



Walton Medical Centre PPG

Date: 21st July 2026

Attendees: Linda, Joanna , Gillian

Apologies: Joan, Heidi

Chair: George Taylor

Minute taker: Ai scribe

Item	Subject	Actions
1	Welcome and housekeeping	
2	Declarations of interest	None
3	Gillian Hopkins – Essex Wellbeing Service – carers support. Key Highlights and Issues: The service is commissioned by Essex County Council to provide general health and well-being support, including weight loss, smoking cessation, and physical activity programmes. They also conduct NHS Health Checks. A single point of access team screens all referrals for caring responsibilities, taking approximately 50,000 calls last year covering Essex, including Thurrock and Southend. Conversations with identified carers are not time-limited and assess the impact of caring on their own health. Support options, including digital resources for working carers, are discussed. The service works closely with specialist commissioned services like Action for Family Carers and Essex Carers Support. They facilitate referrals to Adult Social Care for carer's assessments or assessments for the person being cared for. They also triage to a network of over 30 CareNet Plus Partners, such as Citizens Advice, the Alzheimer's Society, and the Essex Fire Brigade. Information was shared regarding contact details for Carrie Hook, the area manager for Essex Carers Support, and the secretary of the PM group for the ICB. Community Agents, a home visiting service commissioned by Essex County Council, was highlighted. They assist people to live independently by assessing for home adaptations, helping with form-filling (e.g., Blue Badge applications), and providing information on local transport and meals on wheels services. The process for referring to Adult Social Care via Adult Social Care Connects was explained. It was clarified that a carer's assessment falls under the carer's local authority, not the local authority of the person they care for.	



	The service also provides monthly newsletters to social prescribers. An open call for evidence regarding Carer's Allowance, closing on 18th August, was mentioned. Information was also shared about a survey on unpaid carers' rights to leave, referencing the April 2024 law entitling unpaid carers to five days of unpaid leave for caring responsibilities if working full-time. An emergency contingency plan for carers was described, where carers can register with Adult Social Care and receive a carer's card. This card contains an ID number and a 24/7 contact number, allowing emergency services to access the registered plan and contact details, or for social care to intervene if emergency contacts are unavailable. The importance of keeping these plans updated was stressed. Digital Friends is another service offered, providing six weeks of one-to-one support for individuals to learn how to use digital devices for tasks like online shopping or video calls. Age UK's "Lifebook" was mentioned as a free resource for individuals to record important contacts, wishes, and advance care plans. A Healthwatch Essex "Carers Voices" project leaflet was discussed, which outlines the legal rights of carers when the person they care for is admitted to hospital, including the right to be consulted on care and discharge planning. A checklist for hospital discharge is included. The Care Choices directory, specifically the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Care Services Directory, was presented as a free resource listing CQC-approved care providers and other support services.	
4	Minutes from last meeting	Agreed by all
5	Update on building works Background and Context: Jo gave an update on the upcoming building works at the surgery, scheduled to start on 03/08/2026. A stud wall will be erected outside, and the project is expected to last 5-6 weeks, followed by a 4-5-week refurbishment of the reception area. The primary goal is to create two additional clinical rooms to expand clinical capacity, including offering more midwife appointments. Discussion Summary: The work will cause disruption, including reduced car parking and waiting room space. Staff who live locally have been asked to walk to work. The reception area will be made more wheelchair-friendly and will have a glass shutter for staff protection. The increased clinical space is considered essential to meet patient needs and will be valuable during	



	winter pressures. Comms will be managed via Facebook, the website, and posters. Patients will be encouraged to use Anima where it is possible to reduce footfall.	
6	Update from Partners regarding Men's health clinic Background and Context: A discussion was held regarding the creation of a male health clinic. Due to current space constraints, this is not immediately feasible. An alternative of creating male health information sheets for the monthly newsletter was proposed. Discussion Summary: Suggested topics for the information sheets include testicular self-examination, stress, mental health, counselling, and erectile dysfunction. The importance of targeting mid-life males, a group at increased risk of suicide, was noted. Pelvic floor exercises post-prostate surgery were also mentioned as a relevant topic. It was agreed that this is a good interim solution. The Practice Manager will produce a draft for the next newsletter and share it with the group for feedback.	
7	Patient Satisfaction Survey Patient Survey Results Background and Context: The results of the national patient survey were presented. 339 surveys were sent out, with a 32% response rate. Some satisfaction scores were down but remain above national and ICB averages. A key piece of negative feedback was that the practice website is difficult to use. Resolution and Decision: An internal survey is being sent to 109 patients who have been seen recently to gather a more current and accurate picture of patient experience. The aim is to create an action plan based on this feedback, particularly to understand and address the issues with the website.	
8	CQC No visit advised yet	
9	Quorum of PPG (minimum number of PPG present for meetings) – anyone on who is a patient can join; we must have contact information – ideally email address. We need to know who is attending and who is not – please let us know either way. It was agreed that there would be no minimum number.	All members to reply to emails regarding attendance. All members to promote PPG



		and try to increase numbers.
15	Date and time of next meeting – To be agreed	