

Practice Manager report to PPG

29th June 2023

Staffing:

Dr Alice Waldock has settled in and is building her list of patients. She works Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. Dr Chacksfield is starting on August 3rd and will work Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and Dr Normans patients will go to him. We will then have increased our Doctor session and number of appointments.

We are advertising for an additional full time Physician Associate, giving us a total of 3, increasing our clinical appointments even further.

Fungai Jere is our new Mental Health Practitioner. She works 4 days a week at SHMC and one day at Eastfield.

We have Olga Kobova as our second Clinical Pharmacist – Full Time. Also settling in very nicely.

Ongoing difficulties recruiting admin staff. Similar issues in other local surgeries and businesses. Pay rate is on par. Constrained by funding into General Practice which hasn't increased by much. Additional NHS direct funding is assigned to PCN ARRS roles only – Physician Associates, Nurse Associates, Clinical Pharmacists, Care Coordinators, Mental Health Practitioner, Social Prescriber etc. All our care coordinators have left for various reasons. We have recruited one and are interviewing for another.

Reception staff: These are known as Care Navigators or Patient Care Advisers at most surgeries. They no longer automatically book an appointment with the Doctor at the request of a patient – they will ask questions to find out who is best to have the consultation with. There is a BOB wide program to train admin staff across the region to signpost the patient to the most appropriate clinician or service and ask the right questions to gain the info required. Our staff have been trained internally to do this but will also attend the BOB training. Patients are booked in with the most appropriate person or service, such as Pharmacy or one of our ARRS staff. This is why patients are asked to give an indication as to what their issue is. GP time needs to be kept available for more complex issues, new diagnosis and referrals/investigations. This is becoming standard across the NHS GP services.

Pharmacy issues: This is not something we have control over but we are trying to help our patients access their prescriptions. Boots no longer order repeats on behalf of patients. Lloyds Sainsburys has closed. Day Lewis are struggling to recruit permanent dispensers. The wait time to collect prescriptions is still very long. Day Lewis have a new Pharmacist now so things should improve. I am meeting with the local pharmacies to try to improve communication between them and us – most complaints are currently around prescriptions, waiting times and lack of stock, lack of communication from pharmacies etc. I have escalated this to the top of BOB so they are fully aware. The initial response back is that we need to push to get patients to use the NHS app to order repeat prescriptions. This puts our elderly and vulnerable patients at a disadvantage but we need to encourage our other patients to use this. Patients can name a proxy who can order repeat prescriptions on their behalf (ie one of their children). Health Watch will also support patients in raising their concerns higher up the NHS chain.

Website: This is finally top of my priority list and I am working on what I want it to look like before I go out for quotes and funding.

Blood Tests: West Berkshire Community Hospital (WBCH) have an 8 week waiting list for routine bloods. This is an issue I have raised with BOB and Dr Irfan is also aware of this in his BOB role. There is work going on behind the scenes still – over 12 months now - to organise a Saturday blood collection from strawberry Hill. This is now being raised by our PCN manager, Carolyn, as we wish to offer this as a PCN Saturday service and are unable to do so without a collection. We do not have the capacity to run our own blood test service at the surgery during usual open hours. WBCH has the funding and they are in our catchment so the support needs to be with them to increase staffing and capacity back to where it was previously. Blood tests are not in the core contract. Hospital Trusts are commissioned to do blood tests. Previously WBCH provided a phlebotomist to work from SHMC but they no longer have available staff.

Spring Boosters Covid and Autumn Winter Virus: We ran two spring covid booster clinics and vaccinated our housebound and care home residents. This campaign has now stopped. We do not yet know the details of the autumn covid vaccinations. They are not combined with flu vax, so we assume patients will be offered both. Flu this autumn is not available for all over 50's anymore. Over 65's and vulnerable under 65's only. Non vulnerable under 65's can pay a pharmacist if they want one.

Self-Book: When we invite patients in for appointments (ie routine health checks) we can send a self-book link where they can see all the suitable appointments and choose one. This link works for 24 hours. We have used it for spring boosters and baby imms plus some long term conditions appointments.