

**Wealden Ridge Medical Partnership**

Dr R. Rajan, Dr S. Narasimhan, Dr E. Sheppard, Dr S. Crowley,  
Dr L. Gillespie, Dr J. Andrews, Dr J. Wills, Dr K Naineni

Patient Participation Group  
**MINUTES**

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2026**  
**6.30pm at Newick Health Centre**

Present: Jackie Wood – Chair  
Dr Rajan - practice  
Julie Acey - practice  
Gab Szekely  
Mike Gadd  
Heather Ward  
Jane Leney  
Jan Groom  
Jacqui Poby  
Robert Hill  
Becky Dilley – minutes

Apologies: Barry Simon  
Tim Williams  
Colin Webb

	<b>Agenda Item</b>	
1	Welcome and Introductions. Review minutes of last meeting	Jackie welcomed everyone, noted apologies, and held a round of introductions. Minutes of last meeting reviewed – no changes requested.
2	Practice update	Julie gave the practice update:  Scott's last day was in May. The practice is restructuring and so the new structure will be shared in due course. Temporarily Julie is based at Heathfield, with Rose covering as Acting Operations Manager at Newick.  The next PLT afternoon is 9 <sup>th</sup> July. The practice will be closed that afternoon.  Friends and Family Test – 93.65% report their experience as 'Very Good' or 'Good'  March-May DNAs March – 18 hours GP time; 26.83 hours nurse/HCA April – 18 hours GP time; 34 hours nurse/HCA May – 14 hours GP time; 27 hours nurse/HCA

The practice is developing a DNA policy, with a new search available in the system to view patient DNA history. When the restructure is completed, someone will have responsibility to look into this.

Jacqui suggested that associated cost for missed appointments could be included in practice notices about DNA rate. NHSE rates could be used for this.

Mike suggested that a link to add the appointment directly into patients' own calendar could be included in the text confirmation – Julie and Dr Rajan confirmed that unfortunately this isn't possible as the text format is set by NHS Sussex.

Dr Rajan presented an update on the impact of the Sussex AI Triage Pilot.

Background: The project was to understand the impact of AI triage through the app and what patients think about it.

Results: Demand for appointments has improved  
Shift to using digital methods has improved  
Patient experience is mixed, but mostly positive  
Out of Hours demand – high demand for the system out of hours, but this is a new metric and the effects of artefacts (such as it being a new system that people are still exploring) need to be considered.

Jacqui gave feedback that some patients don't want to tell someone unqualified about their problem. The group discussed and outcomes of this discussion were:

- Messaging to be improved to patients to explain that the reception team are merely transcribing the information, not saving it or making any decisions regarding appointments
- Reception staff – the script/messaging for staff to be made clearer to explain this

Jane asked about the ability to be a proxy for another patient to request an appointment for them. This is possible through a person's own instance of the NHS app – as long as you have the patients' details

There was a short discussion about accessing out of hours service across county borders. And confirmation from Dr Rajan that one of the outcomes from the AI triage process is that the patient is directed to a community pharmacy.

Jane mentioned that 111 is able to book a GP appointment for the next day, if needed. Julie confirmed there are 4 or 5 slots a day for this.

3	Healthwatch East Sussex	Healthwatch East Sussex is a group that work to help understand the experiences of patients. They offer visits to general practice to help with engaging patients and understanding the practice environment, from the point of view of different groups that might access the practice. They work with PPGs and practices to understand any issues, and suggest solutions. Dr Rajan and Julie were keen to find out more. Jackie to put her contacts in touch with Julie. September was suggested as perhaps a good time for the visit.
4	Newsletter	The group discussed the content for the summer newsletter – to be ready for distribution by 25 <sup>th</sup> June.  Content: Message from Jackie  Julie to provide F&F pie chart, some info about booking appointments, practice news.  Becky will complete other sections and ask Julie to have the GPs check. Tim/Jackie to feedback from Sussex Climate Panel for inclusion in the newsletter.
5	AoB	Jackie shared information about Freedom Leisure's Health Referral programme. Dr Rajan noted that there are several options for where patients can be referred for this – built into the patient record system. Freedom Leisure is one of these places  Jackie shared information written by the Public Health Collaboration about healthy eating  Heather asked about location for covid jabs – some of the older people from Newick had been asked to go to Heathfield for their injections. Julie will look into this for the upcoming vaccination season.  Jackie has previously shared info about the NHS Sussex Climate Panel and explained that she and Tim will be attending.
6	Date of next meeting	Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup> September at 6.30pm – Heathfield Surgery

Action	Responsible person	Deadline
Add cost of missed appts to DNA data	JA	Complete
Jackie share contact details for HealthWatch GP engagement group	JW	Complete

Summer newsletter	BD	25.6.26 – completed 26.6.26
Feedback from Sussex Climate Panel	TW and JW	Complete