



PPG Meeting - Minutes

Date: Tuesday 10th June, 2025

🕒 **Time:** 1:30 pm

📍 **Location:** Harwood Medical Centre, BL2 3HQ

Invited: AM, KD, W & D H, SW, DB, ML, JL, PG, AC, SJ, GN, MG, C & PM

Attending: DH, KD, DB, JL & SJ

Apologies: ML, WH, MG, PG

We discussed:

1. eConsult:

Online Triage Service: Discussion on the current usage & effectiveness of our online triage system. From October 2025, Practices will need to ensure that Online Triage services are being utilised during core hours.

Yesterday's PPG meeting addressed patient concerns regarding the practice's use of EConsult around Easter. The practice experienced exceptionally high demand for appointments at that time, compounded by staff leave and sickness during the bank holiday period. Despite efforts to secure locum cover, this was unsuccessful. To maintain clinical safety and prevent patients from repeatedly calling, the decision was made to direct patients to EConsult.

The practice acknowledges that communication about this change could have been better, and an apology was extended for not informing patients in advance. We discussed the negative feedback received on social media, particularly on Facebook, and recognise that many patients found the EConsult system isn't user-friendly and distressing.

Looking ahead, while General Practices are being encouraged to use online triage platforms, and this will become mandatory from October 2025, the practice will consider our high elderly patient demographic when implementing these changes. Our goal is to ensure the practice operates efficiently while continuing to provide a safe and effective service to all patients. We are committed to improving communication for any future changes within the practice, ensuring all patients are informed, not just those online or on social media. We are also exploring different software options that are more user-friendly.

2. **New Staff Members:**

An update on our recently joined staff, including Mental Health Practitioners (MHP/MSK) & new administration team members. We're delighted to introduce several new faces who have recently joined our team, enhancing the services we can offer across both our Harwood and Tonge Moor sites.

We've recently welcomed **Andy Williams**, our new Musculoskeletal (MSK) Practitioner. Andy works three days a week and has already proven to be a valuable addition to our MSK team, working alongside Kurt, who continues to be with us on Mondays. We're also looking forward to another MSK practitioner joining us very soon, so please keep an eye on our website and noticeboards for more information!

Earlier this year, **Sophia Reidy** joined us as a Mental Health Practitioner. Sophia has been working three days a week across both sites and is also a prescribing practitioner. Unfortunately, news came to us this week that Sophia will be leaving the Practice quite soon. We are awaiting an update from the Primary Care Network with details of her replacement. I will keep you all updated.

We also have a new Salaried GP, **Dr. Hashmi**, who is working with us every Friday offering later appointments for routine issues.

Finally, our administrative team has grown with the addition of **Lucy, Jennifer, and Sigrid**. We know you'll all make our new colleagues feel very welcome as they settle into their roles at the practice!

3. **Telephony System and Functions:**

We're excited to announce that our new telephony system has now been successfully installed and is fully operational! This upgrade comes as part of the government's 'Modernisation to general practice' scheme, which identified the need for improved communication infrastructure across primary care. Our new system brings some fantastic enhancements that will benefit both our patients and our staff. Key features of the new system include:

- Call-back function: Patients will now have the option to receive a call back, reducing the need to wait on hold.
- Unlimited queues: This will help us manage call volumes more efficiently during peak times.
- All calls recorded: This feature is for training and monitoring purposes, ensuring quality and patient safety.

We believe this is a great addition to our practice, significantly improving how we manage calls and connect with our patients. We're really hopeful for positive feedback from patients as they begin to use these new features. Please bear in mind that the options have changed when calling the practice, so callers will need to listen carefully to the new prompts.

4. PCN Services:

We wanted to provide you with an update on our involvement with the Turton Primary Care Network (PCN) and explain how this collaborative approach benefits you, our patients, and our practice.

The landscape of funding in General Practice is constantly evolving. Previously, individual practices received direct funding to employ various clinical and administrative staff. Now, some of these crucial funds are channelled directly into our PCN, allowing for a more integrated and resource-sharing approach across local practices.

What is the Turton PCN?

Our PCN is a collaborative group of six practices located in the Turton area, working together to deliver a wider range of services to our collective patient population. These practices include:

- Harwood Group Practice (us!)
- The Oaks Family Practice
- Crompton View
- Bromley Meadows
- Mandalay Health Centre
- Edgworth Medical Practice

How Does the PCN Benefit You?

Through the PCN, patients registered at any of these six practices can access a broader range of appointments and specialised services. This is a great way to offer extra capacity and extended hours services (including evenings and weekends) beyond what individual practices might be able to provide alone.

Within the PCN, appointments are offered with a diverse team of healthcare professionals, including:

- GPs
- Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPs)
- Healthcare Assistants (HCAs)
- Practice Nurses

- Mental Health Practitioners
- MSK (Musculoskeletal) Practitioners
- Dermatology clinics
- Menopause clinics (Less frequent)

Furthermore, the PCN directly employs several clinicians who work within our practice, enhancing the care we can provide. This includes our PCN Pharmacists (separate from our existing practice Pharmacist, Hanif), Mental Health Practitioners, Physician Associate and MSK Practitioners.

The PCN model allows us to work more closely with our neighbouring practices, share expertise, and ultimately improve access to a wider variety of healthcare services for all patients in the Turton area.

If you have any questions about the PCN or how to access these services, please don't hesitate to ask our reception team.

Questions & Feedback:

Prescription review reminders - A PPG member reported that the date on their repeat prescription is incorrect and not reflecting the date of the most recent review. We will discuss this with Hanif to see how this can be rectified.

Positive Feedback – PPG Members wanted to share their positive feedback regarding our Health Care Assistant, Sarah Kimpton. Many members wanted to give Sarah the recognition she deserves as a hardworking, polite and efficient member of our team. Well done, Sarah!

Open Evening in Practice - PPG Members felt that it would be useful to invite patients into an open evening at the practice. We did this around 6 years ago and it really helped patients understand what is happening in our practice as well as locally/nationally. Given the changes the practice has gone through in the last 12 months, it would be a good way for our Senior Partner, Dr Ali to address any concerns and explain our vision for the future. We will put this idea forward in the next Partners meeting next month.

Noticeboards in Reception – PPG Members reported that many of the noticeboards in reception are out of date and hold old information. We will delegate this task to a member of our Admin team to spend time each week to update our noticeboards and ensure the most up-to-date information is available to patients. We will also ensure that our PPG noticeboard is updated with information discussed at the meetings, including recent minutes. We can also use this to recruit new members to our PPG meetings to bring fresh ideas and perspectives. Following the meeting, Dr Bradford & Dr D'Souza discussed hosting

our next PPG at Tonge Moor Health Centre where we may be able to attract new, diverse members. More information to follow.

Keeping the PPG in the loop – Going forward, efforts will be made to communicate information through our PPG members so that this can be shared in the community. Platforms such as Facebook and Instagram can often lead to negative comments and not all patients have access to or use Facebook/Instagram. PPG's can be a useful tool to stop misinformation and keep the community updated.

Thank you to all our members for taking the time to attend our PPG meeting. We appreciate you bringing ideas, suggestions and concerns to us and we look forward to meeting with you all soon.

Next meeting – Autumn TBC