Minutes of the Lincoln House Patient Participation Group Meeting
Held on Thursday 23rd July 2026
At Lincoln House – Highfield surgery

Attendees
Rachel Boulter (PPG member)
Carys Faichney (PPG member)
Brian Malyon (PPG member)
Dr. Bawani Sivagurnathan (GP Partner)
Jaki Smart (PPG member)
John Stacey (PPG member
Stephanie Smith (Operations Manager)

1. [i]Apologies for Absence
Juliana Reinaldos (Business Manager)
Tracey Wootten (Digital Transformation Lead, delta PCN)

2. Minutes of the Meeting
These were approved for circulation to members and to be posted on PPG Website

3. Matters Arising from the Last Meeting/Action Points

- PPG Assessment Tool
  This had now been completed by the PPG, with a total score of 79/150. Some questions seemed irrelevant, e.g. C2 (7&10) response to letters sent or telephone calls made by PPG to patients. Likewise Section C3 (13 – 8) all related to regular contact/meetings/project work with PCN (Primary Care Network and ICB (Integrated Care Board). Currently this is vicarious through Practice Staff or South West PPG Network meetings. However, it was agreed that it was a useful exercise and helpful in determining a future strategy/Action Plan for the PPG.
- PPG Development Check List
  This was completed by the PPG at an informal meeting. The process was helpful and several areas were highlighted for development and in some cases were already in progress e.g. Patient Information Articles, Recruitment Drives, a recent survey of Virtual Members regarding patient experience at the Practice.
- Advice and Guidance (A&G)
  Dr. Sivagurnathan gave feedback on the Current use of the A&G and how it gave GPs access to specialist expertise when needed to confirm a treatment plan and seek advice on the appropriateness of further tests and/or referral. This should streamline and improve patient care.
- Abdominal and Aortic Aneurism AAA Screening
  Brian had completed a Patient Information Article for the Practice Web site and this had now been posted. It was requested that this also be on the PPG website. If results of the scan required follow-up with the hospital nurse, the PPG urged patients to do this.

- Patient Questionnaire: This was now agreed and ready to email out to the Virtual Patient Group.

4. **Surgery Update Report/Feedback**
   A paper from the Business Manager had already been circulated and it was noted that a summary would later be published on the Website.
   Nursing: The PPG noted that Laura the Lead Practice Nurse had recently retired after many years of dedicated patient care, and the PPG wished to add their thanks and best wishes for her future. Recruitment was underway for a replacement Lead Nurse and Marion had returned as a Practice Nurse.
   Medical: Doctor Abayalingam was leaving mid -July and recruitment was underway for replacement as well as a short term, fixed term, medical post.
   Building/Accommodation: A small ramp had been installed to allow easier access for those with impaired mobility/using wheeled aids through the sliding entrance doors at the Apsley site. New air conditioning units had been installed at Apsley and were planned for Highfield.

5. **Surgery Statistics/Themes and Actions**
   Tracey, (Digital Transformation Lead) had submitted a report for the meeting which was circulated in advance.

   - Booked Appointments and DNAs (Did not Attend): Covering the period July /25 to March /26. It was noted that the number of patients registered with the practice during this period increased by 141 to 23,498. The number of booked appointments varied between approximately 7K to 8K with an expected peak in October, as a result of Flu vaccinations. Numbers not attending booked appointments varied between 2.7% and 3.9% peaking in July with 3.1% (318 patients). This is an ongoing area of concern and one experienced widely. Much effort continues in support of patients, attending appointments by recognising physical barriers, providing education and efficient means of cancellation if unable to attend.
   - Call Numbers: These numbers again varied but peaked at 9,672 in March 26. With the use of technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) it was hoped these numbers could be reduced. However Digital Exclusion was of real concern often impacting those most in need of the Practice services.
   - E-Consult: It was hoped that with the introduction of AI, the system would be accessible to more patients, thus reducing the intervention needed by reception staff.
   - Feedback Friends and Family: This covered just April to June 2026 and the numbers were relatively small. Of the patients who responded, by far the most, 623, rated their appointment as very good with 37 rating their appointment as either poor or very poor. Although small, it would be useful to know if patients gave any indication of why they were dissatisfied.
   - Complaints: Of the 63 complaints between January and the end of June: 30 were not upheld; 14 were upheld; 15 were partially upheld and 4 were still pending. Request to have complaints broken down into themes.

6. **Patient Education Topics and Videos**
   The list of patient education videos had now been approved by the Practice Partners and sent to the production company to begin development. Dr. Sivagurunathan and Dr. Anwer had also been recording photographs and audio to create personalised avatars that will feature in the videos. Dr. Sivagurunathan gave a further progress update. The PPG expressed an interest in the inclusion of a video on the purpose and activities of the PPG but did not particularly wish to front the video at this time.

7. **GP Patient Survey 2026 (Paper already circulated)**
   Brian presented an interesting review of the data provided. Although a small sample, he pointed out that for 23000 patients a sample size of 378 is the minimum (479 surveyed) and a response rate of 30% is considered excellent (26% in survey) so the results of the survey should be considered seriously. Whilst an overall rating of "good at 67% seems fine, it is below the national average of 77% so there is room for improvement. The main issue dragging the numbers down seemed to be about contacting the surgery by telephone, but very good once the appointment process is sorted. All other figures were within the national average. It was included that the only way to improve this would be by reducing the number of incoming calls through technology and AI, but as noted in Item 5 above, it is essential not to digitally exclude patients.

8. **Care Quality Commission (CQC) (Briefing Paper already circulated)**
   This had been provided to enable the PPG to consider the type of questions that PPG members might be asked in person, virtually or via questionnaire as part of a review. Reviewers might ask to see evidence of the activities of the PPG, means of representing other patients' views, as well as working relationship with the Practice. Terms of Reference, PPG Web Site, Agenda, Minutes and Reports are just examples of how this could be achieved. The Paper is also helpful in giving the PPG ideas how it might develop its strategy going forward (Agenda Item 9 below). It is likely that the Practice will be included in the next round of CQC Reviews, given the Practice merger 2 years ago.

9. **PPG Draft Action Plan (Paper already circulated)**
   Jaki explained that this was an early draft and was being developed in light of the PPG Assessment and Development Tools, the CQC paper above and feedback from other members of the PPG. It was agreed, for example, that we would try and support the flu clinics again this year, as it was an opportunity to promote the work of the PPG and encourage recruitment. A second draft would be considered at the next informal meeting of the PPG.

10. **Any Other Business**
    - <u>PPG Patient Information Articles</u>
      Brian offered to write a second Patient Information Article on the new Health Pods. The idea behind these patient prepared articles, is to encourage patients to respond/participate as appropriate to health initiatives.

- Two Year Anniversary of the Merger of Apsley and Highfield Surgeries.
  The surgery had celebrated the occasion of the merger and its achievements with team building events and ice cream refreshments for its staff

11. Proposed Dates and Times of Next Meetings:

Thursday October 15th 2026 from 1300-1430 at Apsley Surgery

2027:
Thursday January 21st 1300-1430
Thursday April 22nd 1300-1430
Thursday July 15th 1300-1430
Thursday October 21st 1300-1430

Actions Agreed

- Jaki: Forward Completed PPG Assessment and Maturity Model Reviews to SW Herts PPG Network
- Brian: Patient Information Article – Health Pod
- Tracey: Results of PPG Patient Questionnaire.
- Tracey : Surgery statistics – Themes for complaints; Friends & Family – categories/reasons for dissatisfaction
- Jaki: Updated Action Plan for PPG
- Jaki: Outcomes of Recent PPG recruitment drive