

## Health Forum Minutes - Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023 10am-12pm

- 1) Welcome and Introductions, minutes of the last meeting.

There were 48 people in attendance.

Apologies: Martin Yeats, Joyce Gould, Emma Bourlet, Lisa Winney, Dawn Bamforth

The minutes were agreed as accurate.

- 2) Dr Rowan Brown – Access and Capacity (all about appointments) in Primary Care. Overview and discussion

Dr Rowan gave an overview of the PCN plans around access and capacity of appointments with the opportunity to feed in thoughts and comments.

Access and capacity to appointments is a long-standing issue which all practices must manage. This has formally come to the fore with a NHSE directive requesting that all practices must look at capacity and identify improvements. The West Hove area has adopted this perspective for some time, with several government initiatives implemented in recent years. Overall, the Brighton area has had difficulty recruiting GPs - with less new Drs joining general practice and GP numbers falling as GPs retire.

Some of the measures adopted have been to utilise additional roles in GP practices e.g. paramedics, pharmacists, physios, social prescribers, mental health specialists etc. These roles have become slowly embedded in practices and enabled the workforce to increase significantly.

This GP model differs greatly from the past but recognises that a mixture of skill sets creates valuable knowledge. There has been over £1m investment in these roles locally. Practices have changed to adapt to this model. There is now increased overlap with different professionals compared with before. GPs now act as supervisors for these professionals. Aim is it leads to better patient outcomes, albeit it is a different way of being consulted. Balance is between utilising resources with what is important for the patient.

The other biggest change has been utilisation of digital technologies e.g. phone, internet, text messaging. This has increased consultation capacity for GPs. Generally, there is a blend of telephone and face to face consultations. Important to remember that patients need to be kept at heart of it all, by working efficiently with technologies but understanding they are not for everyone.

Questions raised:

Cllr Faiza - If being seen by a professional other than a qualified GP is there a GP on duty to support?

- a) Every practice differs, however, every healthcare professional works within the remit of their skills and refers accordingly. The professionals in these additional

roles are highly qualified but the GPs review all their patients. There are network trainers for all practices to train new GPs, so these roles are treated in a similar way with all their patients supervised. Eventually they will become more autonomous e.g. prescribing certain medications.

Mark – Often receives comments that there are more part-time GPs now which is affecting capacity?

- a) There were more fulltime GPs, predominantly male, 20 years ago. Societal changes mean there are now more female GPs, so it has increased part-time roles. This has led to adapting how people work. However, there are lots of benefits and we embrace parttime workers and younger Doctors who want to pursue 'portfolio' careers which support their ability to prevent burnout.

One resident questioned whether she should just wait to hear from GP after being seen by a consultant, as has been some time waiting to hear about the follow up.

- a) This sounds like communication issue as there is likely to be a clinical reason why the surgeon has decided not to operate. GP's have limited time to write for referrals and it may have got lost in the system on this occasion. Recommend referring to your GP after contacting to see if on the waiting list first. There are phone numbers to check if on a waiting list.

Dawn reported that some residents in H&K are waiting 2-3 weeks for an appointment.

- a) Generally, anyone can see a GP. Most practices will identify if it is an emergency because GP's should not be used as an emergency service. The perception about not troubling GPs is important and if you are worried you should contact your GP. Important diagnostic tests are offered in surgeries, but these should not be identifying emergency heart attack cases.

Are MOTs/Health Checks still happening?

NHS health checks have been a bit neglected because of the pandemic and capacity. This is a priority within our PCN as preventative measures are critical. There is a team of healthcare assistants and pharmacists dedicated to focusing on high-risk patients/those in deprived areas/those that don't traditionally access healthcare. It operates out of Mile Oak and HK residents may be contacted by the PCN to participate.

Jo highlighted that this PCN is proactive and encouraged everyone to attend the health event on Oct 14<sup>th</sup> at St Richards to have their BP taken, enjoy some nice healthy snacks and massage treats. A physio will be available too.

HKP are running a blood pressure project with the PCN until end of March.

Residents are encouraged to buy a machine, HKP will have some to give away and holding loads of events where BP can be taken and onward referral supported if necessary.

Jo advised that a summary of GP patient surveys has been provided (attached as an appendix) This survey is a national survey sent out randomly. Although there are small numbers of respondents it gives an indication about issues in area. Practice managers will provide comments on their results with their updates.

- 3) Surgery and PCN updates Portslade, Mile Oak, Wish, Links, Hove Medical Centre, Benfield 30 mins

#### Hove Medical Centre - Rick Jones

Been there since Feb and job shares with Richard Gravestock. Improved access by employing paramedic, pharmacist, mental health worker, physio, which means there are more initial questions so the patient can be signposted to best person. Have had problems getting access to appointments because of recruitment issues affecting capacity. Recruiting two part time GPs that should join mid oct. Had too many trainees (6) at one time that led to a lack of appointments, because of the GP supervision required. Now back to 4 trainees which is maximum.

