

**DEVONSHIRE LODGE PPG.
DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT SURGERY 30/04/2025
(WEB SITE VERSION)**

1. Present

6 patient members of the PPG and 3 members of staff were present. The PPG welcomed its latest new member, RR.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from 5 patient members of the PPG.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous PPG Meeting.

The minutes of the PPG meeting of 29.01.2025 were approved without changes.

4. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting.

4.1 Update on Practice Web Site

ZH had not had sufficient time to do further work on the web site since the last meeting but will be putting up more information about the RapidHealth Smart Triage system being introduced. **ACTION ZH.** There is already a leaflet on this in Reception and this was provided to attendees at the meeting. There is also a notice on the main door about this system. ZH has spoken to practices outside North Connect PCN which use the Smart Triage system to share their experiences.

4.2 Update on PPG Pages on Practice Web Site

There was discussion about making it easier to navigate to the page with the PPG minutes. There was also further discussion about improving the PPG icon on the web site but ZH explained that the team which designed the web site have only basic tools and work from templates so there is not much flexibility. GH will look at the issues discussed but may not be able to help. **ACTION GH.**

4.3 Update on NHS Digital/Integrated Care Board (ICB).

At the meeting on March 12th between the Chairs of PPG practices (in North Connect PCN) and North West London ICB representatives the Chair of the meeting, SJ (from the ICB) expected to produce feedback from the

meeting by the end of April but this has not been produced/circulated at the date of this meeting. CE has also followed up with NH (given as our contact for the ICB) of the ICB with additional issues focusing on the lack of co-ordination between GP surgeries and local hospitals and why there are multiple apps/web site platforms for patient information. Again there has been no response from the ICB. CE will follow this up again **ACTION CE**. JGS has read that the number of ICB staff is being substantially reduced as part of the abolition of NHS England.

Other concerns which could be addressed by the ICB were raised at the meeting. This included the 28 day embargo on blood test results relating to diseases such as cancer so that GPs have time to review and discuss results but this delay could have a greater negative impact on patients than if the results were made available to patients as soon as possible. Another concern is why patient record apps often message patients to say their records have been updated, but no update is apparent, this just wastes time.

4.4. Update on PCN

MH resigned from his PCN post in March. The thrust of the PCN remains the development of services based on neighbourhoods with hubs responsible for each neighbourhood. North Connect PCN has expressed interest in 2 clinical rooms at the rebuilt Northwood Health Centre where the old cottage hospital used to be.

5. Practice Update

5.1 Staffing.

The practice is quite fully staffed at the moment and staff morale seems to be quite good. TD, who has recently become a Partner at the practice was able to attend the meeting briefly and he introduced himself and answered some questions from patients. One of the reasons he became a partner was the job satisfaction, including being able to offer continuity of care to patients and their families. He looked forward to helping with teaching new GPs. One trainee GP has already started and another is expected to start in the summer. TD will attend future PPG meetings as and when it is possible and JGS will include him on the circulation list for PPG minutes. **ACTIONS JGS and TD.**

5.2 New Online System for Patients - the Smart Triage System from RapidHealth.

The government has mandated GP practices to open up online access to patient services for the whole working day from 1st October 2025 but MH

does not think this would be possible with Patches so it is necessary to change to the Smart Triage System produced by RapidHealth. 175 practices currently use it but Devonshire Lodge is the first practice in Hillingdon to use it.

There has been much discussion about the Smart Triage System at previous meetings. It does not manage patients clinically but it can allocate appointments based on the information provided by the patient. It uses 33 triage pathways to direct patients to an appropriate level of care. MH mentioned an article in the publication, Pulse, which provides information on the performance of this system. JGS has probably found the article referred to at:

<https://pulsepcn.co.uk/insight/digital-triage-sees-pcn-call-volumes-drop-by-60/>

One useful function of the PPG could be to provide initial feedback to the practice on the patient experience of using this system. **ACTION PPG Members.**

5.3 CQC Inspection 23/24th April.

Details were provided of the practice's experiences with the recent CQC inspection. One member of CQC staff spoke to staff and one spoke to patients. Practice staff morale seems quite good. The inspection report will be needed to see how the practice is rated, but preliminary indications are looking quite hopeful. The practice thanked patients who were interviewed by the CQC during the inspection.

5.4 Liaising with CNWL (Central North West London Healthcare Trust).

Space issues in the practice and difficulties with the Wi-fi on the 2nd floor remain. Solutions to these longstanding issues lie in the hands of CNWL. For example, a cable connection to the CNWL server may be needed to help resolve the internet problems and as the building is owned by CNWL, any increase in space is governed by them. There is no standard formula to determine how much space per patient a practice should have. JGS investigated whether there was any evidence of other GP practices raising funds through innovative routes to finance building enlargement but unless the practice owns the building, this does not seem to be possible. In addition, the government policy is for organisations including CNWL to actually purchase buildings from practices which own them so there seems little chance for the practice to gain control of the building. It was decided that further pressure needs to be put on CNWL to resolve the outstanding issues. Seeing the rental contract would be useful to determine exactly what infrastructure CNWL should be providing. ZH will have a look at the contract to check whether CNWL is fulfilling all its

responsibilities and CE will contact CNWL accordingly. **ACTIONS ZH and CE.**

6. Communications with Patients

ZH estimates that 54% of the patient population have online access to the practice and amongst these patients, 90% use the NHS App. There are about 300 patients who have signed up for online access but do not use it. This will be further discussed at a later meeting.

7. Recruitment to PPG

ZH confirmed that the leaflet about the PPG intended to help with recruitment of patients to the PPG is available at reception and estimated that around 50 leaflets have been handed out.

8. Training in Use of NHS App.

TL suggested that, with the focus on patients learning how to use the Smart Triage system, it is perhaps not the best time to risk overwhelming patients by also trying to get more patients to learn how to use the NHS App.

There is an NHS initiative to use libraries as venues to help train residents in the use of the NHS App. However, it seems that relative few people are aware of this. In addition, there are relatively few people at libraries who have the qualifications to do this and the need for DBS checking and confidentiality issues may also act as obstacles.

It may be easier for patients to register and start using the NHS App by visiting the practice to get a number and code to access the App rather than trying to do this online when the applicant may need to use video.

We have previously discussed how Elliot Hall Medical Centre (a GP practice in Pinner with an Outstanding CQC rating) does patient training to use the NHS App. (and Patches). The manager from Elliot Hall is happy to talk to representatives from our practice about NHS App training and TL will contact him/her. **ACTION TL.** It might be possible to train patients to use online systems at one of the community events organised by the PCN.

9. PPG Bank Account

GH confirmed that despite many enquiries, it proved not to be possible to open a bank account for the PPG. bearing in mind the very small amount of money owned by the PPG.

10. Any Other Business

There was nothing to be discussed in this section.

11. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next PPG meeting would take place on Wednesday 23rd July at the surgery. It was also agreed that the AGM would take place before this meeting and that our Strategy Document would be considered.