risk settings (e.g. care workers and teachers). They are currently managing to talk to 80% of positive national Covid cases. BHCC are setting up a local tracing partnership to check in with all reported Covid cases, clarify what they need to do, provide a local call-back number, and signpost people to any help they may need (e.g. for food shopping) via local services.

Becky noted the Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) website was regularly updated with the most recent data, guidance, and information related to Covid-19 (at <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19>) and included a set of FAQs for Test and Trace: <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/nhs-test-and-trace> It is worth noting that reported data is always slightly delayed, due to lags on recent test results.

Becky shared a link to the national isolation guidelines for people with Covid symptoms and those living with/who had been in contact with someone with Covid: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

4. Primary Care Network (PCN) update

Dr Rowan (GP at Portslade Medical Centre and West Area Primary Care Network (PCN) Clinical Lead) reported on the latest progress from the PCN (which had now been established for c18 months). This included:

- Working on the PCN's contractual requirements, focused on national and local areas of need and health inequalities. This has recently focused on resuming the cancer work (referral rates dropped in March 2020 due to Covid); starting with a meeting between the Practices to review the referral and screening processes.
- Working with the Learning Disabilities team in Brighton to promote health checks and education to improving services for people with Learning Disabilities (who often have underlying health conditions), who have been found to be 6 times more likely to die from Covid.
- Employing 4.5 Pharmacists to work across all Practices and help with medicines queries.
- Working with SCFT to introduce Occupational Therapists (OTs) at Wish Park Surgery; principally to help with nursing home patients, but also with others.

- Integrating Physiotherapists into the PCN, to provide instant access to their expertise and remove the historic 6-week wait for access after a referral.
- Working with Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust (SPFT), as the lead provider for local mental health services, since April to set up a pilot site of first contact mental health Practitioners (including counsellors and other specialists). This is hoped to be in place from April 2021 (with the site yet to be confirmed), and the PCN is keen to progress this as mental health affects everyone at some point in their lives. Rowan noted there is awareness of insufficient funding being put into mental health services (especially in the community).
- Exploring potential solutions to the current lack of sufficient premises, including asking B&H CCG about adapting the space above Wish Park Surgery, and asking people to visit a different Practice to access a particular specialist or service.
- Doing outreach with HKP to Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, as B&H CCG had recognised multicultural communities were more at risk of Covid. Practices are also being encouraged to sign up to a scheme to help people from BAME communities with more holistic solutions (such as weight loss and diabetes control) and utilise their Social Prescribers to refer people to community (instead of medical) solutions, including participating in their Practice's PPG, local community groups and the Forum.
- Applying for permission to use some space at Portslade Health Centre as a site for Covid vaccinations (currently the only potential site in the City). It was noted if this did not happen, there was unlikely to be a central place for vaccinations locally.

Tory (PCN Operations Manager) confirmed the PCN had also appointed two Social Prescribers to work across all the Practices, and agreed to take John Kapp's offer for the PCN to rent some of his premises at 86 Church Rd back to the PCN to discuss.

Sharon (HKP Health Champion and our PCN's Patient Representative) noted she felt privileged to be part of the PCN Board, and encouraged everyone with colleagues who were not PPG members to promote the chance of getting involved through the West Area Health Forum. Anyone interested in contacting the HKP Health Representatives can do so via Jo Martindale.

5. Community Learning Courses and previous HKP Projects

Katie reported that HKP had set up two Community learning courses (so far) in response to the feedback received from during a local door-knocking exercise that had been completed over the summer. Both courses are free to participants, and include a 5-week Wellbeing course, being run in partnership with MIND Brighton and Hove (now fully subscribed) and a 5 week taster course for HKP's regular weekly Shape Up classes.

The activities being offered by local community groups over the winter are now listed on HKP's website, including new leaflets about the West Area Multicultural Activities and Groups (<https://www.hkproject.org.uk/docs/news/2020-11-12-MulticulturalActivitiesLeafletNov20-Jan21.pdf>) and Hangleton and Knoll 50+ Steering

Group (<https://www.hkproject.org.uk/docs/news/2020-11-05-HK50+Activities-Nov20Jan21Covid-19Offer.pdf>)

Katie confirmed the final report detailing the peer volunteering health promotion pilot HKP had run during 2019-20, focused on improving cancer screening rates, was now live on the HKP website at: <https://www.hkproject.org.uk/docs/news/2020-10-11-FINALCancerVolunteeringPilotEvaluationReport.pdf>

6. Cardiovascular Disorder project: SPICES

Jo noted that, since the cancer screening peer volunteering project, HKP had been offered a similar opportunity to work in partnership with Brighton and Sussex Medical School to train volunteers to offer peer support in the community about cardiovascular disease. The pilot is called **Scaling-up Packages of Interventions for Cardiovascular disease prevention in selected sites in Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa (SPICES)** Anyone interested in joining the SPICES project about cardiovascular health, or learning more about cardiovascular risk, can contact Jo Martindale or Katie Merrien at HKP. Training will happen in the new year, four sessions via Zoom. This month 6 volunteers (incl from the cancer screening project) will meet with researchers to 'co produce' how this will look exactly on our patch. Possibly choosing a new name!

