

## Sothall and Beighton Patient Forum

### Minutes of the meeting Wednesday 1st June at 6:30pm



**Chair:** Michael Lyall, Practice Manager  
**Practice staff:** Dr R Welch, GP Partner  
**Minutes:** Michael Lyall  
**Members Present:** DR, SR, CL, JM, RE, JS  
**Apologies :** SS, JF, DH, PH

ML opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and confirmed the group's agreement with the content of the minutes of the 01/06/2022 meeting

- 1. Welcome to our new members!** We posted a response on our practice FaceBook page regarding some of the general complaints which were circulating on social media regarding opening doors and restrictions etc. This post ended with a suggestion to join the Forum which has generated some fresh interest although only one of these attended today's meeting. Michael suggested that depending on how covid numbers progress we may consider recruiting more members
- 2. Weldrick's Pharmacy** we asked the Pharmacist to join our meeting for an update on the Pharmacy's current workload. Unfortunately, he was unable to attend today but will attend the next meeting if available
- 3. Question from one of our new Forum members;** how many calls do we receive to book triage calls in the mornings. Could there be a way to prioritize telephone calls in the morning and move other work around? Do other surgeries work in different ways / is there collaboration between practices regarding best practice. Michael provided some statistical graphs from W/C 23/05/2022 which showed that the practice answered 1337 calls and the average waiting time was 8 minutes. Michael explained that almost half of our reception team are relatively new, and we are continuing to improve the telephone service. All surgeries do work slightly differently, ranging from some who only offer on the day appointments on a first come first served basis, to some who offer everyone an appointment which, because of the huge demand at the moment means that these practices have huge waiting lists making it extremely difficult to see a GP for urgent matters. There are numerous companies offering solutions to this problem however we do not feel they offer an improvement that warrants the cost or would meet our patient's needs. We have invested a lot of time and effort to improve telephone access and are aware that there is more work to be done. In Summary we are under resourced and patient demand exceeds capacity which results in our service not always being able to offer all patients what they (or we) would like. We do try very hard to meet as much of this demand as possible which can be seen by the number of patients who are seen each week in the surgery. We also discussed the number of appointments which our Duty Doctor would contact in a typical day. We have a cut off at 40, once this is reached our reception staff are instructed only to add appointments which patients feel is a medical emergency as this is the only way we can ensure safe practice. Ideally, we would like to offer every patient who calls an appointment, but this simply would not be clinically safe. This list often extends to 60, many of these calls are not straightforward. Once all these patients have been spoken too, some will require urgent visits, some will need to be seen face to face and will be

offered appointments in the practice, that day if deemed clinically necessary. Our Duty Doctor is usually in work before 08:00am and sometimes finishes after 9pm.

4. **Staffing update** - our Network Physician Associate (PA) Samia Farhad is leaving us today. This is not unexpected as she has been working here and in Secondary care. She has decided to concentrate on secondary care in the short term. We are currently planning to recruit a replacement however as the moment we do not feel a PA would be the best fit for Sothall and are looking at other options.
5. **Extended access** - we discussed this during our previous meeting. Primary Care Sheffield (PCS) have proposed a solution which will allow some patients to access more services at the Woodhouse practice. These services are provided by the Network although we will be providing a proportion of the staff. They will be outside normal hours including evenings, weekends and bank holidays allowing Sothall (and other local practices) to retain their current opening hours. The out of hours hubs are all running at the moment and this new service will be an extension to both hours and number of available appointments. PCS are in the process of collecting patients views via a survey <https://www.facebook.com/SothallMC/photos/a.267777333632255/1304663369943641/?type=3&theater> which will help shape this additional service going forward.
6. **Covid spring booster (4<sup>th</sup> vac)** there have been numerous logistical vaccine delivery issues which have resulted in our Network being unable to vaccinate this cohort (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-spring-booster-resources/a-guide-to-the-spring-booster-for-those-aged-75-years-and-older-residents-in-care-homes> ) . Our staff have administered the majority of eligible housebound patients and our evidence suggests that 2/3 of eligible patients have attended the Nationally run vaccine clinics – We would encourage all eligible patients to book a vaccine which can be done here;- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) vaccination - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk) or by calling 119. Sheffield City Council are also offering free transport which is available if you call Sheffield City Cars and quote Sheffield City Council grab a cab <https://www.disabilitysheffield.org.uk/blog/free-cab-to-grab-a-jab-2022-03-01>
7. **Friends and Family test** this is long standing feedback tool used by NHSE to give patients an opportunity to comment on the service they receive. Our waiting room previously had a post box for these which was used more by children to post all sorts of things. We are currently trialing a new system whereby we will randomly send the questionnaire by text to some patients who have appointments in the hope that this improves the quality of the data collected, there are only two questions; - 1) Thinking about your recent appointment (or GP practice) overall how was your experience of our service? 2)Please tell us anything we could have done better. We also have a poster with a QR code in our waiting room. The survey can also be accessed via our website <https://sothall.net/friends-and-family-test/>

