

DUKINFIELD MEDICAL PRACTICE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP
NOTES OF A CONFERENCE CALL HELD ON 21 APRIL 2020 AT 2-3 PM

**Present: Geoff Hill (Secretary), Julie Pregnall (Practice Director),
Marion Higgins (Chairperson), Kath Ratcliffe, Joyce Jones, Brian Malpas,
Sheila Frith (Record taker)**

Aims: To update the PPG with information relating to how the Practice is responding to the current situation regarding Covid-19. To discuss how to develop and distribute a further newsletter.

Julie reported that it's "business as usual". However, procedures have been put in place to manage and operate safely. Consultations are now mostly by telephone, on-line or by video link. There are, however, occasions when patients have to be seen face to face and there is a procedure to deal with this. A risk assessment is carried out prior to the consultation. The clinician is the only member of staff involved and wears PPE throughout. Route of entry minimises contact. Reviews are still being carried out by the nursing staff, mostly using the telephone.

She said that there had been a drop in the number of incoming calls and waiting time for a response is currently a little over a minute. She said that there were concerns about what this might mean in the long term, but there were some indications recently that this trend could be changing. It's too early to say at the moment. It is recognised that restrictions at different levels will be in place for some time to come and inevitably previous practices will be reviewed in the light of those restrictions.

There are 37 staff employed in the Practice and changes have had to be made to manage safe distancing whilst in work. Mostly this is achieved, but areas such as the kitchen etc present a challenge! Sheila added that some workplaces have introduced shift patterns to allow for fewer people being in a work area at one time. Julie acknowledged this but felt that the times during which the phone had to be staffed limited their options.

Joyce said that she knew of another Practice, even before this pandemic, always triaged patients by telephone, before a face to face consultation and asked if this was something DMP could see itself doing. Julie responded that, given restrictions will be in place for some time to come, changes in the way patients are dealt with are inevitable. Triageing patients via telephone calls could well result in a reduction in the number of face to face consultations.

The medium used for the virtual meeting has its limitations, nonetheless there was a useful general discussion about the local impact of the virus, symptoms and what progress there has been in managing it. For instance, Julie said that some younger patients can experience a drop in "SATS", which measures oxygen levels. This can be checked at a SATS station using a probe on a finger which can show either it's safe to continue managing at home or to go immediately to hospital. The Practice has a SATS station which can be accessed without needing to enter the surgery. Julie reported that there is still no "local" testing (i.e. Tameside) for Covid-19 for staff.

Newsletter and communication

This has previously been acknowledged as an effective means of communication across the Practice. The last one was well received and widely distributed. Julie asked if it was possible to put one together focusing on the current situation with: contacts/links for developing services; information/advice; importance of keeping active etc. It was suggested that a small puzzle be included (i.e. word search, word wheel etc.) and/or recipe ideas. Julie said that she would have them produced by Vistaprint as it is a cheaper than in house but that it would need to be restricted to a

double-sided A4 sheet. It's a challenge but Brian agreed to have a go and asked for ideas/suggestions to be sent to him or Geoff initially. Some would be posted to those patients considered at highest risk from the virus and attempts would be made to include it on the website.

Julie frequently updates the Facebook page and acknowledged the many acts of kindness and generosity from volunteers. She also told us of the many rainbow related pictures and artworks now posted on the garden fence outside the Practice, mostly from children and asked for the word to be spread as a little project for children to do whilst they're at home.

Joyce also asked that we draw people's attention to the scanner appeal at TGH. Tameside hospital is fundraising for a new CT scanner as the one they have is many years old now. If you have any ideas on fundraising events and want to get involved contact Angie at angie.wild@tgh.nhs.uk or donate via Just Giving at:

www.justgiving.com/campaign/tangscanner

It was suggested that we "meet" via this means once a month and this was agreed.