**PPG Meeting  
Monday 13th March 2023  
7pm at the Roebuck Surgery**

In attendance:  
***BMC Representatives:***Allison Seymour, Practice Manager; Tracy Paul, PCN Care Co-Ordinator; Allison Jones, PCN Social Prescriber.  
***Patients:***RW (Chair); MG; JH; PH; SK; AM

***Patients, apologies but on circulation list:***M.B, E.B, K.L, P.M, L.N, C.O, H.R, J.S, G.R, O.L, A.L

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| 1. | **Allison Seymour introduced Allison Jones, PCN Social prescriber to the group**  Allison explained to the PPG her job role as a social prescriber, Allison went on to say that patients are referred to herself via a GP, a receptionist, or anyone working in the healthcare profession that feel a patient can benefit from Allison’s help. Allison went on to say that patients are referred to her for several reasons, it could be loneliness, incontinence problems, struggling with bills, help after being diagnosed with cancer, helping people that are having anxiety problems leaving the house, people that have a problem with hoarding. Allison explained that she recently saw a patient who needed help to get a job but was struggling to leave the house or even go there alone. Allison contacted the patient and went along to the job centre with them. Allison can see patients in the surgery, at their home and she can also speak to them over the phone. Patients who know they are struggling with a particular problem that is not a medical issue can also call the surgery and ask for an appointment with the social prescriber. There are lots of free services out there that Allison can offer and help with, for instance if someone is struggling with loneliness Allison can contact Compassionate Neighbours, which is a free service, and they will contact the patient and put them in touch with a volunteer. There is also Mind in Herts that offers lots of group sessions and coffee meetings that are also free to attend. Peter confirmed he is part of the Compassionate Neighbours and would provide Allison with the name and telephone details of the main person to contact if need assistance.  Ann mentioned that she works at the Bedwell Community Centre, and they hold a free to attend “Warm Space” Day. These are free to attend and are held on a Tuesday 8.30am – 2pm and a Friday 8.30 am – 12 pm. These are held at other locations across Stevenage including, Daneshill House, Stevenage Museum, Stevenage Library, St Nicholas Community Centre and the Indoor Market. Food and drink will be provided, and residents will also be able to bring their own food and drink if they wanted to. These are all free to walk in. Allison Jones said that she will pop in on Tuesday 14th March to meet Ann and to find out more so that she can mention this to some of her patients. Allison went on to inform the group that there are 4 Social Prescribers within the Stevenage South PCN, so each surgery has their own designated Social Prescriber.  Jackie mentioned that she may know someone who would benefit from Allison’s help. Allison gave Jackie her mobile number to pass on  Jackie asked Allison if she had also worked alongside “The Living Room” in Stevenage. Allison confirmed she is aware of them and will use their service.  After Allison gave a full description of her role and there were no further questions, Allison left the meeting. | PH |
| 2. | **Minutes from 23.02.23**  Ron enquired if anyone had any questions or concerns over the last meeting minutes.  Ann commented it was mentioned in the minutes that the reception area is noisy when calling in. Ann wanted to inform the group that she has never had a problem with it being noisy. It was mentioned that some of the vulnerable patients or patients with a learning disability may find it difficult to hear which is why it was mentioned. Tracy explained that all her LD Patients know how to contact her directly and have her direct mobile number therefore can avoid calling via reception. |  |
| 3 | **How to encourage new members into our PPG.**  Ann said that she is happy to give out some leaflets at one of her ‘warm days’ event. Allison mentioned that we do need to be mindful that only patients registered at BMC & RB can be members so the printouts will need to state this.  Allison mentioned that herself, Tracy and Ron have attended webinars with the ICB (Integrated Care Board). The ICB have funded a Freelance Project Manager from the Patients Association to help practices to increase/improve their PPG groups and are going to use Bedwell as a pilot to help with recruitment.  Stan asked how many members do we need? Allison said that there is no limit, as many as we can get, but they need to help the practice improve, they need to be proactive and come up with projects to help make a difference. Tracy mentioned that we do need to try and engage the younger generation too which, we all know, is difficult.  Ron mentioned that Villages seem to have more PPG Members than a PPG in a town, why? It was discussed and agreed that in a village people seem to be more involved with the community, they have more interests whereas those in a town setting seem to lack.  Stan asked who are our audience? Michelle mentioned that we need people who are going to promote the PPG, Ron mentioned texting patients, Tracy said that she felt this was not a good idea as we text people a lot already for medical reasons which they consent to, they do not consent to receiving texts about non-medical issues. Tracy confirms she has had patients call her to say they did not consent to get these types of texts.  Ron mentioned that he is happy to produce a monthly newsletter to display in the surgeries for patients to take away if they want to, he also mentioned that it would be a good idea if the doctors and maybe the social prescriber could also write something in the newsletter.  Stan mentioned advertising on Facebook, Twitter and having a PPG Website. Allison said that we would need a PPG member to monitor/manage them, we don’t have the staff to do this. Stan said that he would be willing to look into it and asked about any costings, Allison asked him to investigate this and let her know about costs etc. Allison informed the group that BMC does have a website with a page dedicated to PPG, however it was discussed a link can be added on the website (as well as the PCN website) which can then direct patients to the dedicated BMC PPG page. Allison expressed it would be good for the PPG members to have a dedicated email address so each can talk to each other and possibly new members also. A new one will need to be created (which can’t be an NHS.net one). Ann mentioned that she would not want to be included on any emails.  Allison mentioned that Dr Jayabalan would like to get involved in the PPG but would find it difficult to attend on a Monday, it was asked if we could change the day, but the members present said that Mondays suited them as other days are tricky. Allison said to keep as Mondays and that Dr Jayabalan could possibly attend given enough notice. | TP to print some off  RW  SK |
