

Notes of the May Lane Surgery PPG meeting, Thursday 8th October, 11 am

Present:

Adam Beard
Dr Opher
John Hobson
Shirley Hill
Marcia Heaven
Rachel Sleigh

Apologies

Rosalind Cameron-Mowat
Lesley Cross
Geoff Simms

Sadly at the start of the meeting, it was reported that David Thould had died in GRH on 1st October. He had been secretary since the first meeting of May Lane PPG and carried out the role diligently. It was only in the last month that he had to step down as he could no longer manage the role. We send our condolences to family and friends.

Covid-19 Rates and testing

Rates locally are low for the Stroud area as a whole. Local figures, broken down by district

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/inform/health/coronavirus-covid-19-intelligence-for-gloucestershire/>

This is a bit flawed as the weekly figures keep rising after they're issued, due to how long it takes some test results to be reported.

1 The GP's have not been involved in testing as the nearest testing centre is Quedgeley, testing only being available with a booked appointment. Appointments are released at 8 pm each evening for the next day. Although tests are normally booked online on the GOV.UK website, they can be booked on the telephone by calling 119. Lines are open 7 am to 11 pm but are very busy. Tests can also be ordered and delivered to your own home.

a) It is difficult for all practices but their main aim is to try to reduce all risks and keep everybody safe whilst caring for their health. Contact with patients is mainly telephone, some have been seen in cars and some who need to be seen have been escorted straight to the surgery and after consultation out the back door.

Flu vaccinations have been going well, managed by Adam (Practice Manager), working very efficiently, greeted by Adam, sent to the room for the vaccination and out the back door without meeting others. Again they were being done by age and as the relevant vaccine by age was available.

Some people have not received their appointment but this continues for a further months and they should receive a letter shortly inviting them to make an appointment. A question was raised 'why weren't those with health issues who are shielding being given priority and it was explained with the different vaccines for age, this was the determining factor.

- b) With regard to how they see the next few months, they expect to see Covid-19 continuing as it is at present. Dr Opher reported that a vaccine is not too far away, maybe just before or after Christmas. It will be given firstly to those considered high risk by age or shielding as well as those working in the Health sector. It will then be rolled out to others as the vaccine becomes available.

Dr Opher reported that GP's were not being notified of patients testing positive to Covid-19 but he had now managed to resolve this.

2 General update from May Lane Surgeries

A full-time appointment was made a month ago for a child adolescent Social Care Prescriber, Hollie Jones, to deal with young people's issues and this was very successful.

A further part-time appointment for a pharmacy technician is proving very helpful to the GP's and their role is to deal with minor queries from the pharmacies.

Dr Michelle Doidge is back from maternity leave, starting work this week. This results in a full complements of GP's and surgery availability.

3 Use of online surveys in some practices

e-consult is proving popular with some patients who prefer it to ringing to speak to a GP or make an appointment. At May Lane, it is operated at Walnut Tree Practice but patients do have a choice. Shirley Hill expressed concern that there should always be a choice.

Lesley Cross was not at the meeting but responded in advance 'I certainly do not agree with relying on online surveys - it is too complicated to get one size fits all.

4 Vitamin B12 and Steroid Injections - can people be trained to do these themselves?

Dr Opher responded that patients can be trained to do Vitamin B12 injections themselves but not steroid injections but there is no policy to stop injections. Some patients are responding well to Vitamin B12 tablets which can be checked by regular blood tests. Rachel raised the issue that tablets are not successful for those that did not absorb Vitamin B12. On the chat line, she stated that she was referred to an online do-it-yourself learning (it was not clear who she was referred by).

5 Access to Cancer Treatment

Both Walnut and Acorn practices are doing well now with cancer referrals.

6 Access to surgery or treatment for those on the waiting lists

This was not going so well and access for Knee and Hip surgery, as well as cataracts was resulting in longer waits for their surgery.

7 Any Other Business

- a) **Facebook policy** Rachel Sleight raised the issue of how this should be used as there did not seem to be a clear policy. Dr Opher said he was not a user and not something he wished to get involved with but now Dr Doidge is back, Rachel should liaise with her and they could organise a clear procedure.

- b) **Local Help Groups liaison with surgeries** Rachel mentioned that there were help groups performing a valuable role with regard to Covid-19 patients who needed help but there was no clear connection with the surgeries. Gloucester County Council has provided a hub, that feeds information to Stroud Emergency Response, who contact local groups.

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gloucestershires-community-help-hub>

The hub cascades to Stroud District Council's Emergency Planning, who cascade to the huge number of groups that stepped up. These are a mix of mutual aid groups, often set up purely to address the crisis, town and parish councils, churches and places like GL11, schools, businesses that used their kitchens and grocery shops to provide free food parcels to those in need.

<https://www.stroud.gov.uk/health-wellbeing/coronavirus/find-support-services-map>

Stroud Coronavirus Community Response instigated by Nadin Hadi, all work done by volunteers and this works as an information hub for Stroud District residents and a bit of a hub for the volunteer groups. <https://neighbournetworks.uk/>

Dr Opher said that these groups were performing a valuable service and he would raise this issue at the next ILP meeting.

- c) **Tests for Aneurysm** Lesley emailed a question - I would like to ask 'why is it only men that get assessed for aneurysm. Is it definitely known that women have no such problem?

As with all screening programmes, it is run on the basis of statistical risk, cost and potential benefit. It is only men who are routinely invited to be screened as they are far more likely to develop an aortic aneurism. I do not know the physiologic reason for this.

If a woman is thought to be at risk of developing an aortic aneurism for any reason they can be referred for screening by their GP.