



# The Selsdon Park Medical Practice PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP



Autumn 2021 newsletter  
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## Welcome

This edition of our newsletter is dedicated to the incredible team of professionals working at the Selsdon Park Medical Practice, whom we asked for reflections of their experiences of the last twenty one months.



### Lisa - Practice Nurse:

As if working as a nurse in a pandemic is not challenging enough I started a new job and my first in primary care in the middle of it! For me there were many highs and lows of the pandemic. Thinking right back 18 months ago when the first lock down hit, getting home from a 12 hour shift in my previous job working as a ward sister to the Thursday night clap was one of the humbling experiences that will stick with me. This brought our community together, as the weeks went by our socially distanced clap evolved to including music requests from neighbours to bunting and banners. Also, the outpouring of love from all corners of community dropping off food, cosmetics and many more treats on a daily basis for the health care staff at work. On a home side the ultimate challenge for a mum of 4 had to be home schooling along with no sports clubs for them to let off steam. Eventually decided to send them back to school as key worker children was a bonus! Moving over to the new job as practice nurse hit me with the realisation that to some patients you were the only face many elderly and shielding got to see and being able to make that difference to them. Being involved in the role out of the covid 19 vaccine was also something I felt proud to take part in.

### Nicki - Lead Practice Nurse:

It is the only time in my 40-year nursing career I felt frightened about going to work. Initially I felt like cannon fodder as only nurses not doctors were seeing patients face to face. Pulling myself together and saying I have never run away from a sick patient in my life and do not intend to now. Being mindful of not potentially taking any of the virus home to my husband, by wearing scrubs and changing at work. My husband having a hot bucket of Persil in the porch so that I could drop my scrub bag into it. Putting my Infection Control Practice into home as well as I do at work!

### Pauline - Practice Manager:

During my 31 years working in general practice the Covid 19 pandemic has challenged me and my team in ways we could never have imagined. I unfortunately contracted Covid 19 myself in April 2020. It took me 6 weeks to recover enough to return to work and then I slowly increased my working hours as it wiped me out. We have had to adapt to remote working, GPs have had to get used to doing telephone consultations as a first line of care, something they never thought they would have to do. Having rotas so not too many staff were in the building at any one time but enough to provide essential patient care were amended on a daily basis. We created a "hot room" to see patients who may have Covid 19 or are showing symptoms which, the nurses/

• HCAs undertook the cleaning of after every use wearing full  
• PPE. We always had two nurses in the surgery seeing patients  
• who required dressing changes, childhood immunisations, B12  
• injections etc. and until we were forced to stop cervical smears.  
• The receptionists worked on rotas so only 2/3 were ever in at  
• any one time. Our secretary worked from home to reduce the  
• personnel in the admin area. We have seen a major increase in  
• emails, as we tried to enable patients to order prescriptions or  
• register on line rather than attend the surgery. Our prescribing  
• manager Kim worked flat out every day to ensure prescriptions  
• were issued and at the chemists ensuring patients did not go  
• without medication. She even delivered medication on occasions  
• to those who couldn't get out to collect their prescription or the  
• chemists were too over stretched to accommodate. We undertook  
• every measure to protect both patients and staff. We took  
• prescription requests over the phone to assist our patients. This  
• has now stopped. Information changed on a daily basis. It was  
• at times very challenging trying to keep up to date with all the  
• new guidance we received sometimes 4/8 times a day. Nurse Lisa  
• came to us from the Royal Marsden bringing with her a wealth  
• of knowledge in the area of cancer care. Lisa will be making  
• contact with patients to see if she can help them in anyway in  
• her new role as practice nurse. Lisa can also be contacted should  
• any patient or their family need support. We started delivering  
• Covid 19 vaccination from Old Coulsdon as part of our PCN  
• working together to vaccinate patients as quickly as possible,  
• this then changed to us delivering AZ vaccines from the surgery.  
• Both of these efforts enabled our patients to get their vaccination  
• as soon as we could and later in a place they know, the surgery.  
• We are now administering booster vaccines and 3rd doses from  
• the surgery, this we hope to continue for as long as needed,  
• but depends on deliveries of vaccine. This on top of managing  
• my own fears about this unknown virus, my family's safety, it  
• drained many of us and will live with us forever. I am extremely  
• proud of all my team, how they adapted regularly to change, the  
• support we gave each other, without this we would not be in the  
• position we are today. We have never closed our doors to the  
• surgery, we have always done our utmost and beyond to assist  
• our patients. The news articles which "bash" general practice  
• are doing nothing but making those of us who give our all feel  
• deflated and undervalued. I believe this could lead to a large  
• number of people leaving General Practice, thus creating a large  
• gap of knowledge and experience which could in turn have an  
• impact on patient care. There are surgeries who closed their doors  
• at the start of the pandemic and have still not re opened them,

more reflections



there are surgeries who are not delivering the same service as they did pre pandemic, but I am proud to say that this is not the case here at Selsdon Park Medical Practice.

### **Lesley - Receptionist/Facilities Manager:**

The last 18 months have proved a challenging time for the reception team at Selsdon Park. However, we always work as a team and we embraced the challenge wholeheartedly. At the start of lockdown our staffing numbers were reduced, but this only lasted a relatively short time. Initially we only had temporary screens to separate us from patients, so we did feel a little vulnerable - even though everyone was wearing masks and social distancing was being observed.

