Dr Salako and Partners

Langdon Hills Medical Centre

**PPG**

**Minutes**

Date of meeting: 22nd January 2025

In attendance: Dr Salako

Barbara Allen

Christine Fletcher

Tim Young

Leanne Durdle

Paris Smale

Marguerite Cutting

Alison English

Gill Stitson

Apologies: Denise Birkett

Paul Findlay

Lesley Street

Geoff Parker

Charles Hall

Christine Dawson

George Lee

Karen Freeman

Dr Salako and Marguerite welcomed members to the meeting.

**eConsult – total triage**

BS and MC addressed the group regarding eConsult. This is an online platform that has been at the practice for over a year now. eConsults are mostly dealt with on the same day and are currently open between 8am-9.30am for patients to submit. Going forward the surgery are looking to increase the opening times and move towards total triage via this route. Patients can submit various issues/requests using this online platform including administrative requests and can upload photos showing the issue at hand which can be very helpful to the triaging GP on the day.

BS explained that this was an initiative by the Government and the most widely used digital triage system in the NHS across primary care. Members were asked for their opinions on how they felt eConsult was working from their own personal experiences.

BA up until now has not used eConsult but expressed concerns over reports from friends that had tried to submit a form which had been rejected. MC explained that depending on the reason for the eConsult, most patients have been able to submit a request without any issues. Sometimes the way a request is worded can trigger a rejection.

MC explained that any patients coming to reception that have never used eConsult before and are advised to do so will be assisted by the reception team in completing the form if required. Going forward this will hopefully help patients to submit forms independently. BA and CF expressed concern over the time receptionists will then spend helping patients complete these forms. MC hoped that this was temporary and in the long run would benefit both patients and the surgery.

TY advised he had found previous submissions useful.

BA expressed concern over elderly patients who, if not on social media or computer savvy, would still be largely unaware of eConsult. MC replied that there will be SMS messages sent out to all patients to clarify and promote eConsult and other methods to advertise within surgery including posters.

Overall, the group agreed this was a positive step for continued welfare and support to patients’ health and needs.

**Flu Vaccinations**

MC reported that the seasonal flu vaccination uptake this Autumn had been smaller by patients. The surgery had organised dedicated flu clinics across both sites (Great Berry and Southview Park) in October, but this was later than usual as the government had instructed surgeries to wait in the hope that the efficacy of the vaccination would work better if given a little later to cover patients fully across the flu season. Currently there is a high level of flu cases and both the surgery, 111 and A&E are currently under great pressure. The surgery has sent out further SMS messages to eligible patients to encourage them to book an appointment for their flu vaccination. Discussion included the fact that a lot of patients are fed up with having ‘another jab’ post Covid generally and it had been harder to encourage patients to have this important seasonal vaccination.

**List Closure Update**

An email had previously been sent out to members asking for their support in the surgery’s request to have the patient list closed for a period. This must be done via NHS England and is a lengthy process. BS explained that the reasoning behind the request was that NHS England were trying to force the surgery to take care of a further care home which up until recently had been looked after by a different local surgery. We currently look after 2 care homes who each receive a weekly ward round from a GP. The surgery felt they would not be able to adequately take care of a further care home with current resources hence the list closure request.

NHS England eventually allocated the said care home to an alternative surgery so the request for the list closure was cancelled. Our list currently remains open.

**New Staff at the Surgery**

MC and AE advised that there were new staff at the surgery. An additional HCA – Sarah Eaton, an additional Nurse – Lara Morley and a Clinical Pharmacist – Kayode Oke. We also have a PCN backed GP – Dr Oyekan at the surgery once a week and from February a new GP will be joining – Dr Harding. They are a welcome addition to the practice.

TY enquired as to whether we have any Physician Associates (PAs) working at the practice. BS confirmed that we currently have 3 PAs working at the practice. They do not see acute patients, but their duties include assisting GPs on their weekly care home ward rounds, calling patients with blood test results, BP checks and medication queries. They are debriefed after each clinic by a GP. PA time allocated to the practices are determined by the practice list size.

**New Patient Registration Forms**

MC told the group that an additional way a new patient can request to join the practice is to submit a form via the website. This is then received into the practice via email for processing. TY asked how ID was checked if this was an online process and GS advised that no ID check/documentation was required as per current NHS guidelines. This could sometimes be challenging for staff when adding new patients to the system.

**Research**

We have 2 research nurses who are based at the practice twice a week. Leanne Durdle who is a Clinical Research Nurse and Paris Smale who is a Clinical Research Practitioner.They work for Central Basildon PCN and support research ready practices with a variety of studies.

Leanne explained that they promote research within GP practices and offer a complete service to take the pressure off GPs. They are always available to offer support to both GPs and potential participants.

A recent study they were involved in for our practice was the DEFINE study. This study provided a personalised approach to managing patients’ asthma by using equipment to guide decisions about their treatment going forward for GPs and Nurses. The aim is to optimise care and to make sure that any money on equipment etc was well spent. Any studies that are promoted have always been rigorously checked and signed off by the time they reach surgeries – patient safety remains the top priority.

TY asked how patients are enrolled into studies the practice is participating in – LD replied that there is always an inclusion criterion of patients that needs to be adhered to. A report is run to identify these potential participants and a series of SMS messages, telephone invitations, letters are sent out to eligible patients inviting them to take part depending on the study. Taking part in research is always optional and patients can always dissent from any research invitations if not interested.

**Any Other Business**

eConsult was addressed again and the concerns over contacting all patients to advertise the fact that this was the new way to contact surgery. MC reiterated that patients will be contacted via a variety of platforms, including Facebook, SMS, posters within surgery, on our website and on the telephone system.

Members praised the surgery for their continual hard work and dedication to their patients which BS thankfully acknowledged.

Next meeting proposed for Wednesday 19th March 2025 at 1pm. Members can either attend surgery or join via Microsoft teams.