

# Hollies Patient Forum Notes

## Steering Group Meeting Hollies Medical Practice

### Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2024 6-7.30pm

#### **In attendance**

Ian Hodgson (IH) (Chair)  
Linda Strudwick (LS) (Acting Vice Chair)  
Sally Freeman (SF) (Secretary)  
Michael Worboys (MW) (Editor of the newsletter)  
Mike Lyons (ML)(GP)  
Andy Smith (AS)(Practice Manager)  
Linda Campbell (LC)  
Howard Fry (HF)  
Pauline Tryner (PT)  
Phil May (PM) (Greystones Patient Forum)

#### **1. Apologies for absence.**

Apologies were received from Myrtle Pritchard, Lydia Wells, and Tom Baker.

#### **2. Welcome and Introductions (for observers and visitors).**

Introductions made by all attendees. PM was welcomed to the meeting, and he shared information about the profile and membership of Greystones' Patient Group. They have been especially proactive considering their short time in existence. Congratulations were given by ML.

#### **3. Notes from previous meeting and action points.**

All actions discussed and items resolved or on this meeting's agenda.

#### **4. Core discussion Theme: Hollies and NHS Update.**

The British Medical Association (BMA) is encouraging changes in primary care to ensure that all GPs and practices are treated fairly, including financial remuneration. There continues some blurring between primary and secondary care, and the Hollies practice now has almost 11000 patients. Other important issues include:

- Safe working for, and access to GPs.
- The need to prevent burnout of GPs and practice nurses.
- **Changes in appointments:**
  - This Autumn, routine appointment times will be increased to 15 minutes (up from 10 minutes).
  - On the day and urgent appointments **will remain at 10 minutes** to help with demand.
  - It's expected that patient, GP, and reception satisfaction will increase as a result, with a perceived improvement in quality.
  - There has also been an informal trial of a 'total triage system' which internally has evaluated well.
  - When the changes go 'live' (possibly November, after an awareness-raising campaign for patients) appointments will not be directly made by phone, but rather a receptionist will complete an Accurx form on a patient's behalf when they call, for submission to triage and colour rating (red, amber, or green).
  - Hopefully, patients will be seen more quickly, being allocated appropriately by triaging.
  - It was emphasised by ML that an assessment of need is undertaken on the day for all patients contacting Hollies.

## Discussion:

- LS asked a question about the **status of physician associates (PAs)** at the practice. ML and AS responded that they are all supervised, noting that at present PAs are not allowed to be members of the BMA. Here is a useful update from the BMA: <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/nhs-delivery-and-workforce/workforce/physician-associates-in-general-practice-making-it-safe-for-patients-and-gps>
- SF asked about the possible recruitment of paramedics. ML spoke about specialist roles and that at this point they do not feel the need, nor have the funds, to recruit a paramedic just for Hollies (though there are paramedics working across the Porter Valley Network).
- MW asked about the effect of increasing the appointment times in patient waiting times, and an overall concern about maximising safety in the practice. ML spoke about rostering more GPs for the anticipated busiest parts of the month, and to cover for the resident doctors who are leaving. Longer appointments are likely to impact on waiting times for non-urgent referrals, but ML hopes that other changes would mitigate these. There was some concern about the impact on workload of three trainees leaving the practice in November 2024.
- AS reported that nearly 1900 COVID-19 and/or flu vaccinations were given to around 1200 patients at the first vaccination clinic on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2024. A further event is being held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2024. The support of HPF volunteers was appreciated by practice staff and patients. All feedback from patients about HMC can be seen here – many of the most recent refer to vaccination clinics: <https://www.nhs.uk/services/gp-surgery/hollies-medical-centre/C88052/ratings-and-reviews>

**ACTION:** AS to invite a PA to the next meeting.

## 5. Recruitment drive for steering group and e-group.

One person from the vaccination clinic 5<sup>th</sup> October 2024 is interested in joining the group.

