

Hollies Patient Forum (HPF)

Steering Group Meeting Hollies Medical Practice

Monday 2 December 2024 6-7.30pm

In attendance

Ian Hodgson (IH) (Chair)
Linda Strudwick (LS) (Vice Chair)
Sally Freeman (SF) (Secretary)
Michael Worboys (MW) (Newsletter Editor)
Linda Campbell (LC)
Howard Fry (HF)
Mike Lyons (ML)(GP)
Andy Smith (AS) (Practice Manager)
Jeet Khosa (JK) (observer)

CORE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Pauline Tryner and Tom Baker.

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

Introductions made by all attendees, and JK was welcomed to the meeting.

3. Notes from previous meeting and action points.

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

CORE DISCUSSION THEME

4. Core discussion Theme: Role of the Physician's Associate [AS and ML].

A PA was not able to attend this meeting, but we discussed the role with AS and ML. This included:

- It's **important to remember physician's associates (PAs) are people**, qualified and dedicated to their work. The forum's queries are not critical of PAs employed at Hollies Medical Centre but are simply to seek more clarity about how the role has evolved in the UK (especially in the light of recent media reports) and current systems of supervision.
- The model **originated in the US**. Currently, in the UK around 37% of PAs work in general practice/primary care, with the remainder working in parts of the NHS such as secondary care (e.g., hospitals). More information about the history of PAs in the UK can be found here: <https://www.fparcp.co.uk/about-fpa/who-are-physician-associates>
- At Hollies Medical Center (HMC), **PAs are supervised by GPs**. The British Medical Association (BMA) and the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) have both published guidelines on the work and supervision of PAs. Hollies currently follows the RCGP's, which can be found here: <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/representing-you/policy-areas/physician-associates-scope>
- At Hollies, **GP partners believe the practice has benefitted** from the introduction of PAs, and **forum members commented positively** on the efficiency and thoroughness of PAs at HMC.
- A **national review** of the role is due in March 2025. This should provide further clarity into how PAs are utilised in the NHS and primary care.

PRACTICE FOCUS

5. Practice update [AS and ML]

- The **lower ground areas** of HMC have been decorated, and further sound proofing is under way.
- The **changes to the appointment system** (see previous minutes) have been very fruitful. Waiting times have been reduced on average from 4 to 2.5 weeks for routine appointments. Reviews have been very positive, and the Google rating has improved.
- The **focus of the changes** has been on the simplicity of ease of access for all online appointments. The triage of the communication is still undertaken by a senior GP and the urgency of the appointment is then decided and appointments are allocated as required. The reception staff are benefitting from the changes as patients appear happy with these improvements.
- **More information** about the changes can be found here (28 October 2024 post): <https://www.theholliesmc.co.uk/news-2>. The practice will consider reissuing and publicising more widely information about the new arrangements set out in the news post.

6. Patient surveys [IH]

- Surveys conducted by other practices in the area have been completed or will soon be underway.
- The survey at Hollies will begin early in 2025, with three core questions (matching surveys at other practices), but with subsidiary questions seeking information specifically about Hollies.

PATIENT FORUM FOCUS

7. GDPR consent forms for steering group and e-group members [IH]

- Currently, there is no formal consent process for steering group and e-group members to allow elected personnel (Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary) to store their contact information.
- Two consent forms have been designed (for the steering group and e-group), and these will be distributed shortly via email. This will formalise members' approval for their contact details to be retained by elected members of the HPF.

8. Update – final plans for information packages for new forum members and new Hollies staff [IH and LS]

- Pilot versions of both packages are now finalised and will be rolled out early in 2025.
- To pilot the package for new patient forum members, current members of the steering group will be invited to participate in a learning event in January 2025.
- For new Hollies staff, a guidance note will be included in their welcome pack, and a suitable slot for a verbal presentation given by a steering group member during a staff training event will be arranged in Q1 of 2025.

9. HPF newsletter – update next edition [MW]

- The October newsletter was available for two of the flu/COVID-19 vaccination Saturdays, though due to cost patients were not notified of publication by text.
- The next newsletter is planned for March 2025, so forum members are welcome to suggest ideas for content, ideally by February 2025.

10. E-group feedback [SF]

- There are currently 77 active members.
- Positive feedback has been received about automatic recalls for infrequent appointments.
- Friendliness and helpfulness of the reception staff, and improvements in GP communications have been noted.

- Feedback about arranging an annual review and access to medication – an earlier appointment can be made if a patient rings the practice.
- Positive feedback for Accurx system and efficiency of practice.
- Complaint about length of time it takes to share final notes from the previous meeting. Emphasis made on the voluntary nature of the patient group.

11. Feedback from AGM of the National Association for Patient Participation [IH]

- Attended by IH on behalf of HPF on Saturday 16 November 2024.
- Thirty-five practices were represented.
- Discussions following the AGM were positive and Hollies has already addressed several difficulties raised by other groups.
- During the event, a prize was awarded to Mendip Vale Medical Group PPG for a project that entailed several interventions accompanied by a pre- and post-survey. HPF will consider applying for this award in 2025.

FUTURE FORUM MEETINGS

12. Final arrangements for the steering group Xmas event

- This will be held Monday 16 December 2024 @ 7pm, at Linda S's.
- Drinks and nibbles will be provided.
- Donations to the [Young Women's Housing Project](#) (YWHP) will be welcomed.
- Details will be shared via a separate email.

13. Dates of steering group meetings in 2025

The suggested dates were approved, and will be as follows (all are Mondays @ 6pm):

- 10th Feb 2025 (AGM) (Theme: Patient Participation and Patient Groups)
- 7th April 2025 (Theme: World Health Day – [information available here](#))
- 2nd June 2025 (Theme: Porter Valley Primary Care Network – [information available here](#))
- 28th July 2025 (Theme: Maternal health and breastfeeding support, to reflect World Breastfeeding Awareness Week – [information available here](#))
- 6th October 2025 (Theme: Diversity and Health, to reflect Black History Month – [information available here](#))
- 1st December 2025 (Theme: HIV and prevention to reflect World AIDS day – [information available here](#))

Identified themes will include an overview of the issue and then a focussed discussion on local implications for primary care.

14. Any other business

1. LS suggested that the **meeting venue could be more comfortable**, possibly in another room in the building. This was agreed, and beginning in 2025 tea/coffee will also be provided. Group members with mobility issues will be able to attend virtually from 2025 onwards, via a conference microphone.
2. IH distributed a **Christmas Quiz** sheet (£1 or more) from Falkland House PPG (proceeds to S2 Food Bank and the Archer Project). **These can be copied as needed to share with friends and family.**

15. Date of Next meeting.

- Monday 10th February 2025 (AGM) – Hollies MC 6-7.30pm

SF/IH

9 December 2024 [final]