| 4. | **Suggestions to think about from Dr Jayabalan**   * PPG Newsletter? – already discussed above, Ron to draft. * Can PPG run drop in cafes on a Saturday AM (when surgery is already opened) i.e. dementia/careres/mum & baby groups etc – Group felt this was possible but feel a large group event would be more beneficial as previously done (Wellbeing with Dr Begum, and Diabetes with a specialist speaker). Ron informed the group a large PCN event is being organised presently where speakers will be invited and its for all 4 surgeries. We agreed for all to attend (if possible) and see how this goes first to get further ideas. * Lunchtime meets – This may be tricky with space and who to get to come in but something to think about and discuss. * What can the PPG offer the community – communication, reaching hard to reach patients ideally but working out how to do this. * What are the PPG successes – Allison informed the group that Ron had been instrumental in the refurb of Roebuck, Ron had organised with the Council a ‘disabled parking bay’ in the carpark to enable the disabled patients a space and for it to be near the surgery.  *\*not mentioned in meeting but listing other achievements: - changes on website to improve patients understanding on Saturday appts - no place to store bikes when patients cycle to surgery (bike stands installed) - help with changing wording on annual review letters to patients - too many posters in the waiting rooms, too busy looking (new noticeboards purchased with separate dedicated subjects) - installed new GDPR prescription request boxes rather than clear open box for all to see* |  |
| 5. | **PPG Newsletter / Email**  Already discussed in above topics. |  |
| 6. | **Interesting Appt Facts**  Allison informed the group that as of today (13.03.23) we currently have 12,942 patients. Allison was interested to ask the group how many patients they thought **did not** come in for an appointment in the last 12 months? All thought around 10,000 - Allison confirmed it was only 3,273 patients which shows how many patients are needing to be seen/called!  Jackie enquired what the ratio was to telephone appointments and face to face in those appointments, Allison advised we can’t run reports on that, but explained rotas are currently made up of a mixture of book on the day face to face appointments, book on the day as telephone appointments and also pre bookable face to face appointments and pre bookable telephone appointments. Also available is online telephone appointments, and appointments are also set aside daily for patients requesting an extension of a sick note. We also have appointments at our out of hours hub in the evenings and weekends.  Stan mentioned that he felt that the waiting area always seems empty when he comes for a face to face appt, compared to when he previously attended, so probable more telephone appointments are being used.  Tracy mentioned that the surgery can also book patients into the Acute Respiratory Hub. This is based at St Nicholas Surgery and Canterbury Way, we have appointments every day, these are booked with a Prescribing Nurse, and they can see patients with acute conditions which is associated with respiratory such as: Colds, Coughs, Vomiting, Sore Throat, Ear Ache etc. The patient must be able to get these surgeries and these appointments are booked by all surgeries within the Stevenage North and Stevenage South PCN. Plus as mentioned already, we also have the facility to book patients in the normal extended access service 6.30-8pm. |  |
| 7. | **Any Other Business**   * Ron raised awareness that he and his son has had trouble requesting medication that has been requested before but is not on as a repeat item and he does not wish to travel to either the surgery or pharmacy to hand in a written request. There should be a box for ‘comments’ when patients request their repeats online so the request could be written in the box for the GP to decide yes or no. * Michelle mentioned her concerns that there seems to be no bridge or consistency anymore from a patient being discharged from hospital and the discharge notes reaching the registered GP. Michelle feels there is a lack of communication when a patient has come out of hospital and then approaches the GP for assistance, but the GP does not always have the discharge note. Allison stated this has improved a great deal now and we should get the paperwork within a day or two at latest. Michelle was concerned that patients leaving hospital are not check or followed up by anyone. Allison explained if the discharge letter states for ‘GP to action’ then we do, however if this is left empty then the GP does not make contact as it would be impossible to ensure everyone who leaves the hospital is followed up in general, sadly we have no manpower for that. Hospitals should not be letting any patients out if needed care/follow up after, this will be organised prior to the patient being discharged. * Michelle asked about receptionist being trained more on Nurse appointments as her husband had an issue. Tracy mentioned that all receptionists have a list of the Nurses and what they can see patients for. Allison agreed to look into it to see what went wrong. * Jackie asked if any of the Doctors specialise in certain medical conditions and can that be advertised so patients know who to go to with that problem. Allison explained some of the doctors have an ‘interest’ in certain areas, but are not specialists in that area i.e. Dr Raveendran being interested in musculoskeletal conditions doesn’t mean he is the only one that would be the best GP to see with a bone problem, or Dr Yeturi for family planning etc, they just have an ‘interest’ in those fields. Allison raised concern if this was advertised in the practice it may confuse patients that they should only see that GP for that type of problem. It was agreed to leave as is.   Meeting closed at 8.45pm | AS |

**Next Meeting is Monday 17th April 2023 at 7 – 8pm at Bedwell Medical Centre.**