Additionally, had admin shortages –just recruited Communications Officer. Also recruiting for 1-2 new receptionists. More training happening to ensure everyone is signposting safely, especially for the front-line staff. 2-3 clinicians working from home every day because of space issues which means that sometimes initial contact with GP is via phone. Need to improve speed at getting in front of them.

Q Cllr Faiza - how do you respond to patients that feel uncomfortable sharing medical issues with reception staff?

- a) Need to know headline information only to ensure they speak to/see the right person. Most people are happy to do this.

Jo commented that the lack of space/privacy issues at HMC has been raised at this forum over many years as we have tried to support HMC in their vision to expand. It causes many issues because the surgery space is not big enough for the number of patients at the practice.

#### Wish and Links Road - Steve Cribb

Maintaining excellent service at both surgeries. Three GPs on maternity at same time at Wish Park, which has been managed well. It is essential to protect clinical workforce because there are GP's leaving partnerships to become salaried GPs. Covid has increased workloads as well as bringing about changes. Important to understand the receptionist role has changed immeasurably. Lots of training and support is given to ensure patients are seen by right person. Recruited another new paramedic, Scott, at Links Road, to cover both surgeries and is being trained by Tom.

Q Cllr Amanda – What facility is there to replace GPs on maternity leave?

- a) The response varies – potentially employ a locum GP for a prolonged period to ensure continuity. Holiday cover is different – missing sessions are covered with locums but won't necessarily have continuity so avoid this where possible.

### Portslade Health Centre – Tracy James

Highlighted that these eventualities are planned for, but it is not always possible to get locum cover, locum costs are very high and don't receive reimbursement or have surplus budget to cover the cost.

The survey indicates access is an issue, although respondents are relatively happy with the reception staff. The prescription and ordering pod closes end of month. Tried to manage by designated prescription line which receptionist will dial into as funding for the pod has ceased. There is a premises plan for Portslade HC, which has been provisionally approved for a funding grant. There will be provision for 6 new ground floor clinic rooms and the reception desk, with back-office staff to be situated upstairs. Everyone in PCN will be sharing with West Hove PCN. Need to work out which surgeries will run from Portslade. New website is going well, patient contact forms has helped. Flu clinics on 30<sup>th</sup> Sept and 7<sup>th</sup> Oct. Encouraging use of NHS app for prescription orders. 2 outstanding vacancies - secretarial and phlebotomy.

8 Portslade patients got the NHS app at Friday Health digital drop in.

Liz, reported that she had tried to access blood results from 15<sup>th</sup> August via the website, but they are not there. There was a very long delay in getting an answer via phone, with over 1 hour 20 minutes waiting in a queue. Aware that the general rule is that if there is a problem patients will get contacted, but no one has and still no results.

- a) Can't answer specifics about an individual case. If patients can use the NHS app results are uploaded. This implies the results haven't come back. Tracy will investigate. It is correct that patients are not contacted where there is no concern. Drs are informed and would be in contact if there are any issues.

Nancy: as a patient and local person in relation to ACT on cancer, shocked at the paradox of so many amazing things happening in UK, yet others are lost in translation. Need to come together and resolve this.

Sharon – highlighted that colleagues being present at this forum hearing what patients are saying and identifying weaknesses is a step in the right direction.

Mike – felt it is great surveys are issued but disappointed in participation rates. Only 32% took part Mile Oak.

Jo responded that although it is a small sample 30-35% response is about national average. It still reflected issues that had happened e.g. at Wish Road and Mile Oak. Echoed Sharon's thoughts that practices should look carefully at data and try to make improvements. This forum helps everybody remember there is pressure on all

sides as well as the whole health system, we try and improve what is within our power.

Cat explained that the survey is commissioned by NHS annually. PCN's could conduct their own survey as appreciate very low numbers.

- 4) David Golding – Census statistics for Brighton and Hove overview and discussion 30 mins

David is an Analyst at the Public Health Intelligence team. David gave a presentation of the Brighton & Hove Census statistics (slides attached).

Jo requested people send her any further questions after the meeting.

- 5) Erin Barton Our Future Health – National Research Programme in Brighton

Erin introduced 'Our Future Health' which is the UK's largest ever health research campaign. Aim is to collect information and samples from up to 5m adults across the UK. The research data collected will enable patterns of disease to be predicted, detected, and treated earlier to create better outcomes. They are partnered with the NHS, Boots, and blood donation centres. The campaign will include GP endorsed sms/emails, non-personalised letters to whole households, media advertising – with sign up via the website. A consent form will be required to sign up along with a health form and physical measurements e.g. blood pressure, height and weight, blood tests etc. This will be via an appointment at Boots North Street or the blood donation centre at Shoreham. Can opt out at any point but the aim is to join for life.

