**NOTES FROM THE PPG MEETING BELVEDERE MEDICAL CENTRE**

**THURSDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2022 @ 4.30PM**

Attending: **PPG Members:** KA; MA; DN; RH; GL; CP; ET

**BMC:** Dr Varun Bhalla GP; Shelley Bhalla (Practice Manager); Monika Shahjadee (Asst Practice Manager)

Apologies: DT; BT

**Review of Notes Meeting 4 August 2022:**

Discussed Among Members & Practice Management Team

**PPG Membership Initiatives**

RH & DN gave feedback on their activities speaking with patients following the August PPG Meeting. A number of patients had been spoken to during several visits to the practice. Some had appeared keen to consider joining or finding out more about the group. However, GL said that there had not been any contact from prospective members via the PPG’s email address. Any remaining information leaflets would be returned to the practice by RH for handing out to patients that expressed an interest in the PPG.

ET said that she had encouraged a number of others in the area in which she lives to consider joining the PPG, rather than they moan about issues relating to the practice! Despite the best efforts of everyone, there hadn’t been any new members since DN joined the group in August 2021. Shelley added that she understood a number of PPG’s were struggling with membership, & the practice was fortunate to have a strong core of members. Dr Bhalla said that he believed patient’s lifestyle & their busy lives may preclude them from joining the PPG.

GL suggested that a trial of remote membership be considered, if only to encourage those patients that were unable to make meetings to have an input into the PPG. Dr Bhalla said that the practice would be able to target particular groups with a text message if the PPG thought it was worthwhile. Everybody agreed that the importance of the text message would be adding value & improvement for the practice, rather than a complaints forum. It was agreed that the group would come up with some ideas for moving the action forward in advance of the next meeting.

**Staff Changes**

Dr Bhalla provided the group with an update on the staff changes that had taken place since the last meeting. Lesley Ndreu had joined the clinical staff as a Practice Nurse. Another nurse would be joining the practice in February of next year. At the time of the meeting, the clinical establishment was up to full strength.

Dr Bhalla said that his administration team were at times struggling to cope with the numbers of enquiries emanating from patients, hospitals & other external organisations. At the time of the meeting, practice is looking to recruit two administration staff. Dr Bhalla paid credit to their resilience in what he described as, on occasions, difficult circumstances.

**Ask First**

There continued to be a drive via texts, & in-practice advertising to encourage patients to use the AskFirst App to book appointments etc. Despite this, the take up from patients appears to have plateaued. Dr Bhalla confirmed that the use of the App was by far the best way to book appointments, as all appointments on the surgery’s computer system mirrored what was available via the App. It was suggested that if the booking of appointments via the App was to become ‘business as usual’, it would take some time as those patients with Smart Phones became the majority of patients on the practice list. ET & Monika were going to meet the following day to download the App on ET’s mobile.

**Telephone Waiting Times**

Following on from the issues raised at the August meeting, Dr Bhalla said that there continued to be a problem with calls to the practice, ‘dropping off’ without being answered. This ongoing issue was being addressed by the suppliers! Generally, according to the practice statistics, the average waiting time remained around 5 minutes. There were team of four personnel answering telephones, with additional resource when required. Monika said that she was able to monitor waiting times from her computer, & if waiting times appeared excessive, she was able to assist.

Again, by far & large the majority of calls were patients seeking appointments with clinicians. Asked if the practice list continued to increase, thereby impacting on the number of telephone calls, Dr Bhalla said that at around 17,500 patients, there had been little or no increase since the summer.

**Flu Jab Take Up**

The take up of Flu Jabs by patients that qualified by age or other conditions had been a success story this autumn. The continuing Saturday morning sessions at the practice had been welcomed by patients. Another session was planned for this forthcoming Saturday 12 November 2022 from 08:00hrs – 13:00hrs. GL made mention of the positive comments on the ‘Belvedere Banter’ Facebook Page about Flu Jab initiative. Dr Bhalla said that the practice had achieved one of the highest uptake in the area.

He added that apart from the Flu Jab initiative, the practice was undertaking Covid-19, Shingles & Polio vaccinations on a regular basis.

**Any Other Business**

**Did Not Attend (DNA) Appointments**

CP raised the issue of DNAs, & asked if they remained at a high level. While the practice didn’t have specific numbers to hand at the meeting, the major concern for the practice were the number of missed appointments with the nursing team. Dr Bhalla provided as an example of a recent situation when on one day 5 appointments were missed for one of his practice nurses. This despite all patients being reminded the day before their appointment to cancel if not required.

This has a massive impact on the NHS resources in times of high demand.

**Prescriptions**

Clarification was sought on the time patients should wait for repeat prescriptions to be at the Pharmacy/Chemist once a request had been left at the practice. First of all, Dr Bhalla said that the most efficient method for repeat medication was via the NHS App, as these would likely be fulfilled within 24 – 48 hours. Reminding the group that repeat prescriptions could not be taken over the telephone, repeats placed in the practice box in reception would generally take 72 hours to reach the nominated Pharmacy/Chemist. Problems could, & did arise when patients arrived in the practice with prescriptions issued by hospitals. As was often the case, he thought that patients wouldn’t wait at hospital pharmacies for prescriptions to be fulfilled. This would cause delays, as the paperwork would have to be checked/authorised.

With regard urgent prescriptions, there were approximately 10 items; inhalers, cancer drugs etc. that would be made available without any delay!

Any medicines prescribed following a telephone consultation by one of the clinical staff would be sent electronically to the preferred Pharmacy/Chemist immediately following the consultation.

**Proposed NHS Industrial Action**

Asked if the impending industrial action by NHS Nursing Staff would impact the practice, Dr Bhalla said that his nurses weren’t part of the ballot & thus the practice would continue to work as normal.

**Energy**

If there were any power outages in the near future, the practice had contingency plans in place, sharing resources with other practices. With regard expenditure, the practice had negotiated a fixed price deal with its supplier before the energy crisis began. Obviously, when the deal ended, additional energy costs would have be absorbed into the practice budget.

**Date of Next Meeting**

4.00pm Thursday 9 February 2023