Dear PPG,

The practice would like to send a big Thank You to you all for being so patient over the last few years and with all the changes since 2020:

* New Manager
* New Reception staff
* New Nurses
* New Healthcare Assistant
* New Advanced Practitioner
* New attached staff (Pharmacists, MSK, Mental Health Practitioner, Paramedic and Nursing Associate)
* And even new GPs

This has put some pressure on the practice/staff and patients. We feel/hope this should slowly give the practice a new lease of life with new ideas. However; within all these changes we need you, you’re the most important group of people to help point out changes and whether they work or not.

In this PPG email I have attached a quick questionnaire, if you have a spare minute to complete and return, I would be most grateful. I am also asking for you to send in some topics to discuss for the next new quarter. I will then put these forward to the practice team for discussion and come back with a summary/feedback to the group. I’m hoping this will get more of an interactive PPG group going forward and help build the communication with our patients.

**Practice Website** – I have been approached by our website company to update the site to a more digital platform. We are wondering if this is a worthwhile process due to the amount of patients that access this. If anyone does access our practice site could you provide me with some information about how you find the site, i.e. is it easy to navigate around, can you find what you require etc. <https://www.boltondoctors.co.uk/>

We still have our ‘Facebook’ page going, which as a practice we feel is better platform to promote campaigns and awareness months to our patients.

**New Staff**- We have since the last newsletter, employed an Advanced Practitioner (Imrane Bana) who will be working Mondays and Tuesdays. An advanced practitioner can deal with most patients requesting acute, same day appointments that do not require GP contact. This is a more effective use of primary care services and allows GPs to see patients with more complex health needs. The only area that Imrane is **unable** to do is Med3’s (Sick notes)

Within our PCN Network, we have employed a Nursing Associate, Lizzy. She will be working with us on Mondays and Wednesdays. She is still relatively new to the role and the practice, so we are currently starting her off with areas like: Blood tests, ECGs, Mental Health Physical Reviews, Over 75 Reviews, NHS Health Checks and BPs.

**Appointments** – We are still working to the remote consultation first system. We are currently having discussions about how to go forward and start to introduce more Face to Face appointments in a safe way for our patients. The concern is that COVID is still increasing, even more now the restrictions have been relaxed. I would like to inform you that Dr Thagia is trialling pre-bookable face to face in the mornings. This will be her first 4 appointments unless she is the emergency GP. This will be monitored as we need to be mindful of the amount of patients within the waiting area.

**Telephones** – Due to the increase of queries and calls, this has put pressure on the phones and has resulted in patient unable to get through to the practice. To monitor this I have asked our IT phone provider to send me data each day to see where the demand is, for example a certain day or time. I have been analysing this since mid-Jan 2022 and within that period we had received 3294 calls. In Feb we received 7249 and currently in Mar we have received 6398. In March out of all those calls 98.89% had been dealt with by our receptionists. 1.11% unfortunately had been unanswered, however these had been between the times of 8am to 9:30am which is our busiest time for phone calls. The other time is when we only have one receptionist (lunch time and from 16:30 till closing).

I hope this helps to give you an insight of the demand and the pressure our reception staff have faced as they’re receiving a lot of abuse on a daily basis over trying to get through to the practice. Unfortunately we don’t have the facility to increase our phone lines at present.

**Birth Month Recalls** – So we are coming to the end of our first new system of recalling our patients in their Birth Month. This has been hard to try and streamline but we have seen a difference in our appointment availability with our nursing team. We still have some tweaking to do with the system but all in all it has worked well and hope it’s worked well for our patients.

**Healthwatch Bolton** – I have come across a website I would like to share with you. Healthwatch Bolton is an independent consumer champion in Health and Social Care in Bolton. They listen to experiences of people using the NHS and social care services in Bolton, good or bad, with the aim of improving services for people.

They also provide an information, advice and guidance service. The provide advice and guidance around health and social care related issues – (for example: how to register with a GP) they don’t provide medical advice but can signpost to organisations that can. <https://www.healthwatchbolton.co.uk/>

**Next quarter April** – Here are a few topics/discussions to consider:

1. Access to the practice
2. Environment (condition of the practice/cleanliness)
3. Practice staff service (Reception, Nursing Team, GPs, Management etc)
4. Appointments

If you have anything you would like to me to look into please reply back to this email.

As always the practice values feedback and suggestions.

Take care, Keep safe

Dr Earnshaw and Partners