



## **MELKSHAM & BRADFORD ON AVON PRIMARY CARE NETWORK**

### **Report to Melksham Area Board by Dr Amy Gately, Clinical Director – 12/9/2023**

#### **1. Who we are?**

Melksham and Bradford on Avon Primary Care Network supports a population of 48,500 patients across three Practices; Bradford on Avon Health Partnership, Giffords Surgery and Spa Medical Centre.

Our practices along with GP practices across the country are experiencing significant and growing strain with declining GP numbers, rising demand and struggles to recruit and retain staff. Since 2019, our PCN has recruited many additional roles to support primary care and patients can access the services of:

- Paramedics
- Clinical Pharmacists
- First Contact Physiotherapists
- Social Prescribers
- Health & Wellbeing Coaches
- Patient Care Co-ordinators

Our reception staff are well trained and able to help patients navigate to be seen by the right person. Digital access through PATCHs, the NHS App and SystemOne also means that patients can contact the practices out of hours to book appointments, access their medical records and request medicines, with surgeries offering appointments in the evenings, bank holidays and some Saturdays.

#### **2. On-going pressures with new housing and planning applications**

Melksham Practices in particular are concerned with the significant number of new housing being built with little or no consideration to the impact on health services.

For example, there was a planning application in 2020 for 210 dwellings and a 70 bed care home, which the NHS raised concerns about being about to support in terms of both the housing numbers and the enhanced services required for a 70 bed care home.

This application was refused, and another for the same thing submitted again in 2022, which again was refused but they have just gone to Appeal to challenge that decision.

Planning application ref 2022/08504 refers, there were no comments from the NHS on this application at the time as we were not alerted to this application.

There are now also two recent pre-application presentations at the town council's Economic Development meetings, one for a care home on land at Verbena Court, on the waste bit of land behind the car park (this is where the shops and Water Meadow pub are). Developers often cite that new Care Homes do not put additional strain on local health services but reduce it, our experience is that this is not accurate, as this often leads to additional care home visits, medicines queries and significant communication between the home and doctors surgery.

We have also been made aware there is another application that is for a care home on Longleaze Road, close to the Spa Medical Facility.

We would like to see earlier communication between developers and health and to be able to access 106 monies which would allow us to consider way to expand our building and staffing to deliver more local GP services.

### **3. Local Projects - examples**

Our PCN is working across our practices on a range of local projects to improve access and support to patients.

3.1 Pro-active social prescribing for unpaid carers – this offers information and health checks to unpaid carers. We have carers lead in each practice. Staff have received training on the importance of identifying patients who have caring responsibilities, so that we are able to sign-post to other carers support available.

3.2 Support to people who are high users of primary care. There are a growing number of patients who contact the GP surgery more than 50 times during the year. We aim to understand these needs and put together a personalised care plan to try to reduce the number of contacts and involve the patient in their own self-care.

3.3 Neighbourhood Collaborative initiative, this is to work locally with the social, health and voluntary sector to provide ways to reduce duplication, improve communication and support patients to only have to tell their health journey once. A small project to find out what services will help older patients reduce their risk of having a fall is starting in September.

### **4. The Flu and Covid vaccination programme**

Practices are working hard to deliver this year's flu programme, which will be delivered at practice level and will offer some weekend appointments. Each practice will be continuing to send out information to eligible patients.

Many will also know from national press that this year's covid vaccination programme will be started a month earlier. Our PCN is taking part in supporting the vaccination of the Housebound and Care Home patients. Practices will also offer 'opportunisticly' patients a covid vaccination alongside their flu vaccination.