**Patient Participation Group Argyle St Surgery**

**Minutes of meeting held 08.04.2024**

The meeting was held at Argyle St Surgery.

Present: Judith Scourfield, Maria Williams, Dennis Evans, Dr Bhari, Kay Macken

And Sarah Scourfield (Town Clerk)

Apologies: Victoria Clare and Justine Hendy

Dennis opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. He explained and apologised that there had not been a meeting for some time but this had been due to him requiring an eye operation and although Judith had offered to meet group members there had only been 2 people who had responded to her, no meeting had transpired.

Dennis introduced Sarah and asked that we introduce ourselves. He then explained that there were no set agenda items as we would primarily be discussing concerns raised by people who had contacted Sarah.

A discussion was held regarding the concerns mainly these were as follows:

People not able to access appointments.

Telephone system

Shortage of GPs in the practice

The role of the qualified nurses and nurse practitioners

Dennis gave an account of the historical problems of the difficulty in recruiting new GPs to the practice and Dr Bhari then explained that many newly qualified GPs do not wish to work full time and that work life balance is now of utmost importance to them.

Currently the surgery has 5 salaried GPs and 7 in total. 1 GP has recently left the practice, the practice serves a population of 23,000 people and when compared with statistics of other surgeries the newly qualified GPs see Argyle St Practise as too big a challenge, especially when they read the negative social media reports about the surgery. Currently, if full complement of GPs is in, they will see at least 100 patients in one day. He also explained that there are also other factors to be considered, such as the signing prescriptions and reading up on outcomes of tests that have been received regarding patients.

Judith stated that appointments can only be given if they are available but that the receptionists that are answering the phones receive an unacceptable amount of abuse and this is stressful for them. Abuse is soul destroying and not all can cope with this and often leave due to this.

82 appointments had been taken by 8am and 50 were still waiting in a queue.

She also explained that no show appointments had an impact on the situation and that only today there had been 18 no show appointments just for the nurses.

There were similar problems experienced in all areas, primary care, secondary care, and social care were also unable to recruit.

My Health Online now required phot ID to enable them to assist people. Pharmacists were also now prescribers, and many were being used in a positive and successful way. The surgery had nurse practitioners who were able to prescribe for minor ailments but often patients only want to see the GP.

Judith stated that she would be retiring later this year. Those present wished her all the very best but felt that she would be sadly missed after being part of the surgery for so many years.

Dennis explained that 17 years ago there had been apox. 17 GPs in the practice, and that it was a great concern that the practice found it so very difficult to recruit GPs. Dr Bhari explained that the problem is a national one and that New GPs say that the older GPs work too hard. This is experienced in Locum services also and there is very little that there seems can be done to change the culture.

Maria explained hat she had contacted the surgery to make an appointment to see Dr Hesketh but was not able to do so on all occasions, she had explained the reason was a valid one as she had been told to do so by Dr Hesketh. Eventually she contacted Judith who had intervened, and she did get an appointment. Judith explained that Dr Hesketh does manage her own follow up appointments.

A discussion also took place regarding the need to recruit new members to the PPG. This will take priority at the next meeting.

Dennis asked Sarah if there were any other items she wished to discuss at present. She felt that all her concerns had been discussed and that she would now go back to the people who had contacted her and explain the outcome of this meeting. She felt she had a better understanding of the surgery and the problems that they were facing, she felt that the surgery was doing the best they can, given the circumstances.

Dennis assured her that she could contact Judith or himself in the future if there was anything she wished to discuss.

He then thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting saying that the next meeting would be arranged, and that Sarah was welcome to attend.