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**Patient Participation Group Forum**

**Minutes of meeting Thursday 20th February 2025, 5.30pm-7 pm**

**Waltham Forest GP Federation ,** [**500 Larkshall Road, London, E4 9HH**](https://www.google.com/maps/place/WF+Federated+GP+Network/@51.6083183,-0.001316,19z/data=!4m13!1m7!3m6!1s0x48761e02b6708aff:0xa14b9bf26e4449df!2sLarkshall+Rd,+London+E4+9HH!3b1!8m2!3d51.6093846!4d-0.0013634!3m4!1s0x48761e0299fab97d:0xe3de3c86baa74d2c!8m2!)

Attendees

Andy Agathocleus (AA) – SMA Chair

Trevor Calvert (TC) – Old Church

Maria Dadabhoy (MD) – The Microfaculty Practice Manager

Dave Gifford (DG) - Dr Dhital’s Practice

Marilyn Gould (MG) – The Ridgeway

Sharon Hanooman (SH) – Kiyani/Public Health Social Prescriber

Jane Harrington (JH) – Wood Street

Sue Kofi (SK) - Walthamstow Central PCN Social Prescriber

Catherine Mears (CM) – Old Church

Patrick Morgan (PM)- Addison Road (left at 6.30pm)

Philip O’Herlihy (PO) - St James

Kate ? (K) –

Dr Sheraz Younas (SY) – WF GP FedNet Medical Director

Suzia Riasat (SR) – WF GP FedNet Operations & Service Development Manager

Dianne Barham (DB) – Healthwatch Waltham Forest (Chair)

David Hastings (DH) – Healthwatch Waltham Forest (Secretary)

Apologies: Yakub Rahman (Wood Street)

**Welcome and introductions.**

**Approval of Minutes of last meeting**

Actions not on agenda

DB to look at data on LD/SEND but Waltham Forest had just had a SEND inspection so not done yet.

SR said that other practices are interested in setting up a PPG.

SH suggested holding the next meeting as an outdoor event encouraging people who want to set up a PPG to attend and learn how to do it. CQC could be invited too.

DB presented LMC award for best PPG.

TC said hospital consultants didn’t know of PPGs but SK said it was included in GP training.

PM said PPGs should be more widely known to patients as they support their best interests.

DB said Waltham Forest was the only borough within North East London to have a PPG Forum although Newham were starting one up.

PO said the PPG Toolkit was far too big and needed summarising.

**Item 1: Identify common themes/concerns that should be escalated.**

* Update on concerns raised previously and their impact:

**Blood testing systems**

DB - There has been no drop off in appointments since the NELFT blood test centre moved to Comely Bank from St James. There have been fewer DNAs.

SY – FedNet and GPs have been doing blood tests which has reduced the waiting times for patients using the NELFT service. Surgeries can book a FedNet test directly but patients have to call. They are trialling walk-ins at Harrow Road.

DB raised the issue of online blood test forms at the Whipps Cross Interface Service meeting. It is a very complex system for patients. One GP said they couldn’t do online forms but another said they did it.

SY said that a blood test form is required by lab so it is about how that form is organised. A practice could print off the form but no one else could as they can’t access the system.

DB raised this issue at the North East London Integrated Care Board (NEL ICB) partnership board. Need to have a joined up digital system before anything else can be joined. We will keep on at it although it could take 5 years!

PM said people need to find a use for the NHS App which could be this. GPs can text patients through the app for free instead of sending out letters by expensive post. Should be a paperless option.

**Same Day Access**

DB said this was included in the impact report. Encouraged members to push this with GPs.

PO said that patients weren’t good at dealing with health issues - serious ones were not taken seriously enough or taking non-serious ones too seriously. That is why there is triage. St James usually turns their online system off at 10.30am as they run out of appointments which means some patients are left to their own devices – pharmacists for minor things, call FedNet for out of hours appointments, call 111 or go to A&E.

AA said that SMA’s online system is available throughout the surgery hours from 6am to 8pm.

