

**DEVONSHIRE LODGE PPG.
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT SURGERY
12.11.2025 WEB SITE VERSION.**

1. Present

5 patient PPG members and 2 members of practice staff.

2. Apologies

9 patient PPG members and 1 member of practice staff.

3. Welcome to New Members.

2 longstanding patients at Devonshire Lodge Practice, were welcomed to the meeting as new members of the PPG.

4. Approval of the Minutes of the PPG Meeting of 23 July 2025.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without correction.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 Update on Practice web site.

There were no new changes but ZH summarised some of the previous improvements made including making access points to the RapidHealth and PPG page(s) more prominent.

5.2 Update on Interactions with NHS Digital/Integrated Care Board (ICB).

A briefing note provided by CE provided some background to concerns about the need for patients to access multiple online platforms in order to get their information. CE has now been contacted by Neil Kelly, Head of Digital Transformation and Delivery at NW London ICB offering an online meeting with digital leads about this issue. His assistant, Ruth, will arrange the online meeting and CE will co-ordinate with those PPG members and ZH who will be attending. **ACTION CE.**

In a recent newsletter intended for Practice Managers, ZH noticed an article which said that by 2026 the NHS plans to make the NHS App the only platform for making appointments and in 2027 it will become the only online channel for patients. Trials are planned to link the RapidHealth Smart Triage system to the NHS App and ZH has applied for Devonshire Lodge to be one of the practices involved in the trial. The practice is

contractually required to promote the NHS App to its patients with a target of getting 75% of patients to use it. The recent level was 71%.

ZH has also been investigating training patients to use online platforms including the NHS App and did 3 sessions with the NW London ICB Ambassador about this, but these were of limited value. ZH also visited Elliot Hall Medical where the PPG members train patients in using the NHS App. This made the logistical needs of such training clearer, including the IT arrangements and the need for a private space. These requirements would make it difficult to carry this out at Devonshire Lodge and the Partners do not want to prioritise this.

One problem is that some people who used the NHS App during the pandemic now find they need to delete their old log in and sign up again and this can act as an obstacle to using it.

The need for training may become more prominent now that the NHS is planning to make the NHS App the only platform. This can be taken up at the forthcoming online meeting with the digital leads. Perhaps PPG members could ask patients in our waiting area whether they are signed up to the NHS App and if not, whether they need help. FG offered to help here and potentially EJ could also help.

6. Practice Update

6.1 Staffing

The last month had been challenging because of a couple of absences but the staffing is now back to normal.

Please see CE's briefing note on bank staff. The PCN already has some experience of providing staff centrally for all the constituent practices but this was found not to work well so will not be repeating this. CE to investigate further whether it might be possible to use bank staff just for our practice. **ACTION CE.**

6.2 RapidHealth Smart Triage system.

ZH reported that the RapidHealth Smart Triage online system which patients can use for interacting with the practice is still working well and is popular with the clinicians. There have not been many complaints about it. JGS thought he could not use it for arranging a routine, annual blood test but TD suggested using the administrative channel of the system for arranging this. As a result of introducing the RapidHealth system, ZH has found that the number of phone calls staff deal with per month has decreased from around 6,000 to 2,500 calls. CE suggested sending a message to patients about this as it is so significant but ZH reminded the meeting that texts are quite expensive for the practice to use. However,

ZH did put a message to patients on the web site about the money wasted as a result of patients not attending (DNAs) their appointments. FG suggested that the message screen in the Waiting Room could perhaps be used for such messages and agreed to follow this up. **ACTION FG.** JGS suggested that the PPG could help by writing messages to patients about such things if a PPG box was created on the web site, although this would still involve ZH in extra work, at least initially. ZH will investigate this. **ACTION ZH.**

7. Communications with Patients.

In order to increase attendance at meetings it might help if there is an option to participate remotely via Teams or Zoom so meetings would have a hybrid form. This needs further consideration when more members are present and a vote can take place so a decision about this will be deferred to the next meeting. JGS suggested that a glossary/list of acronyms could be sent to new members before they attend their first meeting so that it is easier to understand what is being discussed and it was agreed this would be useful. **ACTION JGS & CE.**

8. Strategy/Goals 2025/26

It was agreed that we are adhering to the agreed strategy/goals for the PPG so no need to take any corrective action.

9. Mount Vernon Urgent Care Centre

It was agreed how useful this facility has been but the decision on closure has now been taken so little that we can do. However, at the current time, it may be possible to still access the centre via 111.

10. Any Other Business

ZH confirmed that, like last year, the practice will have a Christmas lunch for staff and PPG members. PPG members look forward to this. The date has been provisionally arranged as 17th December from midday to 3pm but ZH will need to confirm this.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Subject to confirmation, the date of the next meeting has been arranged for 18th February 2026.

