

**NOVUM HEALTH PARTNERSHIP
BARING ROAD BRANCH PATIENTS' GROUP**

**Online Meeting: 16 July 2020
4.00 p.m.**

MINUTES

Present: Lee Walker (LW, chair), Bob Blunden, Pat Blunden, Robert Thompson (minute taker), Janet Thompson (JT), Patrick Connolly (PC), Suzy Wilkinson (SW), Paul Howell (PH), Maureen Bishop (MB), Mythily Mahatharan (MM, Novum), Seyhan Yusuf (SY, Novum)

1. Before beginning formal business, LW outlined the etiquette for conducting online meetings in terms of waiting for cues to speak, minimising background noise, muting devices when not speaking and so on.
2. LW then welcomed and introduced everyone who had signed in to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Dr Judy Chen, Jeanne Mynett and Anthony Atherton.
3. The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as an accurate record.
4. There was one matter arising not covered later in the agenda.

LW asked about progress with the patient survey. SY and MM reported that it is complete and ready to be converted to Survey Monkey. The link to it will be texted to patients in a particular age range, the target group to be decided at a meeting of the partners on 30 July. The actual date for launching the survey will be confirmed to the PG by email.

It was noted that the online survey will not be accessible to all patients. If necessary, hard copies can be provided, to be returned by post or in person.

5. SY and MM presented a practice report (attached). The following points were raised in the subsequent discussion:
 - i. SW suggested that the Ringway Centre might be a suitable location for flu vaccinations, to help with social distancing at the practice. LW asked whether vaccinations could be administered outdoors. SY responded that any off-site location (including the church halls already being considered) would require a risk assessment and CCG approval, but the Ringway could certainly be approached. It was noted that the flu vaccination programme must not rely exclusively on email communication.
 - ii. In discussion of nurse appointments, PC noted that a practice nurse had contacted him about a blood-pressure check and commended the practice's proactive approach. SY explained that the practice had worked hard to keep up with monitoring ongoing conditions: patients needing essential face-to-face appointments had been invited to the practice, and others will be contacted as the lockdown eases.

iii. LW asked about the success of remote consultations, including setting up appointments over the telephone and whether patients had generally been available at the prearranged time. SY felt that the various processes had worked well, though no overall figure for abandoned phone calls is currently available because calls are redirected to the receptionists' personal phones. SW commented on the apparent length of the telephone queue; SY explained that the reason is partly that there is a single system for the entire Novum partnership and partly that the system indicates the total numbers of callers waiting at any time although there may be several receptionists on duty (so, in effect, several short queues rather than one long one).

6. Post-lockdown arrangements and developments.

Most of the relevant points had already been covered in the practice report. LW asked about second-wave preparation; MM replied that there is no specific plan as yet, but all current arrangements will be maintained (including the call redirection service enabling receptionists to work from home). There is adequate PPE in store.

7. Online forum

SY reported that the partners are content with the current arrangement and that text messages containing a link to the online forum will be sent to those who have expressed an interest; it will also be available on Novum's website and Facebook page. The forum will be inclusive of the entire partnership, but will have specific areas for the two separate branches.

In subsequent discussion it was agreed that PG members would be emailed the link in advance of others, as a test; it was also agreed that the online forum would not replace the face-to-face Patients' Group but could indicate issues for the group to discuss and provide a channel for communication.

8. Proposal to combine the Rushey Green and Baring Road Patients' Groups.

LW referred back to the minutes of meetings in late 2018, at which the conclusion had been that although the two groups wished to retain their separate identities, the Baring Road group would welcome joint meetings. This proposal came to nothing because the Rushey Green group ceased to function shortly afterwards.

SY pointed out that all of Novum's administration is now combined, and for that reason it seems logical to have a single Patients' Group. LW replied that the two groups had in fact been very different: the group at Baring Road had been organised and led by patients, while that at Rushey Green had been organised by the staff. He passed on observations from Anthony Atherton at Rushey Green, who feels that the Rushey Green group should remain separate to focus on its distinct patient population, which is more transient, socially diverse and proportionately disadvantaged than that of Baring Road; however, the group needs active support from the practice.

MB, who had attended Rushey Green meetings in the past, commented that they had been successful; JT added that from the Baring Road perspective the Rushey Green group had been seen as an example to follow, especially in terms of arranging visiting speakers. Some of the practical difficulties of arranging joint meetings, however, had not gone away: the journey between the two branches is difficult, especially by public

transport, and parking is a problem at either end. Both groups separately had experienced problems in finding meeting times suitable for everybody.

LW pointed out that setting up a new joint Patients' Group would require new terms of reference and approval by the Baring Road group's AGM. There was also a sense, articulated by PH, that the two branches genuinely have different needs. After some discussion, the following conclusions emerged:

- i. For now, the groups should function jointly but on an informal basis, keeping the option of separating if and when desirable fully open.
- ii. The terms of reference should nevertheless be revisited, to sharpen our focus upon objectives.
- iii. We should initially consider holding face-to-face meetings in the boardroom at Baring Road, using a video connection to the screen there for those unable to travel from Rushey Green.
- iv. Efforts should be made to engage more participants from Rushey Green, perhaps through the new online forum.
- v. SY will consult Dr Chen about possible visiting speakers.

9. AOB.

SY clarified the hours to be worked at Baring Road by the two new GPs mentioned in the attached practice report: a 'session' is a three-hour surgery.

The meeting was declared closed at 5.00 p.m.

Next meeting: Thursday 27 August at 4.00 p.m., probably online.