We never closed our doors at any point during the pandemic. A dedicated hot room was allocated when it was felt essential that a patient was seen. This room had only essential equipment in it - everything that was not required was removed. The room could be accessed via the extended hours door, so patients did not have to enter the main reception area. After each consultation this room was thoroughly cleaned by the nursing team and latterly reception staff - it was a case of all pulling together.

The pandemic introduced a new way of working for everyone in the surgery, face to face appointments were replaced by telephone consultations/video calls and only those patients who had been triaged by a doctor who felt they needed to be seen were brought into the surgery via the hot room.

Working in reception has at times been very stressful, but we have all worked together and I think we have provided an exceptional service to our patients in an extremely difficult time.

### **Dr Neil Kelvin - GP:**

The Pandemic has changed the way we all live. Everyone has faced enormous challenges, both professional and personal. I believe facing these challenges effectively - and now feeling positive about our future - is in no small part thanks to my work colleagues and the values we share. I feel very privileged and fortunate to work at Selsdon Park Medical Practice. We have a united, cheerful, hard-working team.

We have all had to learn together very rapidly. Initial Government guidance to avoid face to face contact as much as possible led to Primary Care having to quickly adopt new working practices: telephone triage and embracing technological developments such as video consultations. We had to remain up to date, digesting and adopting new guidance on a near-daily basis.

As the pandemic progressed, normal life ceased: lockdowns ensued, children stopping going to school, elderly relatives could not be visited.

Pressures at work mounted daily: dealing with patients who may have a virus which causes a vast variety of symptoms - many not recognised in those early months - but with no way of testing for it. Very little to offer patients in terms of treatment. Inadequate PPE and ever-present awareness of the real risks of contracting the illness ourselves. Doctors, nurses, administrators and others falling sick or having to self-isolate, leaving the depleted workforce to cope with ever-increasing demands. Tragically, news of Hospital and Primary Care colleagues losing their lives. Despite the challenges, we all felt privileged to be able to continue to come to work. Many of us also have young families and have had to juggle home-schooling with our professional demands.

Twenty months on and the World remains a changed place. But astonishing progress has been made. Primary Care has delivered the majority of Covid vaccinations in this country. At Selsdon, we have been one of the few Practices in Croydon to offer

- the vaccine from our premises; giving thousands of doses and
- continuing to do so - in addition to all the usual work. We now
- offer pulse-oximetry at home to vulnerable patients, with daily
- follow-up from our Paramedic and her team; identifying early
- low oxygen levels which if not treated can be lethal.
- We now see as many patients face to face as we did before the
- pandemic, with hundreds of additional remote consultations
- where this is more appropriate or convenient - patients are
- offered the choice. This hybrid model is helping us offer more
- clinical contacts than ever before. Staff now having the option
- of working from home if coming to the surgery is not possible
- - another new challenge, but necessary to keep providing a high
- quality service to our population.
- It is regretful that despite these efforts, clapping the NHS has
- been replaced by a misguided Government campaign claiming
- GP surgeries are not contributing sufficiently. This has damaged
- morale in an exhausted workforce.
- It is gratifying however that our patients have remained positive
- and supportive, recognising the difficulties we have faced
- and appreciating our efforts. The Patient Participation Group
- continues to be a vital interface between the Practice and those
- for whom we provide care. Together we will continue to develop
- our services and strive to meet the ongoing challenges we all
- face.

### **Marilyn - Patient & PPG Committee member:**

- Those of us who belong to this great Practice should know just
- how lucky we are. The doctors and all of the staff have done an
- amazing job to keep everything ticking over during the Covid
- crisis. The newspapers daily print letters from patients at other
- surgeries who are unable to get through to them by phone, never
- mind face to face. I think that the triage phone system has worked
- very well here, certainly for me and others whom I know. A few
- times now after a chat with a doctor on the phone, he has called
- me in and where necessary, sent me for scans. I would even say
- that it has worked out better for me. Prior to the lockdown, it
- wasn't always easy to book my preferred GP online. This way, I
- can ask to speak to him and know that he is really aware of my
- medical history, and that is a bonus. The GPs have to cope now
- with the extra load of problems that many patients "Did not want
- to worry them with" during the lockdown. They are all doing a
- great job and we should applaud them for it.

### **Feedback from patients:**

- I have now had both vaccinations and I take this opportunity to
- thank you and all for your support, staff for their dedication and
- efforts in arranging these with such efficiency. I am truly grateful.
- I had my 2nd Pfizer jab on Friday and wish to congratulate
- Dr Trompetas and team for their enterprise in setting up the
- Coulsdon centre and running it so efficiently. We are the envy of
- friends who haven't heard from their GPs yet. Well done one and
- many thanks to you all.
- Spoke to patient today who wanted me to pass on her praise for
- how well the Covid Vaccination Clinics are being run at Selsdon.
- Very efficient!
- A patient who registered with us in May this year wanted to
- express his thanks and gratitude for all the help and kindness the
- surgery has shown him since moving from Hong Kong.
- 95 year old patient said she feels that the residents of Selsdon are
- so very lucky to have us as their GPs. She said all the fuss on
- the news about not being able to see a GP or nurse face to face is
- very confusing because she has never experienced this.