

Attendees:

Glenn (chair), Sue, Cat, Bernice, Elizabeth, Vicki, Helen

1. Introduction, Apologies, Acceptance of last meeting notes

- Meeting notes accepted from 12 January 2026.

2. Practice Statistics & General Update on Medical Centre Operation

Statistics Update

- The statistics for 2025 and 2026, provided by Leon, were discussed.
- It was noted that February had a high monetary value of missed appointments, many of which were for nurses.
- The practice is already proactively managing patients who frequently “Do Not Attend” (DNA) by sending reminders the day before their appointments.
- The appointment pattern is similar to last year, with a busy January post-Christmas, followed by a drop in February.
- There has been a definite increase in triage requests, which is encouraging as it indicates wider use. This could also be attributed to the system remaining active during all opening hours.

Triage System Performance and Feedback

- A triage group is still reviewing the demand and adapting processes to meet it.
- The triage system is now part of the core contract, meaning every practice in the country must implement it. The practice is well-placed as an early adopter.
- Operational changes have been made to manage high demand, especially on Mondays when over 200 requests can be received. A clinical pharmacist now handles medication queries, which was previously a GP task. This change is viewed as very positive.
- Feedback on the triage system is generally positive: patients often appreciate the quick call-back.
- There are still patients unfamiliar with the triage system, likely those who do not visit the surgery often. A discussion was held on how to engage with that community.
- Cat reported a delay of almost a week in receiving a response from a clinical pharmacist.
- It was clarified that response times depend on the clinical urgency, categorised as red, amber, or green.

AI Triage

- The practice is reviewing AI Triage systems and their usage by other practices before rushing headlong to adopt.

3. Abbottswood Medical Centre challenges faced this year

- The “accessibility project” is the main focus for the year, following intensive CQC work. The team is now returning to normal day-to-day operations.
- The upcoming patient survey will feed directly into the accessibility project, and the feedback will be crucial for analysis and steering future focus.

- The issue of hospitals asking medical centres to perform blood tests was raised by Glenn. This is a long-standing point of negotiation between primary and secondary care.
- The practice is coding all hospital-requested bloods, performing approximately 120-150 per month.
- Due to overwhelming demand and a three-week wait, the practice is looking to employ a new phlebotomist for 20 hours a week.
- The practice absorbs this work to avoid inconveniencing frail or elderly patients,

4. Update on PPG questionnaire

- The questionnaire has been finalised and printed.
- Distribution will be via Microsoft Form (email/text) where possible to save costs, targeting patients who have visited the surgery recently.
- A key target group is patients who do not use the online triage system. The challenge of reaching those without computer access was raised, with hard copies or post being considered.
- Using Microsoft Forms will allow for easier data collation and analysis.
- The group agreed on the content and will discuss the sample size and distribution strategy with Leon.

5. Update on Dementia meetings

- Cat provided an update from the Pershore Dementia meetings.
- Key Events: Dementia Awareness Week (19th-26th May) and number eight's dementia awareness day (12th May).
- Training Sessions: Two dementia awareness training sessions will be held at the town hall on the 5th of June (morning) and the 7th of July (evening).
- Challenges: The initiative is struggling to book professional carers and speakers who are dementia patients themselves.
- Lisa Smedley represents the PCN at these meetings. The next meeting is on the 13th of April.

6. Anna Sterckx talk last month, plus the question of whether to join the PPF

- A recent informal meeting with Anna Sterckx was discussed. A key topic was the Patient and Public Forum (PPF) – the following is from their website:

'We're a group of volunteers passionate about helping Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust deliver the best possible care to our local community.

We work with patients, carers, families, and the public to gather feedback and share experiences -helping to drive positive change and improve the quality of care across our hospitals.

At the heart of our work is a simple goal: to make sure the patient voice is heard at every level.'

- Our PPG has been asked to join the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals PPF but the group decided that it was more appropriate to supply a point of contact, Helen, the Practice Manager, at the present time.

7. How best to build on the relationship with Pershore Medical Practice PPG

- The group noted the strong engagement from Pershore Medical Practice at the Anna Sterckx event and agreed to explore collaboration, possibly via a joint meeting.

8. Any other business

- Grant Application: Cat suggested applying for a grant next year. Pershore Town Council runs an annual scheme that supports local clubs and organisations. It may be possible for the PPG to apply; we have missed this year's deadline (March 2026), but we can prepare for the next round up to March 2027. Grants are typically between £250 and £500 allowing the PPG to benefit the community in some form. It is recommended that we submit an application around January 2027.
- Abbottswood Website 'learning disability' section: Sue reported she was asked by Dr Paula Baxter to read this section and give honest feedback. Sue's feedback had resulted in it becoming more positive and relevant to health and wellbeing. She also pointed out that having read through the resources associated with the website, she found these to be very useful and relevant.
- NHS Patient Satisfaction: The recent British Social Attitudes Survey was mentioned by Elizabeth, highlighting dissatisfaction with GP appointment waiting times.

9. Next meeting date

- Proposed next PPG meeting: 20 May 2026, 12:00–13:00, Abbottswood Medical Centre.

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