



West Area Health Forum

Wednesday 25 May 2022, from 10-11:30am at St Richard's Church and Community Centre.

1. Welcome and introductions

There were 30 people in attendance. Apologies were received from Lisa Winney at Mile Oak Medical Centre, Martin Yeats – Links Road Patient Participation Group (PPG) Chair and HKP Health Champion, Anne Pissaridou - Councillor North Portslade, Ann Tizzard from St Richard's Community Centre, and Karen Barford Healthwatch

Please contact Forum facilitator Jo on joanna.martindale@hkproject.org.uk or 01273 881446 at any time with agenda ideas, comments, feedback or questions; including feedback about experiences of attending the Health Forum meetings online.

2. Notes of the last meeting

The notes were agreed as accurate.

3. Updates Hove Medical Centre, Mile Oak, Wish, Links, Benfield and Portslade Surgery representatives and Patient Participation Groups (PPGs)

Steve Cribbs (Manager of Sussex Primary Care) updated for Links Road Surgery and Wish Park Surgery, both of which had joined Sussex Primary Care on 1 April 2022. Steve reported that joining Sussex Primary Care was working well for both Surgeries.

Links Road Surgery

Steve Cribbs reported the Practice:

- Had purchased the Surgery's building from Dr Alex Coat following his retirement, which gave the Practice more security in terms of its lease and on-going location.
- Was finalising recruiting a new Practice Manager to fully take over from him.
- Had generally stable staffing levels, but was currently recruiting to replace both Healthcare Assistants (HCAs) who were leaving (Sue had retired the day before).
- Was stable GP-wise, despite country-wide GP recruitment shortages. Dr Ebbage is reducing from 9 to 6 six sessions per week by the end of this year.
- Was retaining Tom as a Paramedic, and Tom was training Alaina (recruited earlier in 2022 as a new Paramedic).

Wendy noted her concerns about Paramedics treating people that she felt needed a diagnosis from a GP. Steve explained all Surgeries were trying to make best use of each medical professional's skillset and move away from the historic "GP as default" approach (which had seen GPs undertaking work that did not make the best use of their skills, time or cost). Steve gave assurance that Primary Care Paramedics were

fully-qualified and experienced. Steve invited Wendy to join the Links Road Patient Participation Group (PPG) to feed into conversations about changes in healthcare. Dawn stated she had found paramedic care to be excellent at Links. John Kapp, a member of Wish Park Medical Centre's PPG, said he felt the national staffing issues could be helped via Social Prescribing, including complimentary therapies, with the money following the patient.

In response to Wendy's concerns about older people being told to book treatments (such as cortisone injections) online, Jo added that multiple residents (especially older people) had reported issues to her about digital access to GPs. Jo confirmed the Primary Care Network (PCN) had plans in place to try and help people gain the skills and tools to access GPs digitally. Steve noted Links Road had not focused as heavily on digital access as other Surgeries, and all patients could still use the phone.

Update – there will be health focussed digital support sessions at St Richards every Friday from 11-1 starting on Friday 10th June. Drop in for expert help in searching health info, downloading apps or anything else that might help you access or support your own health better

Wish Park Medical Centre

Steve Cribbs reported:

- The Practice's 2 new GPs (Dr Amlani and Dr Bailey) had settled in well and were providing both in-Surgery support and remote telephone sessions as part of the Sussex Primary Care Connect team (with other GPs, Nurses and Paramedics).
- One of the Nurses, Sophia, had qualified as an Advance Nurse Practitioner (ANP) and was now able to take on more complex cases.
- The Practice had supported one of its administrators to develop into a HCA role.
- The Practice was recruiting a new Practice Manager to replace Greg Barnes, who would be leaving in July 2022. Jo noted Greg would be missed by the Forum, and sent him best wishes for the future.

Hove Medical Centre

Ashley Bellis (the new Deputy Practice Manager), reported:

- She had joined Hove Medical Centre with 9 years' Reception Management experience, and was training up to hopefully become the new Practice Manager in a few years' time.
- She also worked in the Improved Access Service (also known as the Extended Hours Service) for Here (Care Unbound Ltd.), at weekends and evenings.
- The Practice had several new staff: Ruth, a new Paramedic Practitioner starting the next week; Michaela, a first contact Physiotherapist; Dr Sally Gouse, a new salaried GP who had joined in April, and; Megan, a long-standing staff member who had now qualified as a GP Assistant to help with tests, blood pressure etc.
- The Centre had changed its appointment system in February 2022 to be more accommodating, with e-consults now offered 10am-4pm Monday-Friday (for a GP response within 24 hours), pre-bookable appointments for some services,

Improved Access Service appointments at Benfield Valley Healthcare Centre, Charter and Mile Oak Surgeries, and a triage service for urgent problems.

