

June Newsletter

Planning & Strategy Day review

The PCN hosted a whole day event for all the Practices to attend to review what the PCN has achieved thus far and an opportunity to discuss our plans for the future. It was great to share how we have grown as a PCN and the tremendous work that has been achieved across the network by all members of staff.

The Practices were given an overview in to the digital innovations that are currently out there to support general practice with signposting patients to additional services and how to improve access. Last year we had 32 Investment and Impact Fund (IIF) targets to achieve, which has been reduced to 5 for this financial year. The reason for this is because the focus for all PCN's will revolve around improving access and producing a Capacity and Access Improvement Plan.

There are a number of projects designed to support and improve access that were discussed with Practices during the strategy day. These projects are now being worked on and rolled out to Practices, which will be the central focus for the PCN for the rest of the financial year.

Cervical screening awareness week

Our PCN Care Coordinator team have created a number of cancer screening awareness leaflets to encourage patients to get checked. These will be featured on the PCN website, PCN Facebook page as well as other Practice websites and reception area screens. Below is an example of the Cervical Screening leaflet.

Let's talk about...

CERVICAL SCREENING

DON'T FEAR THE SMEAR

WHO IS INVITED?

Six months before you turn 25 you will become eligible.

- 25-49 year olds will be invited every 3 years
- 50-64 year olds will be invited every 5 years
- 65+ if one of your last 3 tests were abnormal

You may be invited for more frequent testing if you have an abnormal result.



HOW IS THE TEST DONE?

The nurse will ask you to get undressed behind a screen from the waist down. You will be asked to lie on a couch with your legs bent, feet together and knees apart. You will have something to cover you while the test is done. A smooth, tube shaped tool will be gently put into your vagina using lubrication which will then be opened so that the nurse can see your cervix. Using a soft brush they will take a small sample of cells from your cervix before removing the speculum and leaving you to get dressed.

The test can be as quick as 4-5 minutes.

[SEE WHAT HAPPENS AT YOUR APPOINTMENT HERE](#)

WHY SHOULD I HAVE A SMEAR?

The smear test checks the health of your cervix, it is not a test for cancer it is to help prevent cancer. The cells taken are checked for certain types of HPV that can cause changes to the cells of your cervix. Finding these cells early will reduce the risk of them turning into cervical cancer.



WHERE CAN I HAVE MY SMEAR?

Your GP surgery will have appointments available. You can also ask for an appointment in the evening or at a weekend.

TOP TIPS

- Talk to your Nurse or Doctor if you are nervous or embarrassed
- Ask to book a longer or double appointment if it will make you more comfortable
- You can ask for a Nurse of a particular gender
- Take someone you trust with you
- Wear a skirt or dress that you can keep on during the screening
- Ask for a smaller speculum or ask to put it in yourself

Pharmacy team

Our PCN Pharmacy team have been working with Practices since the creation of the PCN. The team are made up of Pharmacists, Pharmacy Technicians and pre-registered Pharmacy Technicians.

The team now have bookable appointments, available throughout the week, that can be accessed on the EMIS appointment book. There are a mixture of face-to-face and telephone appointments. You can book a patient to see or speak to someone from the Pharmacy Team for an acute medication follow up, if the patient has been discharged from hospital following a medication change, if a patient requires medication stopping, altering or starting and for any general medication queries and safety concerns.

PCN Prolapse and Pessary service - Dr Julia Visick

The PCN Prolapse and Pessary service is now running well after initial pilot sessions. This is run by experienced GPs seeing patients for either just pessary changes or for assessment to see if a pessary is even required. The GPs will also be offering vaginal oestrogens where appropriate for this group of patients and also assessing urinary problems if they also exist.

Unfortunately, we have seen many patients who are well overdue their pessary changes and so we are seeing a higher rate of ulceration and erosion than normal. We will book the patients back in directly for the follow up appointment if we need them to keep the pessary out whilst this heals. **Please do ensure that you have checked diary dates for your patients and called up any that are overdue.**

Any patient who is concerned they have a prolapse or symptoms of this could be booked into this service.

With waiting times for hospital appointments being excessive, clinicians may want to consider booking patients into be seen even if they are younger and fit for surgery. Patients can be taught to self manage their pessaries (remove themselves if needed), and so pessaries can be offered to younger women also whilst awaiting secondary care!

Cancer Care Coordinators

Our two Cancer Care Coordinators have now started with the PCN and are eager to explore and support with Cancer patients across the network. Watch this space for more information on this work to come!

Healthy Lives Advisors

We have three Healthy Lives Advisors, who have recently joined the PCN. The team will be providing NHS Health Checks to our patients suffering with high deprivation and health inequalities. They will also be carrying our project work around supporting our homeless patients, Asylum Seekers and patients who attend food banks.