800,000 people have signed up so far. Targeted outreach is a potential route to increase participation in the future. The diversity of the research population is really important to reach all backgrounds and ethnicities, especially those that typically don't take part i.e. low income, BME, young people. Lots of community engagement will take place. Any ideas how to raise awareness and reach people please contact Erin.

Mike commented that it is an excellent piece of work and exactly what is needed. He suggested that prizes may encourage participation. Erin confirmed they are trialling supermarket vouchers in certain parts of the programme. However, it is also important that the participants are invested for life and for the right reasons. Also, speaking to Albion in the Community and other community groups. For more information:

[www.ourfuturehealth.org.uk](http://www.ourfuturehealth.org.uk) or contact [erin.barton@ourfuturehealth.org.uk](mailto:erin.barton@ourfuturehealth.org.uk)

- 6) Carers Centre – Colette Stapleton

The Carers Centre Brighton & Hove offer support to those in unpaid caring roles. This includes anyone that is supporting someone wouldn't manage on their own without support. The centre works with all marginalised groups in communities to ensure they get the help they deserve. They carry out carers assessments, tailor support individually, signpost, make referrals to the council, offer support groups.

They also have a dedicated project to support young carers that are looking after an adult or sibling, which Colette is the primary care link worker for. There are a variety of posters/booklets for available and a Carers Champion programme. Details on the website.

Katie explained care link workers are in place, delivered by the Carers Centre, and integrated within the hospital discharge team at the County. This enables them to start to identify a person's carer, raise awareness of carers and put the relevant support in place.

Please link in with the carers centre if you know anyone that might benefit from their support. Contact:

[colette.stapleton@thecarerscentre.org](mailto:colette.stapleton@thecarerscentre.org) or [rosie.pryer-vaz@thecarerscentre.org](mailto:rosie.pryer-vaz@thecarerscentre.org)

- 7) Community news – October Health event, Ongoing IT drop in Sept and October and Cancer screening

Sharon explained the aim of the health event (flier at end of minutes) is to look at ways to further support patients and surgeries by raising awareness of patients' own health issues and enable them to self-manage those which are possible. It is supported by HKP and led by Claire Hines.

The whole of St Richards will be utilised and set up like a variety of market stalls, with a significant HERE health hub - blood pressure, glucose, cholesterol checks. There will be the opportunity to book therapeutic treatments, engage with other health professionals, social prescribers, physios etc. as well as free healthy snacks/refreshments. Dr Rowan and Bella Sankey - Leader of B&H council will be speaking to offer opening remarks. If anyone wants to come as a service provider, please contact Claire Hines [Claire.hines@hkproject.org.uk](mailto:Claire.hines@hkproject.org.uk)

Claire explained part of her role is to work for ACT on Cancer together, in partnership with TDC, Macmillan and HKP. Working as a pilot in Portslade and Wellbn GP surgeries, to improve screening uptake. It is breast cancer awareness month in October. Looking to recruit volunteers to cascade campaign materials as widely as possible across the city. Contact Claire if interested in being involved.

Also running a health IT drop-in on Fridays 11-1 at St Richards. This is increasingly important because accessing appointments and ordering prescriptions is through the NHS app. There was a good uptake from Portslade on Friday as there are a lot of residents anxious about the removal of the pod.

Aleya introduced her equalities inclusion work around perinatal care. She is recruiting 10 community members to capture their pregnancy and/or birth experiences to shape and improve future experiences for the ethnically diverse community. Also setting up a men's health wellbeing group. Held their first meeting in August, with a second planned for this month.

Aleya also highlighted other health focused work around blood pressure, diabetes, menopause, and dementia work. Further information on website and facebook pages.

Shelley Brown provided details of a new drop in for Brighton and Hove Speak Out in the west at Hove Methodist Church on Thursdays 10.30 – 11.30am term time. It is a drop in for those with learning difficulties. There is also a lunch club from 11.30 -1 cost £4

[www.bhspeakout.org.uk](http://www.bhspeakout.org.uk)

**Meetings 2023: 6<sup>th</sup> December**

**Meeting 2024: 27<sup>th</sup> March**

# BEING WELL IN THE WEST FREE WELLBEING EVENT



**Saturday 14th  
October  
10.30am - 1pm**

**Health Hub**

**Blood pressure checks  
Glucose &  
Cholesterol checks  
Drop in physio advice**



**Meet and chat to:**

**Healthy Lifestyles Team  
Social Prescribers  
Community Pharmacists  
Plus many more....**

**Come early and book  
your free treatment:  
Ear Acupuncture  
Hand Massage  
Shoulder/Neck  
Massage**

## FREE REFRESHMENTS AND HEALTHY SNACKS

Please contact Claire Hines for more information:

Tel: 01273 410858 [claire.hines@hkproject.org.uk](mailto:claire.hines@hkproject.org.uk)

ST RICHARDS COMMUNITY CENTRE, EGMONT ROAD, HOVE, BN3 7FP

Bus Routes: 2, 16 and 66

