



# WEST BYFLEET HEALTH CENTRE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

## Minutes from 11<sup>th</sup> November 2025

**Church of the Good Shepherd, Pyrford, at 5pm on Tuesday 11 November 2025**

**Attendance 360 people both in person and online.**

### 1. Introduction

The Chair, Andy Grimshaw, welcomed all the attendees and recalled that the PPG had grown from some 50 members four years ago to over 400 now. He introduced each of the PPG Steering Group members and the Practice Managers of Parishes Bridge and Wey Practices. The Madeira Practice Manager was unable to attend but it was hoped that Dr Soin, the senior GP of the Practice would attend shortly. He also welcomed the presence of WitKnits and encouraged support for their fundraising efforts through their raffle and sale of knitted items.

### 2. GP Practice Updates

**Liz Reynolds (Wey Family Practice)** focussed on the benefits of using the GP Practice websites. Computer expertise was not required and the websites helped patients save time and get information quickly while freeing up Practice phones for urgent requests. The websites were also data protected under NHS and GDPR standards, with access to any details only by the patient and Practice staff.

The websites had 3 tabs with a wealth of information about the Practices and NHS Services:

- the “Services” tab, provided by NHS England with useful generic information on a large variety of services.
- the “News” tab, with specific information provided by the Practices. This included “Info Sheets” provided by the PPG covering various topics, including: Access to timely healthcare; Adult Healthcare-screening and vaccinations; Using the Ashford and St Peters PALS service versus their complaints service; How to request an appointment and top tips; A guide to pregnancy and beyond; and A guide to being a carer.
- the “About Us” tab, with details of Practice policies and staffing, and where patients can give feedback (complaints and compliments!). There is also information on the PPG and minutes of its meetings since October 2023.

In summary, the websites provide 24 hours a day access to information, secure online services and reliable health advice, all of which supports better health care.

**Dr Soin (Madeira Medical)** expressed gratitude to carers for their work and for the help and information they provide to doctors. He encouraged carers to register, which would assist in

information sharing and the provision of respite care/ carers' breaks, for which there was some limited funding available. Carers were entitled to flu jabs and special times could be provided for them and their patients to come to the GP practices if required.

Dr Soin also noted the changes made in the past year by GP Practices and the forthcoming smart triage system. He hoped the changes made had helped to provide a better service and he looked forward to answering points arising in the Q &A.

**Kim Austin (Parishes Bridge Medical Practice)** explained how the Practices receive and manage information from hospitals and other healthcare services. When a patient has been seen in hospital, a letter or discharge summary is sent to the GP, usually by electronic transfer. **Each** Practice typically receives between 2,000 and 3,000 pieces of correspondence each month. This correspondence is processed by Practice staff and then allocated to the most appropriate clinician, usually the patient's usual GP, or the duty doctor if urgent, to decide what action needs to be taken.

Most hospital letters and discharge summaries are reviewed within five working days, with arrangements made e.g. for prescriptions, blood tests or other follow-up. If the discharge summary indicates something urgent, the GP team acts on the same day wherever possible.

When a hospital starts a patient on a new prescription, they usually provide a supply for 7-14 days, with the Practice then continuing the prescription once checked. If the hospital identifies an immediately serious issue or a medication that needs to be changed straight away, they will contact the GP Practice directly. This ensures that urgent matters are dealt with quickly, even before the official letter or discharge summary arrives.

As well as the volume of documents received, challenges faced include not all hospitals using the same electronic system, occasionally incomplete discharge summaries, and pressure created by the need to provide primary care that should have been completed at the hospital. If documentation is submitted concerning private treatment or procedures, this is not given priority over NHS work. Despite such challenges, the aim always is to act on hospital information promptly and safely.

In summary, documents coming to the Practices are added to patient records and any instructions on new medications and follow-ups are checked carefully. For urgent matters hospitals contact the Practices directly to ensure safe continued care. The process ensures that information from different parts of the NHS is shared efficiently and that ongoing care is joined up,

### **3. Rapid Health/Smart Triage Appointment System**

**Liz Reynolds** gave a presentation on the new smart triage system - called "Rapid Health" - which will be introduced in all three GP Practices. This will be a change in how to request a GP appointment.

While many people had concerns about the speed of new technology being introduced, the aim is to make user experience as easy as possible, Indeed because the Practices already have a triage system, the change will not be a big one. Over the past year each of the Practices have already introduced a system by which patients request a GP appointment through the Practice websites or NHS App. Under the previous telephone system, all same day appointments would usually be gone by 9am and the next routine appointment would be in 4 weeks. Under the current system, 96% of routine appointments are now able to be booked within 2 weeks.

However while the current triage system is fairer for patients, it takes one GP every day per Practice to triage all appointment requests. It is also difficult for patients to include full details on the triage form and patients have to wait to hear back from the Practice once the information in the form has been triaged.

For these reasons the three Practices have decided to introduce the Smart Triage/Rapid Health system. The aim is to get patients the right care, faster. The biggest benefit for both patients and staff is that it will add extra GP capacity. By using Rapid Health to complete the triage and send out appointment links, it is estimated that an extra 150 appointments per week will be released across the three Practices. The triage forms will likely be available from midday Sunday for 24 hours a day until the following Friday afternoon, whereas the current clinical forms are only available during core opening hours. Rapid Health will enable Practices to offer appointments on the day, within 48 hours, 5 or 14 days depending on clinical need.

Liz proceeded to a PowerPoint presentation of the Rapid Health system, followed by a "patient explainer" video showing the steps to request a GP appointment. Patients will go onto the GP website, clicking on APPOINTMENTS, then ONLINE FORM, then ADULT MEDICAL REQUEST. They will be asked to enter their symptom (not the cause of the symptom) and will then be asked a series of medical questions. Once finished, patients will be able to choose from a selection of available appointments.

Smart triage is endorsed by the NHS and the medical questions asked are clinically validated and adhere to clinical safety standards. The system also conforms to NHS data privacy and protection.

The planned start date is mid- January 2026. Patients will be informed of exact timings ahead of the launch and the system will be kept under review to resolve any teething

problems. The Practices have learned from other GP Practices who already use the system and are confident that it will help them to deliver the best service they can.

#### **4. Q&A session moderated by Carol Leong-Son**

See Appendix A for a list of all questions and answers.

#### **5. Chair's closing remarks**

The Chair thanked Carol Leong-Son for moderating the Q&A session and Nigel Ward and David Haysom for handling the online IT. He hoped that everyone had found the information provided at the meeting to be both useful and interesting. He invited all those present and online to fill in the feedback form and encouraged any non-members to join the PPG.

AG/JR 15/10/2025