**Complaints and complaints process**

DH gave a quick presentation of his report on the NHS complaints data for 2023/24. He also mentioned the recent Healthwatch England research into the complaints process indicating people were not happy with the system. Advocacy services were under resourced.

DB said NEL ICB was overstretched with complaints. There did not seem to be any comeback to practices.

AA said that patients could voice their complaints through the NHS Survey.

PM said that Addison Road had explained the complaints process which may have led to the practice having the most complaints.

AA said that SMA patients can complain via the PPG who can approach the practice manager.

**ACTION**: DH checked the NEL ICB website complaints page. It does not say explicitly that they will not accept complaints that have already been rejected by the service provider. It just says there are two ways to complain – service provider or the commissioner (the ICB). DH contacted NEL ICB complaints who sent the following:

Thank you for your email. Unfortunately, under the Local Authority Social Services and NHS Complaints Regulations 2009, only one investigation can be conducted into a complaint. As the Practice has already responded, NHS North East London (NHS NEL) is unable to carry out a further review.

**Edmonton Incinerator**

DB had asked Public Health for a review of data available on the prevalence of long term conditions/cancers near the incinerator. She has pushed them to provide more information. TC handed over two studies to DB. One said that there were toxins identified in breast milk. Another said the wards around the incinerator had the highest incidence of asthma in London. TC added that the existing incinerator was burning 500,000 tonnes of rubbish but the new one was planned for 700,000 tonnes.

PM said the number of child admissions are higher in Waltham Forest than in other boroughs. Map where children with asthma pumps live in the borough.

**Current concerns from PPGs**

CM said PPGs should manage patients’ expectations when they get involved. One of her PPG members complained this process with the practice was too long.

AA thought things were heading the right direction regarding the phone answering systems.

TC said that the PPG had helped the practice by suggesting reducing the duration of the recorded message.

DB suggested different sections to a PPG agenda. Those that the practice wanted would get done quickest and what patients wanted done would take a longer time and then a section for other things.

AA said that SMA PPG had promoted Pharmacy First to patients at GPs behest.

DB said that phone systems were still a problem but technology was improving.

DB said that it seemed that same day appointments and same day triage were not the same thing.

SY said that all Waltham Forest GPs apart from SMA had the old style GMS contracts. SMA had a new APMS contract which was more flexible.

**AOB**

**Community Chest grants prorgramme**

SH said that this was the 3rd of a 3-year programme of issuing grants to voluntary sector groups and community groups supporting residents. The launch event at Leytonstone Library on Tuesday 25th February from 12pm to 3pm. Any group including PPGs need to have their own bank account. Cannot give money to NHS organisations like GPs. The deadline for applications is 5th April. Maximum amount of money was £9999. Money must be spent between June 2025 and February 2026.

TC asked if Waltham Forest Dyslexia Association could apply. SH replied they had to be for 18+.

SY said that FedNet would be prepared to allow their bank account to be used and they could organise something centrally for a number of interested PPGs.

**ACTION**; PPGs to contact SY if interested.

**St James Practice**

PO raised concerns about the St James Practice regarding the NEL ICB and funding issues. The ICB had funded all temporary costs. The practice were paying for extra locums as the practice had fewer consulting rooms in their temporary home of The Firs practice so they had extended hours. Practice is concerned about financial viability.

**Blue Badges**

TC attended a council meeting about the removal of free parking. One councillor said that people could ask their GP for a letter to get a blue badge.

SK said this was a medical summary not actually a letter. She said she dealt with one application a week.

**Building of flats at Silverthorn Medical Centre**

TC said that the Council had approved flats to be built on some derelict part of the former Chingford Hospital site which contains the Old Church surgery as well as the Ainslie Wood Rehabilitation Unit.

The new flats would take up valuable car park spaces from the surgery and in addition there would be the chaos of the construction works.

**National PPG Week**

SK said that this awareness week was 31st May to 6th June. Claremont PPG were having a street party and other PPGs may be running event in her PCN.

**Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed to hold the next meeting on Monday 28th April 2025 from 5.30pm to 7pm.