#### Other business

8. **Question time style event** there was a city wide event last year and there are plans to repeat this event. This event will have GP's, Managers and representatives from the CCG and other health agencies. Patients can ask questions to the panel. Details of this event will be shared with the Patient Forum and on social media once finalised.
9. **Q's from Forum member not attending today**;- Q1.'we need to get the message out there that you are seeing patients face to face when there is a need but that it's more efficient to triage. I think people believe what they read in the papers, that they still can't get to see a GP'. Michael explained that we have seen patients face to face through the pandemic, GP's have been seeing patients remotely or via a telephone call as we can 'see'

many more patients this way, where necessary a GP will bring patients into practice. We are currently working to streamline this service further and certain conditions will be booked immediately for a face-to-face appointment. We would ask that patients understand the constraints of the practice and trust that the appointment allocated for them is appropriate, Q2. Do we plan to revive the support groups for patients with specific illnesses? I'm interested if people would find this helpful and if it could be established? Michael explained to the group that around three years ago there was a CCG initiative to support patients through a programme called "Shared Appointments". Around 10 patients would all come to a one hour shared appointment. It was very popular with patients however they did take a lot of planning and administration. They were obviously stopped during the pandemic, and we are unsure if they will re-start. NHSE incentivise programmes such as this by providing additional funding allowing staff to try these new ideas. As things are at the moment, we are finding it increasingly difficult to meet the patient demand which tends to make staff less likely to attempt new ways of working. Should this be incentivised again we may well look at it again however it's unlikely in the short term. On a more positive note, we are back on track with our annual Long term condition (LTC) reviews and patients should receive an invitation for this review meeting on the Month of their birth. These annual reviews are important as we can identify how well patients are managing their condition and intervene where appropriate.

- 10. What's happening with the car park and could the bays be made larger?** The practice building is leased from a third party (Assura), they have noted that the car park requires some work and we are awaiting information from Assura as the car park is a shared area. Michael has chased this up several times and Assura have promised to raise the urgency of this. Michael will speak to Assura regarding the bay size however, as this is a shared area it may not be something we are able to influence.
- 11.** We briefly discussed the Practice Covid restrictions including face masks. Michael explained that staff are being more careful than non NHS staff as there are guidelines which we are following. Also, following current guidance we are forced to stay away from work if we have any symptoms of Covid. Previously we could return to work following a PCR test however this test is no longer available. A negative lateral flow test (LFT) is not considered reliable enough to allow a return to work. Essentially some of the measures that some patients feel are excessive, are designed to ensure we retain a workforce able to provide the service patients need. Even recently several practices in Sheffield had had such excessive staffing problems that they will only see 'emergency patients'.

Next meeting – Provisionally Wednesday 3rd August 2022, 6.30pm – 7.30pm

There being no further discussions, the meeting closed at 19.45

The patient Forum, formally known as the Patient Participation Group (PPG) is an excellent way for patients to engage with the practice and influence improvements. It allows the opportunity for patients to openly discuss issues they feel could be improved as well as providing the practice the opportunity to discuss these issues. We are always actively looking for new members. Meetings are usually every two months, usually at 18:30 – 20:00 on a Wednesday evening. There is no formal commitment to attend meetings regularly and there is always an opportunity to shape the meeting agenda even if you are unable to attend. The criteria for becoming a Forum member is that you are a registered patient at Sothall Medical Centre. If you are interested in joining this active, friendly group please visit our website and complete the very simple application form

[Sothall Medical Centre](#)