- The Surgery hoped to get its PPG back up and running soon; with further details published on the Practice's website and calls/emails to interested parties.
- Was now offering Minor Ops and Freeze clinics again, and would be contacting the people on those waiting list to make appointments.

Action: Ashley to send Jo Martindale the Hove Medical Centre PPG relaunch details once confirmed, for Jo to help publicise this.

Mary reported her friend had been to several appointments lately and been seen by a different person each time; with each person giving different advice and medication. Ashley explained this was due to different staff being qualified to prescribe different levels of medication. Ashley confirmed that Mary's friend could ask to see a specific person when she booked an appointment, and then she would get more continuity.

Kathryn noted the lack of comprehensive local approaches/support groups for people experiencing the menopause, and suggested a local group could stop unnecessary referrals to costly services, reduce social isolation, and prevent the economic impact of people leaving work due to menopause. Una Nicholson confirmed Here was in the process of setting up a city-wide women's health offer in partnership with Brighton Women's Centre and GP Practices, which would be hosted on evenings and weekends by the Improved Access Service, based in the community, and held in GP Surgeries. Una noted this had developed from an identified need for menopause support, and for broader women's services.

Actions:

- **Jo asked to talk to Kathryn about setting up a community-based menopause support group; thinking better about how to put people together about certain conditions/life circumstances.**
- **Una to send Jo details of new city-wide women's health support group offers to share with the Forum, and potentially replicate locally too.**

Mile Oak Surgery

Lisa Winney sent the update below in her absence, noting:

- David Grant had left the Surgery, and Lisa Winney was now the Practice Manager.
- Karen Morley-Freer was the new Assistant Practice Manager.
- The Practice now had a Physiotherapist, Michaela Barnett, working with them.
- They were currently recruiting for a new GP, Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) and maternity locum Practice Nurse.
- Other changes at the Practice would be shared once they were fully implemented.

Portslade Health Centre

Dr Rowan reported the Practice:

- Had been missing a management structure since its Practice Manager left earlier in 2022, due to difficulty recruiting, but the new Practice Manager would start by July 2022.
- Had a well-established GP Partnership who were working really well together.
- Had welcomed Dr Julie Rose, who had joined in 2021, as a new Partner in April 2022; which was a positive step for the longevity of the Practice.
- Had seen lots of staffing changes including Phlebotomists, HCAs, new Nurses.
- Did not have a Paramedic, but did have Pharmacists and a Physician's Associate (who was GP-trained and could diagnose, but worked under GP supervision).
- Was trying to make best use of all clinical staff expertise, and maintain continuity for patients wherever possible.
- Had kept the same appointment system since pre-Covid, but GPs were now often doing a phone consultation first to then arrange any necessary investigations before meeting the patient face-to-face, to make the appointment as worthwhile as possible.
- Had seen a very positive patient response to e-consults; with 200 more queries a week, including from younger/working people who were previously not accessing the Surgery. This increase in demand is having to be managed by temporarily turning off e-consult when demand reaches a certain level above capacity.
- Had seen a 30% increase in GP workload since pre-Covid (when demand was already outstripping supply), which isn't sustainable. The majority of GPs' work is still seeing people with long-term conditions and older people, and they are still doing lots of face-to-face appointments and home visits, with GPs prefer.
- Saw the benefit of Social Prescribing in helping to manage some of elements of the multi-faceted issues that people presented with in Primary Care, and help with elements that GPs aren't equipped for as a blended solution. However, some Practices have struggled to find any physical space for their Link Workers on-site; so they may not be utilising Social Prescribing as much as they should/could be.

The Forum discussed their concerns about the lack of funds for NHS services and the lack of available trained staff to look after patients; especially given the ageing population, the increase in reports of loneliness, and the impact of the pandemic.

Benfield Valley Healthcare Hub (BVHH) (including Burwash Surgery)

In response to noted disappointment from several Benfield patients about the lack of Practice representation, Jo said Lindsay Coleman usually attended every Forum meeting with a thorough update. Dr Rowan noted Benfield had recently been visited by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), which was always a difficult time for Practices.

Jo reported that Benfield was merging with Brighton Wellbeing Centre from 1 July 2022, and would join Goldstone PCN (as they could only be members of one PCN), but Lindsay still planned to attend the Forum and support their local patients. Dr

Rowan answered John Kapp's query asking if Benfield joining Goldstone PCN meant both Hove PCNs would merge to confirm the PCNs were not merging but would keep working collaboratively as before.

