**Minutes of Patient Participation Zoom Group Meeting**

**9 June 2020**

Present

GP Partner Dr T W Hunter

Practice Manager Jan McCulloch

Administrative Assistant Angeline Salani

Assistant Practice Manager Karin Thorburn – Minutes

Reception Supervisor Kingsleigh Mitchell

Patients – 7 patient group members attended via Zoom

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1. **Minutes of Previous Meeting & Actions**

This meeting date was planned prior to Covid. The practice decided to continue with this date under the extraordinary circumstances to update our Patient Group regarding Covid.

1. **Coronavirus – Practice Response & Future Working**

Dr Hunter attended the meeting to speak about Covid and to answer any queries or questions that our patient group may have –

Practice Response –

While the practice continued to deal with the general healthcare needs of our patients, we required to change the way we offered our services to follow the Scottish Government guidelines. Whilst we had already been offering telephone consultations, we responded by offering more telephone consultations to meet these guidelines and the patient demand. We did not close our doors during this period but instead decided to follow a sensible approach. Reception staff and clinicians were all advised to wear masks. We offered morning blood appointments to protect vulnerable patients who could attend whilst the premises was at its cleanest and had minimal footfall. All unwell patients with Covid symptoms were triaged by a clinician and asked to attend via the back door where they were seen in our allocated “Hot Room”.

Any patient requiring a house call would be visited by a clinician wearing PPE including top-to-toe disposable coveralls. The Practice has been unaffected in terms of shortage or quality of PPE.

Team huddles were organised twice daily to discuss the information and directions given by the government and health board. Initially it was busy times in the practice but our team responded well to the busier times and changes at every point during this period. Our patients were very supportive, offering kind messages of support.

Our MDT contacted our most vulnerable patients to offer support.

Care Homes –

The Practice has patients registered in care homes across Ayr and Prestwick and are aligned to 3 care homes in the area. Our care homes have followed government guidelines and have been supported by the practice. They have been largely unaffected.

Future Working –

Moving forward, we have begun to offer more face to face appointments and introduced video consultations. The reception area now has protective screens installed and clinicians will continue to wear masks for protection. In order to reduce footfall in the practice we have introduced –

* staggered surgeries (mix of telephone consultation and face to face appointments)
* More telephone consultations offered than previous
* Prescription collection by the local pharmacies (uptake of this service has increased)
* Sick lines emailed instead of surgery collection
* Longer appointments

These measures are likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

1. **Annual Reviews for Long-Term Conditions**

The Practice have been experimenting with new ways of working remotely including trialling a new service Medlinks which has been recommended to the practice to reduce footfall in the practice. This involves patients completing part of their annual review online. Any patients with asthma who were born in March have now been emailed with the link to this. Medlinks offers educational support including information and videos. These results are then reviewed by a clinician and actioned accordingly.

We have looked into offering patients with hypertension the opportunity to manage their own blood pressure at home using their own BP monitor and sending their results into the practice for review. A survey was undertaken asking patients if they owned their own monitor or would consider this as a future purchase.

Alison Jones, Respiratory Nurse Specialist, has been working remotely contacting our COPD patients via telephone. This review is working well via telephone.

Face to face appointments are still available for bloodletting.

The practice continue to invite patients for their annual review on their birthday month.

1. **Telephone Consultations – Patient Satisfaction Survey**

We conducted a survey to gauge the effectiveness of telephone and video consultations offered by some of our attached team consisting of occupational therapy, mental health, community linking and physiotherapy since Covid. Feedback was very positive with patients stating they were happier to receive a telephone call as they felt it was beneficial, more convenient and easier to speak openly.

1. **Beat the Bulge – Lockdown Losers**

It was widely reported in the media that people were beginning to feel unhealthy during lockdown. Given this circumstance we have reinstated the Beat the Bulge challenge. Support is offered to patients and staff via a private Facebook Group where everyone is encouraged to support each other and a weekly newsletter will be sent out to all patients who have signed up. We currently have approximately 25 active participants and have almost lost 25kgs over a 3 week period.

1. **Patient Group Queries/Feedback**

**Q. With reports of A&E being quiet, has this put pressure on the Practice?**

**A.** No. Workload has been different but manageable. As testing for Covid has been provided and results returned promptly, we have lost very few work days and have been working with a full team.

Out of hours was reported to be experiencing high volume of calls. We monitored this in the practice and the number of our patients contacting out of hours had stayed the same.

**Q. Dr Hunter’s opinion on the efficacy of face masks was sought –**

**A.** Dr Hunter advised that in his opinion he feels they are an effective way of controlling the spread of the virus. Whilst the mask will not protect you completely from contracting the virus, it should control the severity of it. We are guided by the Scottish Government.

**Q. Dr Hunter’s opinion on Scottish Governments suggestion that patients with asthma should not wear them –**

**A.** Dr Hunter suggested that if a person with asthma can comfortably wear a mask then it would be advisable to do so.

**Q. When Covid is over, will the Practice return to normal service as before?**

**A.** The majority of services will go back to normal but we have learned from this experience and if the temporary measures we have currently put in place prove to be a better service then we will adopt these for the future.

1. **Any Other Business**

* Congratulations to Dr Tan who gave birth to a baby girl
* Dr Scott is working with us as a locum covering Dr Tan’s maternity leave
* Dr Andrews is our new Foundation Year trainee GP who will be working with us for the months of June & July
* **Date of next meeting –** Tuesday 6 October 2020