



## Patient Participation Group Meeting Minutes

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024

Time: 13:30 – 14:30

Attendance: SR, LMc, VD, DZ, JE, LH, RT, CE, KA, JZ & BI

Apologies: ER, PL, GS

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Chair: SR

Putneymead (PGMP) Representative: Kieron Stewart (Chief Operating Officer)

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### **1. Putneymead Appointment System**

Practice introduced a new appointment system in November 2023, moving to a Total Triage Model. The intention was to have those able submit all medical request via our online consultation tool, with those unable calling through to the practice in the normal way, however all clinical requests being triaged by a GP for the most appropriate outcome for request made. The intended benefits were as follows:

- No patient being turned away
- All medical requests triaged and sent to the appropriate clinician saving wasted appointments
- Reduced demand on the telephone to allow staff to support our patients most in need
- Alleviate the 8am rush, offering our patients the same service throughout the practices core opening hours

This agenda item was to find out via our Patient Group their experiences since the inception of the new system, allowing the practice to review and put in place mitigations for difficulties where possible.

#### Patient Group Feedback

- System can be a bit clunky and slow
- One-way texts from practice to patient, making them unable to response to open dialogue which would bring efficiencies
- Online consultation tool has removed option to select clinician they would like to see
- When a patient expresses a means of communication it to be internally communicated if request is passed to another clinician
- Staff contacting patient to introduce themselves and their role
- Some calls coming from the practice appearing as 'withheld number'
- Website confusing as it offers AccuRx and Patient Access
- Self-check in screen not given accurate location of clinician

### **2. Digital Engagement**

Sue attended Boroughwide PPG Digital Engagement session where Healthwatch and Power to Connect were present. Gave overview of meeting discussion

Newly appointed, Wandsworth Digital Care Coordinator, joined the meeting to give a little outline of how role is to improve community digital engagement, with:

- Weekly Digital Engagement Drop-in sessions at Putney Library every Friday
- Lending Scheme: where patients can lend smartphone or tablet to improve digital engagement for periods of time

Putneymead will be advertising Digital Engagement Drop-in Sessions, on telephone and website.

### **3. Queen Mary (QMH) Phlebotomy Service**

Since QMH have changed their walk-in phlebotomy service to a pre-booked service, service users have found access more challenging and wanted to share experiences, being:

- Telephone access to make an appointment can leave you in queue for hours
- Long waiting times for appointment
- Patients having to chase blood request forms for appointments
- Putneymead pushing more patients to QMH and not providing enough internal phlebotomy appointments

KS has raised concerns with St George's Hospital and awaiting feedback, which will be relayed to PPG membership.

KS will review demand for phlebotomy appointments at Putneymead, with the view at increasing if demand outweighs capacity.

### **4. Reception Training for vulnerable/visually impaired patients**

PPG members have been attending the practice and noticed patients with impairments (specifically visual) are not adequately supported with the patient becoming overwhelmed/bewildered at the support offered by the reception team.

KS was aware of a specific scenario where a visually impaired patient attended and commented on the lack of support offered during visit to practice. KS has since spoken to reception team regarding being aware and proactive in supporting all patients when they enter the premises. Further discussing signs to look out for and how to adequately approach and support.

The practice is currently reviewing its accessible support and information it offers to patients with impairments, currently having induction hearing loops on all floors, website accessible in larger fonts, sign language interpreters available for pre-booked appointments and accessible parking bays. We are further reviewing ways we can support patients with impairments liaising with patients with impairments to understand how Putneymead can better support.

### **5. The role of Physician Associates**

There has been quite a lot of negative publicity around the role of Physician Associates and their ability to diagnose undifferentiated patients. PPG brought this to meeting to understand the role of the Physician Associate and how they supported, and patients medically protected.

Putneymead Group Medical Practice is a training practice and has been for many years offering vast experience in training and developing an array of specialist clinicians. When Physician Associates join Putneymead they are closely supervised by GP's to assess their clinical competence. They gradually increase the number of patients they see accordingly to treatment or the GP. All appointments made with Physician Associates are triaged first by a GP for clinical adequacy before being booked. All Physician Associates sessions are supervised by a GP who reviews diagnosis and treatment plans for patients as needed.

*Action: Website Practice Team page to be updated with Physician Associates*

## **6. Continuity of Care**

PPG brought the query of patient continuity and enquired what improvements are being put in place to improve continuity for patients who most need it.

All GP, Physician Associate and Nurse Practitioner appointments are now booked exclusively by our GP's offering more available to bring continuity to our patients who most need it. Currently, all GP's are divided into 5 teams A-E with all our patients are assigned to a team. Each team has GP partner overseeing and supported by a designated Care Coordinator. The purpose of a team is to support all clinical administration for each patient within the team ensuring each patient has the full understanding of a GP of their medical journey. Those patients assessed as having a high level of need will be assigned a specific GP and offered an annual review proactively. A flag is added to their record to alert the practice team to help ensure continuity for these patients. With our current Total Triage appointment system each patient request is assessed by a GP who will look at the urgency of the clinical presentation alongside the need for continuity for a specific problem.

## **7. Primary & Secondary Care Communication**

Patients attending secondary care appointments are finding that either the hospital do not have access to their medical records or the details of the consultation in secondary care is not adequately sent back to the GP.

Currently the practice has a system linked to clinical system called Cerner which allows access to some hospital records. Although this allows our GP's to access more information than ever before there are incidents where patient documents are not available through this system. Putneymead does not develop the system and has put mitigations in place to support circumstances when information does not come back to the practice, such as, our Care Coordinators are tasked with chasing of medical information from secondary care.

PPG agreed that until systems improved patients who were able should take responsibility for obtaining their own letters from consultants to share with either, other consultants at other trusts whose care they may be under and who do not have access to the information and ensure Putneymead has a copy of the letters.

## **8. Chairs in Waiting Room**

Currently the chairs in the waiting rooms (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> floor) do not have arm rests to support patients with mobility challenges.

*Action: Putneymead will review this and put chairs with arm rests in each waiting room with signage for priority seating*

## **9. PPG Chair**

Our current PPG chair has been in place for several years now and has put the chairing of the PPG to the group to see if there were any volunteers who would like to take over, with the view of stepping down.

*Action: Volunteers to approach current chair who will feedback to practice.*

## **10. Any other business**

PPG would like to write a letter to Healthwatch and Power to Connect regarding empowering patients to manage own care and be more digitally engaging.

*Action: PPG chair to support the development of the letter*