

BRIDGE HOUSE MEDICAL CENTRE AGM CHAIR REPORT 2025-2026

Committee: Hedli Tanner (Chair), Richard Dubber (Deputy Chair), Nina Haines (Secretary), Lynn Hill, Sheila Donovan, Pauline Edwards, Angela Martin.

Our thanks as always to committee members for their work on behalf of patients and the Practice during the year. Thanks also to Dr James Scrivens and Operations Manager Bridget Acock for attending our meetings and liaising between Patient Voice and the Practice.

Patient Involvement

Dr Cristina Ramos from Rother House and Chair of the South Warwickshire GP Federation (SWGP) is passionate about patient involvement. Dr Ramos attends the bi-monthly meetings of the South Warwickshire Patient Engagement Group (SWGPE), composed of representatives of PPGs in South Warwickshire. She ensures that they are kept up to date and have a chance to comment on the proposals brought to their attention.

This means that all Patient Participation Groups have become increasingly important. We prefer to call our PPG 'Patient Voice' because we want patients' views, feedback and suggestions to be heard, to become part of the decision-making process. We support Bridge House Medical Centre (BHMC) by ensuring everyone is up to date and all feedback communicated. The more we hear from patients the better the quality of that support.

GP Partners Practice

Bridge House Medical Centre is fortunate in that it is a GP Partners Practice. Accordingly, the Practice has a level of independence in how it structures its administration and can shape its services to the needs of its nine and half thousand patients which is a great advantage. Patient Voice worked with the Practice to send out a survey to discover just how satisfied patients are with the services they receive, and the results are extremely positive so far.

Patient Concerns

The subject most dear to the hearts of patients during the year was that of the changes to the appointment system. This was raised several times during Patient Voice committee meetings so it's worthwhile clarifying how the service has developed and how it can be used.

Appointment System. It works well, saves long phone queues and allows GPs more contact time with patients. It's useful for patients to recognize that the system can be used for *any* queries, not just for appointments: for example, the need for extra medications for holidays or a problem with getting a blood test.

Initially patients booking an Online Triage were informed that it could take up to 48 hours for a response. The Committee felt that this was off putting. The Practice revised the notice to read that response will take 4 hours for an urgent request and within one working day for all others. The Practice lives up to this promise, and it feels much more in line with patient expectation.

Online bookings are made via the link on BHMC website Home Page, following the Accurx link for Triage Appointments, or patients can phone the Surgery and a receptionist will fill in the form on their behalf and add it to the triages for review. The Duty Doctor reviews the triages; patients are contacted and relevant appointments booked. Triages are marked Red for quick attention, Amber for telephone or surgery appointments and Green for non-urgent issues. Accurx sends a link to patient with non-urgent issues. When the link is clicked the patient sees a screen offering available GP appointment slots. The link is valid for seven days so that the patient can pick and choose during that period, although both GPs and appointment slots will change as appointments are taken up.

Vaccinations

Another patient concern was about the NHS directive for eligibility for Covid and Flu vaccinations in the Autumn.

Pick up was good although fewer patients opted for the **Covid vaccination**. This was offered to adults aged 75 years and over, residents in care homes for older adults and Individuals who are immunosuppressed aged 6 months and over. **Flu vaccinations** were offered to patients aged 65 or over, those with long term health conditions, those who are pregnant, live in a care home or are the main carer for someone or who live with someone with an older or disabled person. As there were sufficient supplies of both vaccines in stock the practice made an executive decision to offer the flu vaccine to patients under 65 but within the criteria as outlined above, and similarly the Covid vaccination for those under 75.

Patient Voice Online

Big thanks to Jodie Oxford, Bridge House IT Manager. She comes up with great creative ideas to keep our section on the BHMC Home Page fresh and active. Patients can also subscribe there to receive information about our aims, what we do and how they can help to make us better. <https://bhmc.co.uk/patient-group/>

Health Watch

Health Watch is due to be abolished in April 2027. Health Watch has been a useful organisation, high-lighting issues such as the problems disabled patients have with contacting their surgeries, travel problems, getting blood tests and perhaps most importantly helping people understand what specific healthcare words mean.

Looking Ahead

It has been a tricky year with new NHS directives from Health Secretary Wes Streeting and further re-organisation of local delivery of services. New groups are formed with

new acronyms but seemingly lacking the cash to make many of Streeting's dreams come true.

Administrative restructuring has started but the truth remains that there are still long waiting times, high hospital bed occupancy and staff vacancies. ICBs (Integrated Care Boards) are being merged to save 50% running costs. On a local level Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB are clustering with Coventry and Warwickshire ICB to share a single executive team, a new Joint Chair, and a senior leadership team. This new arrangement covers nearly two million people across both areas, starting in October 2025. Staff have had to apply for 19 jobs from 36. It remains to be seen how this impacts on local services.

It is a pleasure to support our Practice because it is a good one. It is also an encouragement to remind those making decisions affecting patients that our voice matters.

HEDLI TANNER
CHAIR PATIENT VOICE