
PRG MEETING MINUTES

Date: 10.09.25

Present: Jo Galbraith, Lin Sanders, Roger Watts, Robert Kelso, Simon Redman, Margaret Dove, Kevin Adcock, Sue Hardy, John Hardy, Di Wogden, Teresa Sturm, Sarah Bickley, Whitney Cullen

Previous minutes:

- Some confusion over the antisocial behaviour working group. Agreed these meetings will be face to face.
 - **Sarah Bickley to ask Becky Prosser to initiate these meetings and confirm with PRG members.**

Treatment Room Changes:

- Teresa started in April as Treatment Room Nurse Manager. Teresa is a qualified nurse (20 years of experience) with experience with patient and staff experiences, complaints, quality improvements and steering groups.
- Teresa started as an HCA/Receptionist at Brannams under Desri, before going off to complete her nurse training.
- Teresa is not a specialist nurse but has organisational management experience and a passion for teaching.
- There has been lots of change in the department with some staff turnover. Due to this we have been short of blood appointments, but we have just had 2 new HCAs start this week, so availability will start to get better now.
- We have interviewed this week for a new nurse vacancy too, so overall appointment availability should improve greatly by the end of the year.
- We thank all our patients for their patience with our lack of appointments due to these struggles.
- Teresa is completing cervical screening (smear) training and child immunisation training to increase the availability of these appointments.
- The government have made some changes with vaccination schedules so to support this, there is a current HPV campaign – this is a vaccination that reduces cervical cancer. The campaign is running for people up to the age of 25 who could have missed this vaccine during covid.
- We are promoting a cervical screening project to improve the uptake as the attendance has been dropping for these nationally. We are investigating if there is common themes in people who are not attending such as diverse groups, ethnicities to see how we can help improve this. The project group are meeting with the learning disabilities team to see what we can put in place to help people with learning disabilities attend these appointments. Cervical screening is offered to women aged 24 and a half – 64 years of age. The first invite goes out nationally and then as a surgery we send a further 3 invites if we do not get a response. The project team/nurses involved are planning to do 3 monthly reviews to check the list of non-responders and contact them to try and encourage them to attend/see what adjustments can be put in place to make the appointment more comfortable for them.

- A 'full team' in this department will consist of 7 nurses, 3 HCAs and 1 phlebotomist. Looking at our appointment utilisation, this is the correct number of staff needed. It is important to remember not every nurse can do every type of appointment.
- Teresa is aiming to do 2 management/admin days and 3 clinical days, but this is flexible and depends on the needs of the business (for example if clinics need covering). However, Teresa is firm in supporting staff develop to retain here. Happy staff = excellent patient experience!
- We have a nurse starting respiratory training in January and another nurse starting diabetes training in November, as patients being seen have more complex needs now which get dealt with at the surgery, when previously would be managed in secondary care (hospitals).

Pharmacies Closing:

- 2 local Pharmacies closed (Jhoots – Litchdon and Braunton) for operational reasons leaving lots of patients without prescriptions. The ICB and local MP are involved with the issue. This has had an impact on our surgery because patients are trying to get their prescriptions elsewhere, but other pharmacies are unable to answer their phones so they cannot get the prescriptions.
- Huan – the Pharmacist next door is working extremely hard to help with this crisis.
- As a surgery we aim to process prescription requests in a maximum of 5 working days, and are prioritising those most urgent ones first.
- There have been large queues at Brannam Pharmacy all week and PCN pharmacy staff are working extra this weekend to try and help clear any backlog.
- A big thank you to Huan from all the members of the PRG.

Dementia Support Worker:

- Fundraising has now closed for our dementia support worker, as the 4 Barnstaple practices we raised just over £18,000 and we can fully fund this service now.

Triage Statistics – GP Appointments only:

- 3 monthly average of how a GP appointment has been booked:
 - 59% via the website
 - 15% NHS App
 - 74% Online services

The rest via reception phones or front desk.

- Appointment requests average at 1006 medical requests per week and 132 admin requests per week (this is requests such as sick notes, GP letters, advice and guidance).
- These are reasonably constant figures.
- We are organising a campaign to celebrate the 1-year anniversary of the new system and address themes to continue to educate patients/public about how it works.
- Around 60% of GP appointments are face to face.
- *Why don't we keep the form open overnight?* We have considered keeping it open due to it leading to lowered a&e admissions, however it could also lead to missing urgent scenarios as patients might think we are able to respond overnight, when we are closed.

Counsellor Services:

- We have 2 types of in-house counselling services.
- We have volunteer counsellors, who are in their final stages of training. They offer supervised sessions for free. GPs refer to them and they are considered 'low risk' patients.

- We have 2 new volunteers who have just started.
- We have Southwest Counsellors as well, this service is funded and shared across the 4 Barnstaple practices.
- Our waiting list for counselling currently dates to March, so hopefully with the 2 new counsellors we can start to see this decrease.
- Patients must agree to a minimum of 6 counselling sessions for continuity but can extend to up to 8 sessions.
- Our main limitation here is our room space (or lack of!).
- These services are not related to our mental health teams.

AI Questions:

- The NHS App has started to send negative cervical screening results to patients.
- We are only using an AI software currently for the processing of clinical documents. This is the documents/letters we receive from other healthcare providers, and we are using AI to summarise the document, apply any relevant 'codes' and simplify to save time. Documents still get reviewed manually by a member of staff to ensure the AI is working as we wish and anything urgent is still reviewed by clinicians.

A.O.B:

- *When Sarah sends out emails, as a group should we 'reply to sender' or reply to all included in the email?* Agreed this can be up to personal preference.
- *Fasting/non fasting blood tests* – Teresa gave an explanation of the types of blood tests, how we request and receive results and how these are reviewed.

NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY 19TH NOVEMBER 2025 6PM KILN ROOM
