



Stewart Medical Centre
15 Hartington Road,
Buxton, Derbyshire,
SK17 6JP

Stewart Medical Centre Patient Participation Group



**SMC PPG
8-Feb-25**

MINUTES OF THE PPG MEETING ON 4th FEBRUARY 2025

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Dr Roberts (chairman) welcomed the participants to the meeting. The meeting was attended by Mrs Smith (Assistant Practice Manager), Dr Brennan (partner), two trainee GPs, 6 patients from SMC and one from EMC. Apologies for absence were received from 4 members.

2. MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The chairman said that the draft minutes of the 3rd September meeting were sent out and all suggested amendments incorporated. He did not propose to go through the actions from the last meeting, except for those relating to the PPG text on the website (dealt with later), as everything was dominated by the takeover of the Elmwood Medical Centre and we should concentrate on this.

3. MERGER WITH ELMWOOD MEDICAL CENTRE (takeover from GTD)

The chairman said that he had supplied Mrs Smith with some of the patient questions in advance of the meeting in order to help focus on the main factors. Evidence suggests that, for proper patient care transition, it is necessary to have a clear patient communication plan. Mrs Smith said that she would give as much information as possible at the moment although it should be recognised that, as yet, the takeover had not formally occurred. Negotiations were still in progress with GTD (owners of EMC), the Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board (ICB, the overall NHS health commissioner for our area) and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) who have the final say.

Timeline for the changes: As indicated above, Mrs Smith said that they still did not know when the Stewart Medical Centre will formally take over. Whilst they have visited the staff and buildings, they are not yet allowed to enter the Elmwood building to undertake any work, nor have any jurisdiction over how Elmwood is being run. However, they were preparing as well as possible which should minimise the transition time when the two practices were being run separately. The expected main steps (many of the phases will overlap) were:

- Complete the purchase of the building
- Finalise arrangements with the ICB
- Receive the formal consent of the CQC
- Run the two practices separately for as short a time as possible whilst awaiting the merger of the two IT systems and the agreement of the official take-over of contract
- Complete the legal process to take over the NHS England contract
- Make any necessary alterations etc. to the Elmwood building to facilitate staff movement, IT, patient care etc.
- Complete recruitment of the required clinical and administrative staff
- Merge the appointment systems and run as a single practice

Information for patients: The chairman said that there had been an announcement on the website on the 10th January and an article in the Buxton Advertiser on the 23rd January. Mrs Smith said that the next announcement would be when the formal takeover had occurred. She expected that the announcement would be made on the websites and by text message. She would be soon updating the SMC website with staff changes etc.

Contract with ICB/PCN: Mrs Smith said that, at present, the ICB was not directly providing additional funding although there were to be further negotiations between the Partners and the ICB. However, the ICB have said that they will honour our previous excellent Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) achievements so that the full funding for good performance is supplied. Dr Brennan said that, in addition, the practice would get the enhanced "new patient's premium" for a year and this would help fund the transition arrangements. The current EMC list size was about 5,600 and the SMC list 11,210.

Dr Brennan said that the extra assistance provided by the High Peak & Buxton Primary Care Network (PCN) was done on a per patient basis and not on a per practice basis.

Clinical Staffing: Mrs Smith said that the current SMC staff changes were as follows:

- Dr Georgina Forbes left the practice on 31st December
- Dr Imogen Spector-Hill had increased her days from 2 to 3 from the beginning of January
- Dr Huw McCandless started working 2 days a week from mid-January
- Dr Patrick Burch started working 2 days a week from the end of January
- Nurse Louise Dwyer is increasing her working days from 3 to 4 at the end of March
- Kate Johnston in the Admin team has increased her working days and will be taking on a Safeguarding role alongside Dr Brennan
- Outgoing trainees are Dr Aaron Shaughnessy and Dr Elinor Kirk (both ST1 – **Specialist GP Training year 1**)
- Incoming trainees are Dr Thilakstan Jeyakumar (ST3) who will be with the practice for 12 months and Dr Charles Azeke (ST2) who joins the practice on a 6-month placement.

She said that the practice management structure has been changed, with her Assistant Practice Manager role being divided into two. She will be taking on the Clinical team, QOF & the trainees, and Carly Chip is taking on the admin team in addition to the reception team. Further recruitment is ongoing in both clinical and admin teams. One-to-one conversations have been had with all Elmwood staff and whilst at present it looks like all staff will be transferring to us, it is still too early to say for definite. Currently, there is a doctor working 2 days a week, a nurse working 3 days a week and a phlebotomist working 20 hours a week at Elmwood. Dr Brennan said that continuity of care will be maintained and the service will actually improve as they have over-staffed in anticipation of the merger and expect to have recruited ahead of the extra demand.