Jo noted that, following on-going concerns about the closure of its Burwash site, Benfield had confirmed the site would re-open with new services following a refurb. Mary highlighted that the site had not opened yet, but was advertising for volunteers to do gardening there. Tory Lawrence confirmed the site was being refurbished to re-open soon.

Bob Deschane confirmed his recent experiences of patient care from Benfield had been excellent.

Action: Jo to ask Lindsay Coleman for an update from Benfield Valley Healthcare Hub.

JM update: Lindsay sent the following ahead of the meeting with her apologies but Jo hadn't seen emails that morning: "The preparation for the merger is going ahead. There is lots to do and there will be some disruption, particularly at the end of June when we bring the 2 clinical IT systems together.

However, we will do everything we can to keep the disruption to a minimum. We will have a new single phone system soon, which can be answered from any of our sites. We are recruiting new staff, both clinical and admin and we are very close to re-opening Burwash. I am very sorry for missing the meeting. The merger DOES NOT mean that we are disengaging from these meetings – quite the reverse. We are hoping to become more embedded in the community that we serve and supporting the great work that HKP is doing for us all."

4. Sussex MSK Partnership Service update

Una Nicholson explained her role at Here (Care Unbound Ltd) was to look at patient and colleague experience; as staff with a manageable workload, and who can do work that really matters to them, are known to give people better care. Una noted Here ran the Improved Access Service and Brighton and Hove Memory Assessment Services, and were part of the Sussex Musculoskeletal Partnership (SMSKP) service.

Una explained the Musculoskeletal (MSK) service helps people with their muscles and bones, with support from expert clinicians, longer appointment times, and referrals to specialist services. Una explained the service could be reached by [self-referring via the website](#) or via a first contact Physiotherapist in a GP Surgery, but noted the service did not accept referrals for issues that had been happening for under 6 weeks; as many conditions often clear up themselves within 6 weeks.

Una noted the SMSKP service was currently focusing on reducing its waiting times; which currently vary by problem area, specialism and location (see [their website for more details](#)). In response to Nick's query about the timeframe between referrals and

booking an appointment, and his report of waiting a long time to receive an offer for an appointment, Una noted the service aimed to review all referrals within 2 working days, and get in touch to book an appointment within the next week; although more than 30% of referrals sent to SMSKP were marked as urgent, and this had further increased during the pandemic.

Una asked the Forum members whether they felt that offering quicker appointments at other sites (e.g. Crawley or Haywards Health) would be appealing and feasible for local residents. Several people said travelling to other sites was practically impossible for many local residents, due to lack of car ownership or good public transport links. It was noted that, while free patient transport options existed, getting access to these was complex and the acceptance criteria were very limited.

Nick noted he had not been offered the chance to attend a sooner appointment at another site, which he would have accepted. Steve highlighted the importance of referrers remembering to give people a choice of sites when referring, even if there was a general preference for local services, as part of patient choice.

Action: Una to remind the SMSKP booking team to inform people of any sooner appointments at other sites (i.e. further from where they live) if available.

Una highlighted the range of free resources available on the [SMSKP website](#) to help people self-manage their pain at all stages of their journey. The Forum agreed that, while online resources were useful, they did not help those without access to or understanding of technology. It was confirmed that people without digital access would request a referral via their GP, and ask the GP for printed information on pain-management, but more work was required to overcome these digital barriers. Una suggested adding a note about people's digital access to the front of patient records. Norman Webster, a Sussex MSK Partnership Service Patient Partner, confirmed that the Patient Leads in the MSK service were involved in every level of service design and were continuing to raise and address access issues with the service, including digital barriers; as even accessing the SMSKP website via the local library was only feasible if the person could get to the library. Mary highlighted the importance of letting people know that the resources existed in ways beyond the service website, and Steve added that this should not just be only via GP Surgeries as the solution. Maureen noted her GP had sent her printed exercises to do at home; so there were resources available via Primary Care. Pat and Jo suggested that Social Prescribing could help people to live without digital services and enable them to overcome digital access barriers (alongside HKP's new digital workshops at St Richard's on Fridays).

Una and Norman invited the Forum to join a conversation about the Sussex MSK Partnership service to understand what is happening with the service, and feedback their views to help shape and improve its services for local people, at the second Sussex MSK Partnership Central Patient Partners' Big Conversation on 8 June 2022 from 1-4pm at The Charis Centre in Crawley (including a buffet lunch). More information about the 8 June event can be found [on the poster](#). Norman noted the

event venues would move around Sussex, with one held in Brighton, and all future event invitations would be shared via the Health Forum as details were confirmed.

