**Patient Participation Group Argyle St SURGERY**

**Minutes of Meeting Held 08.07.2024**

The meeting was held at Argyle St Surgery

Present: Dennis Evan, Rose Blackburn, Kay Macken, Sarah Scourfield, Maria Williams, Justine Hendy

Apologies: Victoria Clare

Acceptance of Minutes: Proposed Maria seconded Dennis.

**3. Matters arising:** Sarah was asked to feed back any further comments to the group. She advised that people were still unable to access appointments and that forward appointments were not being offered.

Rose stated that by 8am all appointments were taken and that and she had been told by receptionist that there were GPs on duty from 8-10am and by 8.20 almost 50 people had been accommodated. Justine had been told to contact Tenby Community Hospital. Kay had known 3 people who had been able to access forward booking appointments.

Dennis stated that we needed to understand the process that were available for people to access the forward appointment routes, also were all receptionists acquainted with the forward planning appointments. Was there a standardised training program that all receptionist, undertook during induction.

Judith joined the group at this point and apologised for being late, a patient had wanted to speak with her, and it had taken longer than she thought. Dennis explained the concerns that had been raised Judith explained that there is a list of illnesses that would qualify for consideration for forward appointments and regarding training, CLAISE is the training given. Receptionists were also trained in signposting, and regarding internal information. Judith agreed that on some occasions when she had listened into conversations, she was not pleased with the way the receptionist had handled the call. Although many were excellent and agreed that attitude makes such a difference. The question was asked if they were given an easy to follow script of how to undertake calls, this was not being practiced but may well be work considering.

Dennis asked that if Judith was looking to recruit receptionists, what qualities would she look for in a person. Caring, compassion, good communication skills, calm personality, and an ability to cope and experience in coping with stressful situations. Was there support available for them when they were under extreme pressure. Judith said that there was always in house support and that they belong to CRONA. The situation was made more stressful as receptionist couldn’t discuss patient’s problems due to confidentiality. EG one receptionist had received 32 abusive calls from one person and eventually the police were involved.

The group said that there was concern for the 18 receptionists as it is a stressful workplace and they do suffer abuse from some people. Judith stated there is a fast turnover of receptionists as many cannot cope with the stress related issues of the role. She also explained that GP rotas are set 4 weeks in advance and that there were normally aprox. 2-3 forward appointments per GP. Some were already taken by appointments made for follow up consultations which must be allocated. The NHS app can be used to book appointments if there are any available.

It was asked why there so many receptionists answering the phones when there were so few appointments to be allocated. Judith stated that this what was asked to do by the NHS and councillors. The receptionists were reduced to 4 after 8.15am.

There had been 2 locums in today and these had provided aprox 60 additional appointments. She urged that people should take Nurse Practitioner appointments when offered as they would have access to emergency appointments if necessary. Rose asked would it be possible to contact people waiting for appointments if there were cancellations that day. Judith said this would be very difficult and often patients just didn’t turn up.

Concerns were raised that the surgery was short of the adequate number of GPs required for the number of patients being served in this area. The usual reasons were discussed for this situation. The situation remains the same and many surgeries were reporting that they were having great difficulty in recruiting GPs.

**4. Update on new members for the PPG Group:** Dennis reported that there had been an excellent response to the invitation from Sam’s advert to join the group. He had received 16 emails of interest. He had spoken to and interviewed 7 who appeared to be able to offer something different to the group, he asked if the group would be happy if he were to invite them to the next meeting. (Dennis had also thanked Sam for his assistance with the advert)

Sarah enquired, how had Dennis decided to select the 7 he had spoken to. He explained he had spoken to the others and suggested if they remained interested that they should re-apply.

**5. Practice update:** Judith reported that they were to lose 2 GPs but had also recruited 2 full time GPs (GPs Griffiths and Anthony would be leaving in September to join Milford surgery)

Regarding her own retirement Judith informed he group that she would not be replaced by another practice manager. It had been decided that there will be 3 managers over 3 separate sections within the practice. Discussion was to take place about who would be the lead manager and who the group would contact and attend the PPG meetings.

**6. Cluster information:** Lucie was unable to be present tonight. Judith informed the group that her father had recently passed away. She would contact her to attend the next meeting.

AOB: Judith wished to thank Dennis for the recruitment and coming in to interview the 7 people.

**7:** Dennis thanked everyone for attending. Date of next meeting 09.09.2024 at 5pm