7. Arts Opportunities in Hangleton

Jo noted that HKP had worked with Brighton Festival for a number of years to ensure there were arts opportunities in the West of the City. With HKP support, local people have formed an Arts Steering Group to enable this work and support local arts groups. Jo reported HKP had a chance to bid for more funding for additional Arts work, which could work with Practices' Social Prescribers to link people into the community and hopefully remove some of the pressure from GPs due to Covid's impact on mental health. General agreement this would be very positive if possible.

John noted he was interested in joining the Arts steering group, and possibly linking in his i360 Sundial Project arts project: www.i360sundial.org.uk

8. Any Other Business

Health Inequalities

Jo reported NHS Charities Together was distributing the money raised for the NHS by Sir Captain Tom via a number of charities, and HKP were planning to bid in partnership with other deprived areas of the City to identify potential solutions for health inequalities experienced.

Andy Crosby offered to share health inequalities information regarding brain injuries with Jo, as they were not considered a learning disability or a health condition.

Plot 22

Rita noted that Plot 22 had put more restrictions in place since the second lockdown, even though it is outdoors, to ensure the safety of its volunteers and visitors. Plot 22 has found isolated people are getting a huge benefit from the allotment, including

being around other people and being in nature. Plot 22 now offer even more flexible sessions due to some funding, including sessions for small groups, parents and pre-school children, nature sessions for young children, women-only sessions, and sessions at the weekend. Anyone interested in attending for a single taster session can contact info@plot22.org or visit <http://www.plot22.org/>

Albion in the Community

Sue Brown shared details of Albion in the Community's current offers, including the Neighbourhood Health Squad, Cancer Awareness Training for Social Prescribers, and Speak Up Against Cancer.

The Neighbourhood Health Squad is a team of expert wellbeing coaches and nutritionists looking to help people boost their physical and mental wellbeing during lockdown and beyond. They offer up to 8 free 1:1 or group sessions to help people make little changes in their health and wellbeing and improve their short- and long-term health. Sessions are held online, by phone, or while walking outside (for 1:1 support only, in line with Covid regulations). Areas of support include: being more active; nutrition advice; weight management; stopping smoking; managing long term health conditions, and; supporting your overall wellbeing. For more information, call 01273 878269 or email neighbourhoodhealth@albioninthecommunity.org.uk

Albion in the Community's Cancer Awareness Training package has been developed with Macmillan Cancer Support for Social Prescribers and Link Workers in Sussex. The course takes 6-7 hours (at the learner's own pace, in bite-sized chunks), provides up-to-date information about the needs of anyone affected by cancer, and aims to:

- Improve learners' confidence in their knowledge of cancer, it's treatments and the cancer pathway;
- Support learners in becoming more familiar with signs and symptoms of cancer;
- Help learners understand what people affected by cancer might be going through;
- Improve learners' confidence in talking to people affected by cancer, and signposting them to additional help and support;
- Empower learners to provide effective and compassionate support for clients that are affected by cancer; and
- Start developing a local network of Social Prescribers who have done this training.

Learners are required to join a follow-up discussion group, hosted by Albion in the Community and Macmillan Cancer Support, to discuss any queries or concerns and complete case study exercises; bringing to life the knowledge they gain in the online learning. They are then given access to an information and advice site to help them support their clients in all cancer-related matters (e.g. diet, exercise, psychological support, money, housing issues and details of local support services). To register and find out more see <https://aitcmacmillansptraining.thinkific.com/courses/macmillan-social-prescribing-training>

The Speak Up Against Cancer team's online sessions raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of cancer, and help people overcome the barriers to getting help when

it is needed, by local cancer survivor volunteers sharing their personal experience of early detection of cancer and inspiring others to take notice of changes in their bodies and seek support. The options include tailored, one-hour group presentations, drop-in talks about cancer awareness as part of an existing online meeting, and staff and wellbeing team training sessions (including paid and volunteer workforces). The team also offer 1:1 follow-up support to any employees with concerns or further questions.

BHCC Community Health Trainer offer

Dawn Newman-Shelley confirmed that the Community Health Trainers were seeing an increasing number of clients with mental health issues, more issues with alcohol, and a few people with long-term Covid effects. The service is still open for referrals, but currently only offering sessions by telephone. Dawn confirmed her colleagues (Mandy and Susan) worked with local GPs to signpost people to the service, whilst she worked with Hangleton residents, carers and people from BAME communities.

NHS111 and A&E

Mike Dixon asked if Brighton had a triage service for people to call before going to A&E (using 999 or 111) as, when he had fractured his foot while on the Isle Of Wight, he had been required to do a 111 telephone assessment before going to A&E (and 111 had then arranged his A&E visit). Jo confirmed there was a new 111 service that could book a direct A&E appointment but noted that so far we haven't had any patient feedback about how it was going here.

Online Meditation Classes

John Kapp noted an interest in setting up a free/donation-based online meditation course for anyone who was interested. Jo confirmed HKP would look at John's offer to determine if it would be of interest to local residents.

Future Forums on Zoom

Jo invited everyone to share their ideas for improving how the Forum worked online. Keith and Nick said they found online meetings more useful, as it was easier to hear people and share updates in the Chat window. Mike asked to include a quick round of introductions in future. It was proposed that representatives from the Practice could add their Surgery details to their name on Zoom.

Jo thanked everyone for attending, and invited them to send her any further queries if they didn't have time to raise them.

The next Forum meeting will be held from 10am on 3 March 2021.