

PPG Minutes 9th October 2024 – 1-2pm

Present: Chris Smith, Tony Fleming, Margaret Toms, Colin Mutton, Douglas Butler, Mark Lees, Mary Cobbett, Anna Lockhart, John Denley, Joe Stokvis, Sindy Foster, Nicola Shepley, Dr Peter Hill, Dr Emma McMyn, Claire Farragher

Apologies: Mairead Anderson, Peter Jay, David Hindle, Richard Moon, Simon Barton, Mary Sheppard, Sarah Storer

Minutes of last meeting and matter arising:

The minutes of the last meeting from the 3rd July 2024 were approved.

Practice Report

Staffing: The practice is currently fully staffed, having recruited 3 newly qualified nurses in the summer. They are now in the process of training in order to offer the wide range of practice nursing services, including vaccinations, long term condition management, cervical screening tests and baby immunisations.

Dr Katie Heil, salaried GP, started her maternity leave a little earlier than planned in July and is scheduled to return in the summer of 2025.

Dr Alex Dudley-Cooke, salaried GP, is due back off Maternity leave early 2025.

The practice has been supported by Dr Paul Sherringham on a Friday throughout most of 2024 and this arrangement will continue into 2025.

Vaccination Season: The National Flu & Covid Vaccination Programme began on the 3rd October, later than in previous years, after the Department of Health issued new regulations based on evidence regarding peak virus circulation times and maximum efficacy of vaccinations. The practice is running daily vaccination clinics from 3rd October and holding multi-site flu clinics on two Saturdays in October. Several members mentioned they had already had their flu and covid vaccinations and the process had been seamless.

A new vaccination (RSV vaccination (respiratory syncytial virus)) was launched on 1st September for patients aged 75-79 and pregnant women. Patients aged 80 have until 31st August 2025 to get vaccinated. The practice has started vaccinating the most at risk and will hold regular clinics after October.

Phones, IT & Access: The practice has had a recent upgrade to its phone system which now allows patients to select a call back, rather than waiting in the queue. The system also allows for greater overview of incoming calls, numbers of patients waiting and waiting times.

The backend of the website has had a recent upgrade and patient forms can now save directly into the clinical system. We are expecting this to save some time for our secretarial team, who were previously having to use another system to add the forms to the clinical system.

NHS England has introduced a new standardised registration form for all GP surgeries from the 1st October. The Practice has paper versions at the front desks and the website has been updated. We may need to consider how patients sign up to the PPG as this is no longer an option on the new forms.

GP Trainees: The practice currently has a GP Trainee at Cirencester and Tetbury, supervised by Dr Khalid Al-Khayat and Dr Angus McMyn. The practice was also recently accepted by Bristol University to host Medical Students in Year 3,4 & 5 of their studies. This project is being led by Dr Naomi Vernon.

Premises: Progress is being made in Tetbury where the hold-up with a section 106 has very recently been rectified. Construction is now due to start early 2025 with the aim of the practice being ready by the end of 2026.

The practice is still in discussions with The Steddings development and the ICB regarding new premises for Cirencester. Dr Peter Hill clarified that the practice has moved away from the central Cirencester site plan, which was looking at housing at least 2 Cirencester practices. Phoenix Health Group considers The Steddings a better location for patients. Anna Lockhart informed the practice that there is a vacant property at the Querns off Trinity Road with 3 units should the practice wish to explore this option. Mary Cobbett raised that she has conflict of interest as she is on the public board for the Steddings development.

Matters arising from the practice report:

- Mark Lees asked a question regarding telephone cut-off times after recently being cut-off at 5pm on a Friday after holding for 30 minutes. Claire will look into this.
- Anna Lockhart asked how patients can submit files to the practice. Claire will look into website functionality. Regarding other NHS services contacting us, Dr Hill clarified that we regularly receive incoming information from other services.
- Mary Cobbett and Sindy Foster raised queries regarding the clinical presentation of Covid which appears to be presenting with gastrointestinal symptoms in the latest strain.

PPG Co-chairs report

New email address –The PPG was somewhat forced into moving away from Microsoft due to recipient restrictions but the transition to Gmail has gone well. Chris Smith and Peter Jay are the only members with access to email addresses. Chris Tetley was thanked for his assistance in the transition.

GP Survey – this year’s survey was released on the 11th July. The practice sample size is very small with 272 patients receiving the survey and 118 responding. Chris Smith has raised the statistical relevance with the ICB as it reflects only 1.3% of the practice population. Chris Smith has done some comparative work with other local practices; of the 20 key questions, Phoenix Health Group scored best in 11 of the 20 areas (55%) and better or the same in 3 (15%). An area for further investigation is the low score given by patients who said they found it easy to contact the practice via the NHS App – only 36%.

Lord Darzi’s report – a full government plan is due spring/summer 2025 but this interim report has highlighted that the public voice isn’t loud enough. Chris Smith has got in touch with the ICB to see if all the ICB PPGs (42 in England) could create a forum in order to provide input into the plans that the government is drawing up.

Mary Cobbett highlighted a problem she is seeing through her work as a benefits advisor. She reports that there is often a lack of sufficient evidence to support an appeal as the practice has provided a summary from the health record rather than a detailed appeal. Mary will send further information to Chris who can raise with practice and ICB.

IT & Digital Systems Working Group – Chris Tetley is leaving the PPG and working group. Chris Smith reported less progress than hoped for but will keep the PPG up to date.

Primary Care Strategy Reference Group – no news or meetings since March.

AOB

- ICB Gloucestershire are responsible for dentistry. Emergency arrangements are available via 111 if the patient meets the urgent eligibility criteria.
- Douglas Butler, a Governor for the Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust for for the Cotswold District, provided an update on the role. He is a lay observer and has access to various levels of the trust. He has reported to the Chief Executive that Primary Care in Cirencester is in good shape. The NHS Budget is £180 billion pounds. 1.7 million people access the NHS every day in England. He feels it is a ridiculous thing to say that the NHS is broken, although there are things that require improvement. He encouraged anyone interested in becoming a Governor to pursue it.

Date of next meeting 15th January 2025 - 1pm-2pm.