**MINUTES FROM THE HAMPTON HILL MEDICAL CENTRE PPG\* MEETING 27/11/21**

**Present**: Drs Anjlee Sekhon and Babeeta Staples (HHMC Partners); Rosie Page (Practice Admin); Hugh Rogers and Alison Young (Co-Chairs of the \*PPG/Patient Participation Group); Chris Saul, June Collins, Robert Piper (representatives from the PPG’s Working Group)

**UPDATE FROM HAMPTON HILL MEDICAL CENTRE (HHMC)**

**Appointments** – these are now evenly split between face-to-face and telephone appointments. Thanks to it being raised as an issue by the PPG, changes have been made to allow patients to book more than one type of appointment via Patient Access. The only types of appointment that CAN’T be booked online are urgent ones and bloods (the latter requires a GP request, even if it’s a regularly required test). Patients can book an appointment up to 6 weeks ahead (subject to availability) and can even choose which GP/practitioner they would like to see

**Website** – there have been various useful updates eg relating to ‘other’ services and self-referral services, and input from the PPG has been useful in improving the website’s clarity (comments on the content and ease of use are always welcomed by HHMC)

**Telephone queries** – since promoting the benefits of online access to information and services, telephone queries have reduced considerably (by c.1000 pm). This has meant a shorter waiting time for answering calls (many of which are urgent) and an improvement in the pressure felt by the staff who manage the phone lines. There is a triage system in place for calls requesting appointments or advice – staff are trained to ask the right questions about symptoms and a GP sits in the same room (a) to make sure that the process is being handled correctly (b) to answer staff queries and (c) to speak to patients as required (either to reassure or to make a professional judgement re next steps - such an urgent same-day appointment or a referral to the most appropriate source of help). ACTION: The volume and nature of emails from patients to HHMC will be analysed before the next PPG meeting.

**REQUESTING MEDICATION**

This has been available via the HHMC website or Patient Access for some time, in addition to submitting a written request to HHMC. There are also other web platforms that can be used, eg the NHS app and sites like HealthEra (which is linked to the pharmacy rather than to HHMC). PPG members raised some issues they had found, particularly when a medication request is rejected – they may not be alerted to this, and they do not receive any reason for it, so the only course of action in an emergency is to ring the surgery (increasing the workload for HHMC as well as frustrating the patient). ACTION: This is to be reviewed by HHMC with EMIS, the people who run the online system

**INTERNAL PROCESSES**

HHMC reported that, following points raised at the last PPG meeting, GPs met and discussed how they could streamline some internal processes in order to reduce workloads as well as improving patient satisfaction (eg the way that patient referral letters are handled)

**BLOOD TESTS**

PPG members said that a recent text to patients about blood tests at Ashford Hospital had been confusing and may have led patients to worry about whether they had an up-coming test or if a booked test had been moved from a surgery appointment to the hospital. In fact, what it meant to convey was that you can sometimes find it’s quicker to get a test done at Ashford (who handle our blood tests) and to do this you need to take your referral letter

**ALL THINGS COVID!**

**Long Covid:** Long Covid is when symptoms last for 12 weeks or more. Whilst we do not have huge numbers of patients who suffer from Long Covid, it can be very distressing for those who are badly affected (and their families). There are community clinics that can help and the most extreme cases are referred to one at Kingston Hospital. If required, one-to-one community support is available. Fatigue and breathlessness are among the typical longer term symptoms. Those more likely to suffer from Long Covid include the unvaccinated (a number of these may have become unwell before any vaccine was available, in the earlier months of the pandemic)

**Covid Vaccinations:** Obviously there is concern about the latest variant, but it is hoped that this can be managed well by even more people being fully vaccinated – there is another vaccination session at HHMC this Saturday (December 4th) that will also include some flu and shingles jabs, for those who qualify. The vaccination effort is now being extended to even more people, in line with new Government and NHS guidelines. Booster clinics are being held on 2nd and 9th December, with more to come. More staff have been trained u to give the vaccinations, so there is less reliance on GPs and nurses.

**Covid Symptoms:** As with every virus, Covid is evolving and the symptoms that were typical at the beginning of the pandemic are not the only ones to look out for – dizziness and/or vertigo (with or without a temperature), chilblains, rashes and, in children particularly, stomach problems. There may not even be a cough, in many instances. This means that some cases of Covid could be unrecorded.

**Covid Testing:** It is vital that anyone who has been in contact with a Covid patient, or who plans to go to a crowded event, or who believes that they themselves may have symptoms - gets tested!!!

The newer Lateral Flow tests are much simpler to do and can be ordered in batches of 7 from the NHS website so one should shy away from taking one. PCR tests are available in various locations in our neighbourhood and include at the rear of Teddington Hospital and at the St Mary’s sports ground near Lensbury (both need to be pre-booked online) and there is a new facility in the side road behind the White House in Hampton (near ‘little’ Sainsburys)

**FLU JABS**

With all the focus on Covid, people could be forgiven for thinking that they don’t need to bother about a flu jab this year, because flu is much less dangerous than Covid – but is it????! In fact it’s even more important to get protected this winter, because we’ve all been hiding away and our natural immunity is much lower than usual

Action – HHMC to do even more to communicate this, including putting a message up on the TV screen in the waiting room

**PRIMARY CARE NETWORKS (PCNs)**

These are the way forward for NHS practices – HHMC is now linked in network with Hampton Wick, Thameside and The Green practices for the purpose of sharing some services, best practice, and (in the event of an overload) spare capacity at other locations in the PCN. Patients will have seen this support network in action eg during the vaccination programme. The new initiative has also meant that practices are able to pool resources to appoint and use additional services, so we now have access to social prescribers, a health coach, and clinical pharmacists (with whom you will soon be able to book or be referred for an asthma review or a medication review and even appointments to discuss and treat minor ailments. All of this is aimed at making best use of pooled resources, thus helping patients to access the right support (and sooner) - while also giving our doctors more time to focus on those cases that really do require their input rather than anyone else’s.

Action – our PPG would like to meet key PPG representatives (and healthcare practitioners?) from the other practices in our PCN to share information. NB Hugh and Alison already know some from our involvement with the Richmond PPG Network, but have yet to talk to them about our PCN specifically (and maybe how the PPGs from this can help each other)

**HUGH ROGERS TO STAND DOWN AS CO-CHAIR OF OUR PPG**

Hugh has been a very able and respected Co-Chair for the past 3 years or more but, due to all his other commitments, feels the time has come for him to stand down. During his tenure, our PPG has become a vibrant patient group and a valued support to HHMC, and his input as Co-Chair will be sadly missed! Alison is willing to continue as the other Co-Chair but feels the role still needs to be shared (as this reduces the burden while also ensuring that there is a mix of experiences within the leadership pf the PPG) . After the meeting, Chris Saul (a valued member of the Working Group) volunteered to take the role, and the other members agreed that he was the right person for the job! Hugh will stand down at the next PPG meeting but has agreed to continue as a Working Group member, as and when his other commitments allow. We thank him for all his support and wisdom during his time in the role, and are very pleased that he will continue his association with the PPG!

**THE NEXT PPG MEETING WILL BE ON A SATURDAY IN 3 MONHS TIME (DATE TO BE CONFIRMED), STARTING AT 9.15 AND ENDING 10.15**

Minutes drafted by Alison Young, 1/12/21