Appointment Procedures: Mrs Smith said that the current situation in regard to availability of appointments was as follows:

- Face-to face GP appointments: 17 days
- Telephone GP appointments: 13 days
- Nurse appointments: 14 days
- Blood tests: 14 days

The situation was slightly better than normal as some appointments that had been held back because of the takeover have now been released. However, it could take considerably longer to see a specific clinician. One patient queried why she could not make a direct on-call face-to-face appointment for a lesion. Mrs Smith said that all on-call appointments were always preceded by a telephone call.

In regard to the takeover, Mrs Smith said that, eventually, there will be single phone number for appointments etc. and the SMC triage system will be extended to Elmwood patients. Before this can happen, the online booking systems will need to be combined. Fortunately, both practices use the EMIS (Education Management Information Systems) software although this is only updated three times a year and the practice have no control over when this would happen. After the EMIS system has been updated, appointments will be split between premises for both SMC and current EMC patients. Dr Brennan said that SMC will take over the EMC extended hours slots. She said that there were no implications for out-of-hours cover as both SMC and EMC use the same provider, Derbyshire Health Care United.

Monitoring of Performance: The chairman said that SMC patients are concerned that continuity of care, time to get appointments and quality of appointments is maintained. Currently, the practice performance is monitored by the PPG in terms of the appointment availability reports made at the PPG meetings, the national GP survey performed by IPSOS and the Friends and Family Test data gathered by the accurx text messaging system after patients had had their appointment. Mrs Smith confirmed that the official name of the combined practice will be the Stewart Medical Centre and the C81034 code will remain the same allowing data searches to be carried out in the usual way. She also confirmed that the accurx system will be extended to cover the Elmwood patients and that she will continue to supply the accurx data to the PPG.

Patient Participation Group Procedures: The chairman said that there had been a problem because Elmwood patients had looked on the SMC website and seen that the last PPG minutes on it were from June 2023 and concluded that the SMC PPG had held no meetings since then. Hence it had become important that the PPG website text be updated and the latest documents put on it. He said he would supply Mrs Smith with suggested website text as a matter of urgency and asked that a note be put on the News page on how to find it (scroll to the bottom of Home page). He said that

Elmwood PPG had a meeting on 20th January and those present expressed a wish to merge with the SMC PPG as soon as possible. Elmwood PPG does not have a chairperson and the meetings are run by one of the practice managers. Elmwood PPG does not have Terms of Reference. The chairman said that it may help the PPG merger if the SMC Terms of Reference were passed to the Elmwood PPG to see if they wanted any changes. This was agreed. Mrs Smith said she was happy to attend an Elmwood PPG meeting if given sufficient advance notice. The chairman said that he also was prepared to attend one. The chairman said that the next SMC PPG meeting was in June when some Elmwood patients would be invited and he expected that the November meeting would be open to all (SMC + EMC) patients.

Use of Buildings: As indicated earlier, it will be necessary to make repairs, alterations etc to the Elmwood building to facilitate its use. It was suggested that if Elmwood patients knew of any problems, e.g. disabled access, with the building relating to them, then these should be reported to Mrs Smith or the chairman who would pass them on. Dr Brennan was in support of this. Mrs Smith said that, at this stage, it was too soon to say how staff and services would be split between the buildings e.g. where to have an "urgent hub", where to have a "routine hub". Dr Brennan said that the Elmwood pharmacy leased space from GTD. SMC would enter negotiations with the pharmacy once they owned the building.

Way Forward: The next steps are to complete the legalities of building purchase etc, obtain CQC permission for the takeover and try and obtain additional funds from the ICB. In the meantime, the practice would continue to recruit the necessary staff and sort out the logistics.

4. AGREED ACTIONS

The agreed actions were as follows:

- a) Supply details of the staff changes for the minutes (AS)
- b) Revise text on the PPG for the website (TR, AS)
- c) Put a note in the News section of the website showing newcomers how to access the PPG text (AS)
- d) Notify patients when the takeover has officially occurred (AS)
- e) Pass the SMC PPG Terms of Reference to the EMC PPG for consideration (TR)
- f) Attend a meeting of the EMC PPG (TR, AS)
- g) Pass on any known deficiencies in the Elmwood building to SMC (EMC PPG)

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 3rd June 12 noon – 1.00 pm in the Lower Room of the Buxton Methodist Church. If required, there may be intermediate patient-only meetings.

E-mail recipients of documents are requested to bring their copies with them to the next PPG meeting.