

## **Minutes Diamond Medical Group PPG Meeting**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2025 and introduced new member Jan Sawyer.

Agenda broadly covered within time constraints but not strictly in order.

### **Points of Action from previous meeting:**

**Drop in Digital Help Sessions:** **HS** reported on the lack of uptake from patients at the recent drop in Digital help session held at Rutland Lodge on 14 January. Only 6 patients took advantage of the session, these were mostly retired patients. Those who attended said they found the session very helpful for setting up PATCHS and the NHS App and took away printed guides for future use with the platforms.

**PD** said that the session had been promoted on the website and in the surgery and **HS** posted information on the Shadwell and Alwoodley social media pages. SMS messages had not been sent out, as previously patients have complained about an overload in messages. It was suggested that for future sessions SMS messages could be sent out. **HS** thought that the Company employed to carry out social media for the DMG could be more proactive in communicating these events with patients through social media channels.

**Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Vaccinations:** **PH** had previously enquired why this Vaccine, which was available in September was not included in the same notification to patients as the COVID and Flu Vaccines. There was some discussion about who was eligible for the Vaccine and **PD** has since reported back with the NHS recommendations, which are as follows:

The RSV vaccine helps protect against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), a common virus that can make babies and older adults seriously ill. It's recommended during pregnancy and for adults aged 75 to 79.

If you're aged 80 or over

If you turned 80 after 1 September 2024, you're eligible for the RSV vaccine until 31 August 2025. You're not eligible for the RSV vaccine if you turned 80 on or before 1 September 2024.

If you're aged 75 to 79

Contact your GP surgery to book your RSV vaccination.

Your GP surgery may contact you about getting the RSV vaccine. This may be by letter, text, phone call or email.

You do not need to wait to be contacted before booking your vaccination.

Having the RSV vaccine at the same time as other vaccines

If you're pregnant, you can have the RSV vaccine at the same time as other pregnancy vaccines, such as the whooping cough and flu vaccines.

But it's best to have them as soon as they're offered rather than waiting to have them at the same time.

If you're aged 75 to 79, the RSV vaccine is not usually given at the same appointment as your flu or COVID-19 vaccines, but you can have them at the same time if a doctor or nurse thinks it's needed.

You can have it at the same time as other vaccines, such as the shingles and pneumococcal vaccines.

**DMG Website:** The GP Survey evaluation on website accessibility has now been sent in draft form to **PD** for discussion with the DMG Digital Lead. Paula will report back on any recommendations for changes to the website before the next meeting. **HS** mentioned that the Systmonline link appears to indicate that you can contact your GP via this link but in fact you are only able to access your patient records/ test results or order repeat medication via this link.

Some Patients had mentioned that they needed to access PATCHS via the NHS App, which required multiple sign-ins but **PD** said patients are able to access PATCHS via the direct link.

**Communication:** The PPG thought that better communication is needed between patients of all four surgeries. It has been difficult to recruit PPG members from Rutland Lodge and Carlton Gardens, despite leaflets being distributed to all surgeries. **HS** thought that more use could be made of the previous Rutland Lodge Facebook page and this should be renamed The Diamond Medical Group. **JS** suggested that information leaflets could be displayed in local Pharmacies, in particular those next door to Rutland Lodge and Shadwell. **ACTION POINT - HS** to contact the Pharmacies and request permission to display information leaflets. The question on when the next newsletter will be published arose: All agreed this should happen in the near future. **HS** to look into this.

**Appointment Availability:** The various means of obtaining an appointment were discussed at length. Many DMG Patients are still reluctant to use the Digital Platforms to book appointments; as either they do not want to, or they cannot use the technology. **MG** reminded the PPG about Patient Telephone Assist, for those patients who have difficulty in using the App. **PG** discussed his concerns regarding the 'Capacity has been reached' message, which is sometimes displayed within about 15 minutes of the App opening. **MG** explained that the message 'capacity has been reached' varies in time from day to day, depending on staff numbers and the number of patients requesting appointments. **PH** expressed his concern about what would happen if a patient needed to seek medical attention urgently the same day when PATCHS had reached capacity. **PD** and **MG** replied that the patient could attend a Walk-In Centre, call 111 or depending on the severity of their symptoms call 999 or attend A&E. Some members expressed dissatisfaction with these options and there was further discussion as why more appointments could not be made available. **MG** explained that the situation was not unique to the DMG and the national shortage of GPs is the principal cause of this arrangement being made necessary. It has been noted that sometimes the 'capacity' message is activated in the morning and then switched off later in the morning as further appointments become available, so if not successful at 8am, it is worth checking again later in the day. It was suggested that an SMS alert could be sent to patients who have tried unsuccessfully to request a message on PATCHS, if further appointments become available later in the day.

**Electing a New Chair:** **HS** has informed the PPG that due to her increased personal and business commitments she would like to step down from the role as Chair, although she would still like to remain an active PPG member. **HS** requested members to contact her if they would like to be put themselves forward for election. **PH** asked if DMG had a budget in place to help support the PPG. **PD** told us that DMG did not have a specific budget for this, although it should be noted that funds had previously been made available for the NAPP subscription.

**The meeting terminated at 7pm. Next meeting date TBC**