Patient Participation Group Meeting 22.03.21

With the agreement of the group, due to on-going COVID-19 restrictions, the meeting was co-ordinated and led by F Meadowcroft, the Practice Business Manager.

**COVID-19 vaccination service**

FM provided a summary of the COVID vaccination work that the practice has been directly and indirectly involved in.

Due to the large and unpredictable workload involved with vaccinating the numerous cohorts eligible for vaccination, which would be in addition to the practice’s day-to-day work, the GP Partners decided, in January, along with the vast majority of other GP Practices in Salford to work with Salford Primary Care Together, our local GP provider organisation to deliver the city-wide vaccination programme.

Although the city-wide service has experienced a number of challenges staff have worked tirelessly to overcome these issues and to endeavour patient safety has not been compromised.

Despite initial reports of take up being low across the Swinton neighbourhood, the city of Salford and Greater Manchester a better than average proportion of our patients eligible for their vaccination had attended. Current figures show 6220 out of a possible 7050 have attended for their first vaccination which is one of the highest figures in Salford.

In addition to the central vaccination service the GP practice has contacted a number of patients who have not attended to understand the reasons for this and to see if they can be encouraged to be vaccinated. Through this process an additional 88 patients have been vaccinated.

As with any vaccination programme there needs to be the programme of support tailored specifically for patients who are not able to leave their home.

This programme of home visits has been considerably more complicated than the flu vaccination service due to the nature of the storage and use of the COVID vaccine. Nevertheless, the practise managed to run a very successful service resulting in 140 patients receiving their vaccination in a home setting. As a result of this, Lorraine Townshend, our Operations Manager was called upon to offer support to other local practices with their home-visiting service

**Patient services**

Demand for patient services is still rising, which is unusual as historically it has decreased slightly after the winter months. However, the last six weeks have seen an increase in calls from the previous 6 weeks (an average of nearly 3000 calls per week into the practise.) The weekly demand of nearly 900 prescriptions is approximately the same as the previous few weeks but the number of queries regarding prescriptions has increased.

Thankfully, the practice has been able maintain its staffing levels which has enabled us to remain fully functional as we continue to provide the best service we can.

All staff have now received both does of the COVID vaccine.

As a result of the efforts of the practice team we have seen more messages of support and gratitude from patience in the last few months than anyone can remember previously. These have been received by phone, letter, greetings card and - as in some cases - comments placed on the NHS Choices website. These always shared with the staff and go a long way to keeping our spirits up during what continues to be a very challenging time for us all.

**Patient Online services**

One aspect of our daily work which has changed considerably since the start of the pandemic is how patients are able to access our service using technology.

In May, last year, all practises in Salford were given a digital triage system which allowed patients to access GP services any time, via the practice website. This gave patients the opportunity to request appointments, prescriptions and submit general queries on a 24/7 basis.

However, given that GP services are only contracted by Department of Health to be open Monday to Friday, 8am - 6:30 pm, it soon became apparent that staying on top of the demand was unsustainable.

Furthermore, it was felt that the system given to practices was not offering patients as good a service as other products that were available to us. Consequently, following a detailed piece of work by our GP IT lead, Dr Paul Bateson, we have implemented a new system which has been well received by patients and enables practice staff provide a more efficient and effective service with the resources at our disposal.

**Salford Royal**

Salford Royal Hospital has also implemented new IT systems in recent months, which provides GPs the opportunity to connect directly with hospital specialists, to seek immediate advice and guidance. This has greatly reduced the time it takes to access specialist care for patients, which would previously have required a referral into a hospital setting.

**The Swinton Primary Care Network (PCN)**

The practice is one of four in the PCN, along with The Lakes, Poplars and Silverdale Medical Centres. It commenced in July 2020 and involves the practices working together to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of non-urgent care services for a total population of approximately 46,000 people.

The practises have worked together to recruit two physiotherapists who will be available to provide initial assessments for patients to prevent them having to wait up to six months to access hospital physio services.

One physio has already begun working in the practices second one is due to start next month. It is expected that this service be of considerable use to patients who have musculoskeletal (MSK) issues which previously would have been given a GP appointment and then put on a waiting list for Salford Royal.

Recruitment in other specialisms will also be taking place in the coming weeks, notably Medicines Management (prescription services) and Mental Health services.

**Any Other Business**

The group thanked FM for the summary and expressed their gratitude to the wider team for their continued efforts.

FM asked if the group were still happy to meet in this fashion, i.e. in a Zoom meeting with FM leading the meeting giving updates. The group said were happy for the meeting to continue in its current form.

FM suggested that when some form of normality returned that the group would want to appoint a chair who produces an agenda and leads the meeting with FM (or a colleague) attending for information purposes. The group agreed this seemed something to look towards.

FM added his thanks for the suggestion for the practice to use the Nextdoor Hazlehurst website. As a consequence, the practice had found a way to communicate with a much wider patient base than the practice phone message, waiting room and website could ever have done.

FM 230421