**Notes from the PPG virtual meeting of**

**Tuesday, 14th September, 2021 held at 2.30 PM via zoom.**

The virtual meeting was chaired and organised by Bob Hackett. These notes will be added to the practice website for all patients to read.

There were just three patients present including the chair, with one apology. No representative from the practice (practice attends quarterly so will attend next meeting). My thanks to those attending and involved in this update.

**Topics covered and discussions plus some practice feedback *and queries.***

**1:** A patient queried as to why the practice is still advertising for patients whilst there is still a delay in getting appointments.

Ans:

i) To close the practice to new patients they would need to apply to the CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) who would need to be satisfied that the request was valid. If it was deemed valid then they could close for a defined period and would then have to open the list again. (Information supplied to me at the virtual CCG meeting of the 1th September, 2021).

ii) The practice is, and has been open, throughout the pandemic and sees patients, face to face, as clinical need dictates. This is mostly done via the triage system, common to ALL GP practices in the UK.

**2:** A another GP joined the practice on Monday 13th September, 2021.

Her name is Dr Nadia Yousif. Welcome Dr Yousif.

**3:** A Facebook page posted on line, from the Billericay Discussion Page, stated that a patient had tried to get a GP appointment and was unable to get one until early October. So they tried an APP to get a private one. They were offered one. With the same GP, on payment of a fee of £29.

This query was sent to me. I checked with our practice. It was not one of Laindon Medical Centre patients and our practice response is detailed below.

Ans:

Laindon Medical Centre does not offer, nor conduct private appointments.

All GP’s can, as with all professional services of any kind, offer private advice which is chargeable. This is as long as they complete the NHS contracted services. Laindon Medical Centre does not offer this private service.

There has been a private practice in Billericay for some years that does.

Be careful when using APP’s on line. They can be a source of fraud.

**4:** Some have difficulty still in getting an appointment to be seen.

***It would be nice to know how many people are on duty at any one time to answer phones. Joanne please advise.***

**[Surgery Response post meeting: Re item 4:** Getting an appointment.

We have 6 incoming lines and reception man these.  However, in times of staff shortage, due to sickness or annual leave, other staff within the practice cross-cover.]

Ans:

i) The ‘phones are busy and will cut off after a certain number of calls are queuing. The critical times are listed online on the website in a bold red notice; ‘Important Announcement’. Phoning back outside these times can help you.

Alternatively why not use the online link and send a request. Someone will ‘phone you back. To use it go to the section titled ‘Contact Us Online’.

Go into ‘I have an admin query then tick the appropriate box regarding symptoms. Then go into the ‘I need something else’ box and the leave a message with sufficient detail for your request to be assessed. Someone will ‘phone you back. Many patients have found this extremely useful.

**5:** Queuing outside whilst waiting for someone to come and collect you for your appointment is causing some crowding.

Ans:

i) I need to find out more information about how this process works. ***Joanne, please advise. Are patients booked in when they buzz?***

***Do others then know?***

**[Surgery response post meeting: Re item 5:** Use of the buzzer when at the surgery.

Surgery response: Patients who have booked appointments buzz on the intercom downstairs, reception mark them as arrived and the clinician can see on their screen that the patient has arrived and will go down to collect them.  Sometimes, the clinician may be running slightly behind so this may cause a delay in the waiting time.  We also ask that patients do not arrive before their allotted time slot.]

A recent patient experience meant that the doctor had to go down to collect patients and take her down afterwards. The doctor then had to Covid clean the surgery that they had used. All this takes times which can be exacerbated by staff shortages due to holidays and illness. If at all possible don’t arrive too early for you appointments.

**6:** Flu vaccination: In the News section of our website it has a note about flu vaccines being imminent. Great Berry Pharmacy are already administering them to patients. We have had sporadic texts and the odd social media mention but no clear message as to when we can book.

***What is the position? Please advise as to who, what age range, when and where.***

**[Surgery response post meeting: Re item 6:** Flu vaccination timetable.

We have started our flu vaccination programme here at the surgery.  We are vaccinating over 50s.  We are also vaccinating patients who are under 50 in ‘at risk’ groups.  We are sending out text invitations to patients.]

**7:** Covid boosters:

This is handled centrally by NHS England. All notifications will come via them. The process they will be using will be the same as for the original vaccination programme.

It will not be given until at least 6 months after your second dose.

Please do NOT phone the surgery.

Our next meeting is scheduled for TUESDSAY, 12th October, 2021.

Since I will be on holiday I’m not sure what will happen. This should be a practice meeting on MS Teams.

It is most likely that there will NOT be an October meet and the next one will be in November. ***Until Joanne is back from holiday I cannot say.***

I also need to consider the poor turnout to such meetings as to whether they are worth continuing as we move into a much busier health demand season; the winter!!

[Surgery response post meeting;

Future online meetings.

These will now occur **every 3 months,**online, via MS Teams. The surgery will provide the link for MS Teams and I will send out details the week prior to the meeting.

I will continue to chair said meetings. This will allow members of the practice to attend.

The next meeting, since I am on holiday in October, will be on Tuesday, 9th November at 2.30 PM.  Thereafter at 3 month intervals (February, May etc.).

The surgery will update the PPG sections.

Please feel free to contact me between such meetings with any queries.]

In the meantime keep safe and well and remember that we are to live with Covid and its consequences for ever.

Bob Hackett,

PPG Chair.

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