

**Forest of Dean Health Forum**  
**West Dean Centre, Bream**  
**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017 -7.00 -9.00pm**

**Minutes**

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|--|--|
| Doug Battersby – public                          | Mary Matthews – Bream Ladies Group       |
| Des Gorman – Glos Care Services                  | Lynn Sterry – Cinderford Town Council    |
| Di Martin – Cinderford Town Council              | Roger Sterry – Cinderford Town Council   |
| Mary Thurston – Friends Lydney Hospital          | Caroline Smith – Glos CCG                |
| Stephen Longton – Friends Lydney Hospital        | Neil Moffat – Glos Care Services         |
| Marie Fraser Griffiths – Friends Lydney Hospital | Piers Cardiff – Macmillan Cancer Support |
| Jim Spiers - Treasurer                           | Teleri Selvester – Public/OT Glos Care   |
| Jennie Macauley Lowe – Public                    | Bronwen Reuro - Public                   |
| Linda Vaughan – Secretary                        | Dr Sophia Sandford – GP                  |
| Rich Bennett – Macmillan Welfare Specialist CAB  |  |

- 1. Welcome and Introductions** – Di Martin took the Chair in the absence of Albert Weager. Albert and his wife have been involved in a car accident and Albert has injuries that will prevent him from attending for a while. Thankfully they should both make a full recovery and we all wish them well. Flowers and a card have been sent on behalf of the Forum.  
The Chair welcomed everyone and introduced speakers Dr Sophia Sandford, a GP based in at Brunston Surgery, Coleford and Rich Bennett, the Macmillan Welfare Expert from the CAB.

- **Rich Bennett – Macmillan Welfare Specialist.**

Rich began by explaining his role as Welfare Specialist which entails advising clients on the benefits they are entitled to and helping them with the claims. He pointed out that despite popular belief only 70pence per hundred pounds is actually claimed fraudulently and that there are many benefit entitlements not claimed. A person with a cancer diagnosis can lose over £500 per month when the cost of care, transport, equipment, heating, clothing and loss of earnings are taken into account.

There are two types of benefit: Means tested and non means tested. The six non-means tested benefits are to be merged into the Universal Credit which is due to be rolled out in the Forest at the end of the month. This benefit is aimed to get people into work and most claimants are likely to be worse off. Rich gave a case study of a severely disabled client who was in receipt of the Disability Living Allowance comprising of a daily living allowance and a motability allowance which entitled him to an electric wheelchair. He applied for the Personal Independence Allowance expecting to get the higher rate, but was turned down and lost his vehicle and therefore his independence. This and many similar claims are taken to tribunal by Rich and the vast majority are successful.

Rich mentioned that, contrary to common belief, cancer patients can be sacked. The service at the CAB saw 203 clients last year and about half a million pounds in benefits were claimed for Forest

clients. Clients on benefits can claim transport costs but the claim form has to be verified and has to go to Newcastle, through the DWP and back to the hospital before the claim can be paid. The Macmillan charity can give grants but the claim must improve the well-being and help the patient with essentials. Convalescent breaks are also possible. The grant claims are means tested; the ceiling for savings for single clients being £6000 and for couples £8000.

If you have additional heating costs, Macmillan run a scheme with Npower that ensures you have the cheapest tariff.

To Contact Richard:

Phone: 01594 823937 ext 1006 email: [macmillan@fod.cabnet.org.uk](mailto:macmillan@fod.cabnet.org.uk)

Website: [www.forestofdeancab.co.uk](http://www.forestofdeancab.co.uk)

- **Dr Sophia Sandford – GP Improved Access Pilot**

Dr Sandford explained that the idea came from attending a Royal College meeting where an 8-8 service was discussed. The current Choice Plus arrangement is not able to meet the criteria of the 8.00pm shift because of a lack of GPs. The only way to bring this service in was to use existing GPs who are prepared to work the extra hours in their own practices. In exchange they have additional funding to bring other services in to their practices. The bid submitted by the Forest GPs was successful and 5 Pilots were accepted in Gloucestershire.

Phase 1.

In the Forest 11 practices are taking part but a lot of work had to be done to ensure that the 3 different IT systems could communicate with each other so that patient records are available for the GP on duty. There were also problems with lack of rooms in some surgeries and Indemnity issues needed to be overcome. Specialist nurses will be employed to see patients with chronic diseases such as Asthma, Diabetes and COPD. On Saturday mornings there will be 2 GPs plus a nurse. In October 179 hours of extra appointments were available and the take up was high.

Phase 2.

A home visiting service is planned for frail patients, those who are housebound or have complicated chronic disease issues. This service will be in conjunction with District Nurses and Rapid Responders.

Dr Sandford explained that to access the service patients need to ring their own doctor's surgery. If you choose an Improved Access appointment you may be required to go to a different surgery and it is unlikely you will see your usual GP.

The appointments are for anyone with a new problem such as tonsillitis or an ear infection, or a long term condition that has become worse. Your consent to access your medical record will be a requirement before you can be seen.

It is hoped that the Pilot will be extended for 12-18 months.

Website: [www.forestgpsurgeries.co.uk](http://www.forestgpsurgeries.co.uk)

**2. Apologies – Ingrid Barker, Katie Norton, Angela Davies, Tony Midgley, Lynn Teague, Peggy Jordan, Jackie Jenkins, Hilary Bowen, Albert Weager.**

**3. Matters Arising –** An Epson projector has been purchased at a cost of £329.99

**4. Chairs Report – no report this month due to Albert being incapacitated**

**5. News Update – Nil**

**6. Treasurers Report- Balance £1361.99**

**7. Members Reports and Questions –**

A member asked how to return equipment to GIS who have now moved to Mitcheldean.

The address is Unit 6 Vantage Point, Mitcheldean GL17 0DD

Telephone 01452 520438

Website: [glosequip.co.uk](http://glosequip.co.uk) an email can be sent via this link

Some equipment can be returned via the Library – check the website for details

**8. AOB None – Meeting closed Di thanked everyone for their attendance**

**9. Next Meeting – Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December.**

**Topic: Dementia Action Alliance with boardgame**

**Light refreshments will be available.**