5. Primary Care Network (PCN) update

Dr Rowan updated on West Hove Primary Care Network (PCN) which had:

- Recruited multiple new staff year, going £60k over budget; which it hoped Brighton and Hove NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (B&H CCG) would repay to the PCN by April 2023.
- Had just started a new project, with 2 Pharmacists and 2 HCAs forming a team to provide health checks for patients across the PCN who were at higher risk of certain conditions, including people from areas of high deprivation or specific ethnicities. The team will add PCN-wide capacity for this work, and may visit patients at specific Surgeries or invite them for a routine check at another site.
- Was starting a new targeted lung health check project in in July 2022 offering CT scan lung cancer screening to smokers in a certain age bracket to check for signs of lung cancer, which is usually difficult to detect early-on. It was noted that any incidental findings from the screenings would be directed to Practices to manage and further increase the pressure on GPs.

Jo noted she and Sharon (a Portslade Medical Centre PPG member and HKP Health Champion) were working with the PCN to ensure local people were getting all necessary support for their health.

6. Hangleton and Knoll Project Updates

Jo reported:

- HKP was running a pop-up Covid-19 Vaccination Clinic from 10:30am-2:30pm on 26 May 2022 at St Richard's Community Centre, for Spring Covid-19 Boosters to people aged 75+ and/or clinically vulnerable. Anyone aged 16+ can also attend for 1st, 2nd and 3rd (booster) jabs. The previous session at Hangleton Community Centre gave Spring boosters to 12 people. Jo encouraged the attendees to invite anyone needing a jab to attend the quiet session which had free tea and biscuits.

<https://www.brightonandhovenews.org/2022/05/25/hove-community-group-hosts-covid-spring-booster-jabs/> - thanks to Frank le Duc for this great article!

- HKP was part of the city-wide Vaccine Equity Plan to address variations in vaccine uptake due to transport, vaccine site proximity, and other factors. Jo invited the group to let HKP staff know about anyone who wanted a vaccine but had not been able to get one, and provide any feedback on suggested improvements for the vaccine roll-out; as HKP could arrange more local vaccine pop-ups if needed.
- People aged 65+ were expected to be offered a 5th booster jab in Autumn 2022, but any other vaccination plans for Winter 2022 were not available yet.

7. Any Other Business

Free Room Hire in Hove

John Kapp noted he had 4 free-to-hire rooms available at 86B Church Road, Hove, and was available from 10-11am on Mondays to give tours and answer questions. Sylvia Willard and colleagues (who used to run healing sessions at Brighton and Hove Wellbeing Centre) are offering healing at 86B Church Road from 10-4pm every Monday for donations. For more details, please call John on 01273 417997.

Together Co Buddies

Mel Pickett shared details of Together Co's new Buddy Service, which provides free access to trained, kind, trustworthy people for anyone who would like some help to set and achieve a goal in relation to linking into activities or getting back out of the house (e.g. due to anxiety/mobility). You can request a Buddy via a Social Prescribing Link Worker in your GP Surgery or by calling Together Co on 01273 229382.

Jubilee Party

Jo reported Cllr Dawn Barnett was organising a Jubilee Party at St Richard's between 12:30 and 4pm on 2nd June 2022. Contact dawn.barnett@brighton-hove.gov.uk if you'd like to attend – all over 50s welcome

Cost of Living Crisis

Kathryn asked if any of the local Surgeries had started planning how to support their patients with additional problems that might arise due to the cost of living crisis, as it was likely to reduce peoples' mental and physical health/wellbeing (including due to malnutrition and/or lack of heating at home) and potentially increase social problems and crime. Jo reported the Government's Household Support Scheme had been established to inject crisis payments into the community, but HKP had noted the cost of living crisis' impact on its communities already and expected this will get worse. Steve noted this was a good and intuitive point and very well made, and noted that the answer for most Surgeries was likely to be "no" (as many Practices were already at a crisis point), but confirmed Practices would be planning to try and manage the usual winter increase in demand. Steve noted any cost of living crisis planning would need to include increases in anxiety, depression and cases of poor mental health.

Post-meeting note: Norman Webster shared a copy of the [ordering form for Versus Arthritis leaflets, information and fundraiser supplies](#).

Dates for future West Area Health Forum meetings are:

- 28 September 2022
- 7 December 2022

Meetings are planned to be held from 10-11:30am at St Richard's Church and Community Centre, with coffee available from 9:30am. Jo asked the group to email her if they felt that future meetings should go back to 2 hours (instead of 1.5).

