

North Tyneside CCG Patient Forum End of Life Working Group Notes

Tuesday 9 June 2020
10.00am

Due to the present Coronavirus Covid 19 this meeting took place by Microsoft Teams video call as members are self isolating in their own homes. This will continue until the lockdown is over.

Attendees

Dr Kathryn Hall	Chair
Gillian Bennett	Wellspring Health Centre
Patrick Mayne	Collingwood Health Group
Michele Spencer	Community and Health Care Forum (CHCF)
Carole Reed	Community and Health Care Forum (CHCF)

Apologies

David Hall	Northumberland Park
Val Telfer	Wellspring Health Centre
Hazel Parrack	49 Marine Avenue

Dr Kathryn Hall

Dr Hall explained this meeting would serve as an opportunity to bring members up to date with services.

She gave members an update on the Covid 19 virus from a GP's point of view. At the start of the lockdown Dr Hall was working full time for around three to four weeks to cover the extremely busy period. She also had four clinicians off sick with the virus which put an extra strain on the surgery. There are also two GPs working from home as they are pregnant and therefore shielding. After this period things were relatively quiet, but there were some issues around PPE masks and gloves were available but no visors or goggles. However, Dr Hall did purchase some and the local school also helped.

This has been a huge adjustment period and Dr Hall is aware that people with Long Term Conditions were not being seen face to face. Since lockdown rules have been relaxed GPs have had more contact with patients and they are becoming a bit more comfortable coming into the surgery wearing masks. In the mean-time appointments and consultations have taken place by telephone and video although Dr Hall has missed the patient interaction. Although this has been a very challenging time the good thing to come out of it is that

patients have become more self reliant. Interestingly Dr Hall had two consultations with patients to admit them to hospital yesterday and from putting on all the equipment, conducting the appointments, doing the hygiene routines and then discarding equipment the whole thing took over an hour just to see two people. Dr Hall is now ironically working less hours but is more tired.

MS asked if the pandemic had impacted on prescribing and Dr Hall felt at the beginning of lockdown there was a general fear that there would be shortage of medication and there were genuine concerns however this turned out not to be the case apart from alternatives being offered for a limited number of medications.

PDM said at first, he was uncomfortable doing the video call appointments but has now adjusted and this is probably true for most patients as they get more used to using the system. He has had two successful consultations with GPs. He asked if this would be a way of contact after lockdown. Dr Hall said some of it would probably stay in place, but she wouldn't want it to replace face to face contact with patients.

Dr Hall was happy to say there has been no detrimental feedback or complaints as far as she is aware.

In April during the pandemic peak a lot of palliative care patients had extra warning symptoms and measures were quickly put in place. She has had an evolving picture on coronavirus deaths from the coroner and is also linked to the Northumbria Macmillan Team. There has also been extra contact and support from the Rapid Response Team. A meeting will take place tomorrow where they will start looking at what has gone well and then try and plan ahead. A Northumbria clinical audit will monitor the number of coronavirus deaths in the region. North Tyneside has linked in with the regional and national End of Life services. A network bereavement survey will be taken forward to provide further information similar to what was carried out during the Sars virus of 2011.

PDM asked if it would be possible for Collingwood Surgery to do a PPG virtual meeting - this hasn't been decided. PDM has diabetes so is in self isolation indefinitely until a vaccine is found. Dr Hall said he could be at more risk if he did not see a doctor to have his routine check up, of course people can make their own decisions. GB said Wellspring Surgery have not had any PPG meetings.

A few members have had to cancel holidays due the current pandemic, Dr Hall explained that medics are not subject to quarantine when they have returned from a different country which is quite scary.

Latest figures show there have been low numbers of deaths in Northumbria and the RVI. The current risk to patients with Long Term Conditions means the NHS are currently planning flu vaccines to be available after the summer. Medical care staff are cautious as the next challenge will be the winter period in these unpredictable times it is difficult to plan ahead not

knowing if a second wave of the virus will happen. There is no certainty, we need a vaccine to end this awful disease. PDM said although the first wave of the coronavirus seems to be coming to a slow conclusion the media it is still reporting many cases in North East England and Yorkshire.

Dr Hall said she appreciated the issues that the members brought to the meeting and they should contact Michele if they had any concerns. She also expressed how proud she is of the NHS.

Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 22 September or Tuesday, 29 September 2020 (to be confirmed)

10.00am to 11.30am

Linskill Centre

Linskill Terrace

North Shields

NE30 2AY

If lockdown is still in place the meeting will be carried out by video call. Members will be kept update.