**ACTION:** IH to follow up.

## 6. Plans for strengthening patient engagement at Hollies.

Two training packages have been developed for staff and new members of the patient forum. They were very well received and will now be finalised with additional items as needed (e.g., PPT slide decks). The new member component will then be piloted with current steering group members, and AS will arrange for an agenda item at the next staff away day for the staff component (likely early 2025).

### **ACTIONS:**

- IH, LS, and LW to finalise the materials in preparation for delivery (IH, LS, LW).
- To be included as an agenda item for a staff away day for the *staff component* (likely early 2025) (AS).
- A time to be agreed with current steering group members to pilot the *new members component* (likely early 2025) (IH).

## 7. HPF Newsletter finalising next edition and content.

MW reported that the current newsletter is being finalised and will be available for the next vaccination clinic (12<sup>th</sup> October 2024). It includes information about the walking groups (reported by many participants as a positive experience to combat loneliness and isolation), and material about strengthening the patient voice (IH).

**ACTION:** MW to finalise and arrange for distribution before the next vaccination clinic.

## 8. e-Group feedback

SF reported 77 active members of the e-Group. The following points have been made by e-Group members:

- Query: How do you know if a request is being acted upon, or when to repeat a request?  
Response: Leave it for up to 48 hours, and then follow up. **Note:** Accurx can be used for all interactions, not just making appointments. This will be highlighted in the next HPF newsletter.
- Query: How do patients know which platform to use for which request?  
Response: It's necessary to use only one platform and, if patients are not confident about completing the form, reception staff can assist. The NHS App is becoming more interactive and may be the best entry point overall – it can take patients directly to the Hollies' Accurx portal to make an appointment or submit other requests.
- Query: Blank walls in waiting areas - can these be improved?  
Response: AS apologised for the blank walls, but once building work is complete, more artworks will be installed. Soundproofing is planned for the basement area, and then all the noticeboards/artwork can be reorganised.
- Response to question about annual reviews raised at the previous meeting: in some cases, appointments can slip to 15 months, but this depends on the nature of the review. For example, important annual blood tests will be conducted within a tighter time frame.

## 9. National Association for Patient Participation (NAPP).

Nothing significant to report. HPF remains a member of NAPP, and regular updates about activities and queries from patient groups are shared via a mailing list.

**ACTION:** IH will forward updates to the steering group.

## 10. Patient Survey 2024.

It's two years since the previous survey, and planning should start for the next. Falkland House are currently undertaking a survey based on a small number of questions, which HPF can replicate at Hollies for ease of data collection. It would also provide an opportunity to generate a large dataset across the two practices.

Given that the appointments system and other patient-facing components are currently under review, it was agreed to hold off the survey until early 2025. This would capture patients' views of changes the practice has been making.

**ACTION:** Plan to undertake the next survey early in 2025.

## 11. Do we need a long-term strategy (2025-2028)?

A three-year vision for the group may be beneficial for HPF. It can reflect the vision we have, what we want to achieve as a patient group, and milestones along the way.

**ACTION:** IH and LS to discuss further.

## 12. Planning for meetings in 2025: Themes and structure.

There was discussion several issues, including face-to-face vs. online meetings, the day of the week, and frequency. It was agreed that face-to-face are preferable for most members, though people who find travel difficult could 'dial in' from home. A special 'meeting microphone' can be used during the meeting to ensure remote participants can hear all the proceedings.

It was agreed that a focused topic or theme (which could include important updates from HMC, developments in primary care, or invited speakers, such as PAs) would be higher up the agenda in future meetings.

Meetings in 2025 will therefore be bi-monthly on Monday evenings, 6-7.30pm, at the Hollies Medical Practice. Suggested dates will be offered shortly.

**ACTION:** Suggested dates will be shared for meetings in 2025 (IH).

### **13. Planning for Christmas event.**

Linda S has kindly offered to host us for our 2024 Xmas get together. The next priority is to select the best date for most of the group. Further details about the event itself will be shared shortly.

**ACTION:** A Doodle poll will be shared for HPF to select the best date (IH).

### **14. Date of Next meeting.**

- Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024 – Hollies MC 6-7.30pm

### **16. Any other business.**

None.

SF/IH

29 October 2024 [FINAL]