

**NOTES OF A MEETING REGARDING
THE EAST LANCASHIRE MEDICAL SERVICES (ELMS)
FEDERATED PRACTICE BASED AT BRIERFIELD HEALTH CENTRE
HELD AT BRIERFIELD COMMUNITY CENTRE
ON 14TH SEPTEMBER, 2016**

PRESENT

Councillor Y. Iqbal – In the Chair

In attendance

<i>Councillor N. Ahmed</i>	<i>Pendle Borough Council</i>
<i>Mohammad Hanif</i>	<i>Brierfield Town Council</i>
<i>Audrey Westwell</i>	<i>Reedley Hallows Parish Council</i>
<i>Morag White</i>	<i>East Lancashire Medical Services</i>
<i>David Massey</i>	<i>East Lancashire Medical Services</i>
<i>Sharon Martin</i>	<i>East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group</i>
<i>Rebecca Demaine</i>	<i>East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group</i>
<i>David Rogers</i>	<i>East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group</i>
<i>Lynne Rowland</i>	<i>Committee Administrator, Pendle Borough Council</i>

15 members of the public were also present.

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N. Ashraf.)



Councillor Y. Iqbal opened the meeting by explaining that, in March of this year, a representative of the East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) had attended a meeting to hear first-hand from local residents and members of Brierfield and Reedley Committee about problems being encountered at the GP practice based at Brierfield Health Centre. In response to the concerns raised it was agreed that senior officers of East Lancashire Medical Services (ELMS); the CCG; and members of Brierfield and Reedley Committee would meet to agree an action plan and that an update would be provided to a further public meeting.

The Chairman welcomed representatives of the CCG and ELMS and began by asking them to provide an update on progress since that first meeting in March.

Rebecca Demaine of the CCG began the presentation by explaining that, in response to the issues raised at the last meeting, two sessions had been held with the appropriate bodies.

The first session, held in March, was attended by Councillors Ahmed and Ashraf and County Councillor Ali, and involved discussions regarding the two main areas of concern as follows -

- Access to GP appointments, both by telephone and in person
- Workforce i.e. doctor cover, perceived lack of consistency and the reliance on locum cover

A further meeting had been held in April at which specific key actions had been agreed. These included carrying out a review of –

- staffing cover and workforce
- telephone system
- appointment management, including multiple appointment bookings
- utilisation of appointments booked
- engagement plan
- how the voluntary sector could support non-medical need

A discussion on progress took place with Councillors in July. This was reported to the meeting as follows -

Staffing

- Dr Biskupiak's (referred to as Doctor Kris's) timetable had been amended to allow more time for GP appointments
- Advance Nurse Practitioner Tracy Pettitt had returned to the practice and was in place when available
- Additional Healthcare Assistants had been assigned to the practice when available
- Other GP availability was being explored, although it was recognised that there was a significant workforce challenge throughout East Lancashire and nationally

It had been noted that residents would welcome a further GP at the practice. However, it was explained that there was no funding available to enable this. To demonstrate this, an explanation of how the practice was funded, together with its expenditure was provided. It was reported that, as with all GP practices nationally, the funding provided was the equivalent to providing four GP appointments per patient per year. In Brierfield, the attendance figure was much higher and averaged at approximately 7.2 appointments per patient per year.

Telephone System

It was reported that, up until last year, the telephone system had two lines only. This had since been upgraded to a digital system which had nine lines. However, due to the high volume of calls, the staff could not answer all calls immediately.

The possibility of introducing a call handling hub had been looked into. A number of implications had been identified and therefore further consideration was required.

Appointment management and access and utilisation of appointments booked

It was explained that the system of one person booking multiple appointments at the practice was unusual to Brierfield. This could possibly be one of the reasons for the high number of patients that had failed to attend a pre-booked appointment. In order to highlight this problem, new signage had been installed at the surgery which displayed the number of cases where this had applied. (Last year the figure was almost 1500.)

A new policy had also been introduced regarding multiple appointments. As a result, the number of such appointments had been reduced, as many had been deemed to be unnecessary.

It had been noted that many of the conditions presented to a doctor could have been dealt with more appropriately by other professionals.

Engagement Plan

It had been acknowledged that many of the patients at the surgery required more consistent information and support. Therefore a proposal had been developed with the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Network to provide dedicated individuals to work with the practice. Social Prescribing Grant Funding had been approved for this service.

Reference was also made to a recent consultation on a proposal to extend the GP practice hours in surgeries across East Lancashire. It was reported that there had been over 2000 responses, some of which had been from residents of Brierfield. It was explained that these would be reviewed and considered in consultation with the Patient Participation Group at the practice.

Conclusion

Following a question and answer session, the Chairman closed the meeting by noting the changes that had been put in place since the last meeting and acknowledged that further improvements would continue to be explored. He thanked everyone for their attendance.