

Ivel Medical Centre
Patient Participation Group
Minutes of Meeting Held on 2nd September 2025

Present:

Chris Day, Christine Taylor, David Wheeler, Gillian Gordon-Mackintosh, Georgina Howson, Harold Ross, Jean Gunton, John Hampshire, John Palmer, Joy Cooper, Julia Ainsworth, May Ross, Peter Davies, Rita Andrews, Stephen Williams

Practice Members:

Dr Kirti Singh, Paul Lindars

Apologies:

Alan Porter, Anne Philp, Britta Holland, Helen Bell-Day, Keith Coxon, Richard Philp, Sandra Richardson

- 1. Total Triage Update** - Launched on 10th March 2025. It was mandated in April this year in England. IMC have done a couple of surveys (200 patients). Received 71 responses and 90% favoured the new system. The second survey was digital, comments back were: access is easier; queues are better and responses from staff has improved. Minority of responders said it was difficult to use. Reception staff will continue to be offered help if needed. A survey was also carried out in the Waiting Room – some good comments but a negative comment about loud voices from reception staff. Some confusion regarding prescriptions and the new system. Prescriptions can be ordered as previously.

If a patient needs to see a clinician but its an ongoing issue and is not urgent, they are advised to complete a form under the Miscellaneous section. IMC are using their page on Facebook to inform patients if there are appointments still available. (Facebook is the only way that this can be done as it is a 'live' update.

TT closes for same day urgent appointments once it is up to capacity. However, chronic condition forms can be filled in anytime. If a patient sees a GP and they need a review appointment, the GP should give them a form to take to reception for a new appointment to be made. If GP does not give a slip and the patient wants a review, they will have to complete a new form. Mild illnesses can also complete a Miscellaneous form.

- 2. Saffron Road Collaboration** - BLMK ICB (Integrated Care Board) asked IMC to meet with Saffron Management Team and help where possible. Dates sent to Saffron, but no response received. Saffron Reception Manager got in touch with IMC Operations Manager to make an appointment to visit IMC to see the

system in action, email response was sent confirming it would be ok for a couple of their staff to come over – no further response from Saffron.

3. Staff Training- currently focusing on admin staff. Now have new software called “ANIMA” which is a workflow solution to manage hospital letters. IMC receive 250-300 per day. Will concentrate on training on this new system. Today there were ‘0’ outstanding letters at close of play. Working with a couple of receptionists on customer service skills. Showing them how to deal with aggressive patients as some staff can be blunt and need to be able to pacify the patient.

4. Staff Update - Nicky from Admin team has left. Have now recruited 3 new admin staff. Two already started and the third due to start soon.

Currently recruiting –

- HR Assistant to help with workforce and recruitment.
- Pharmacy Technician (in addition to the current Pharmacist)

Now have a Physiotherapist and patients can be referred by clinician or refer themselves.

IMC inherited some staff when they took over the practice and are continuing to work with them.

**5. Same Day Emergency Care Centre (SDEC)
Bedford Hospital South Wing**

Opening Hours – 12 hours per day / 7 days per week and is located near A&E.

NHS England has funded SDEC.

SDEC will provide emergency treatment for patients who would normally be admitted to hospital from A&E. Patients will be assessed, diagnosed and treated and then can be discharged on the same day.

This will reduce the number of admissions and overnight stays and the patient flow from A&E through the hospital will be improved.

If patients need any further treatment they will be transferred to the appropriate areas in the hospital.

SDEC can treat:

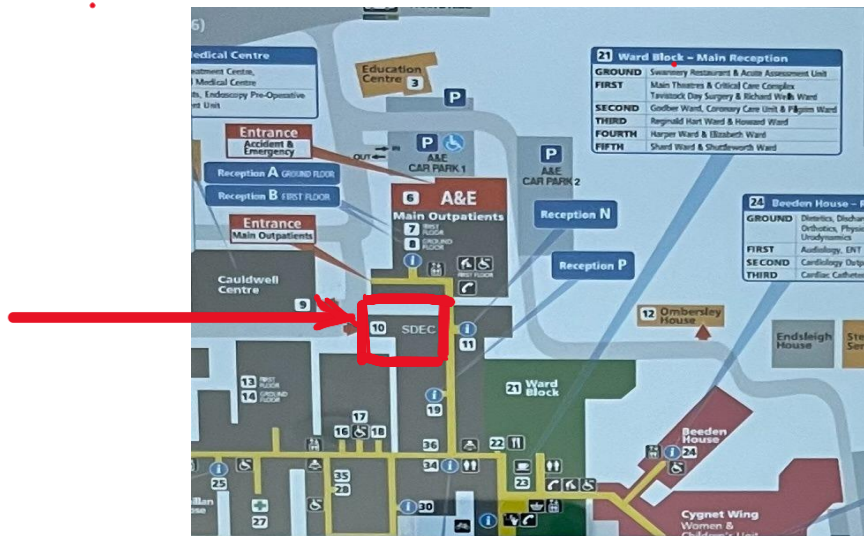
- Medical cases
- Surgical cases

- Specialist cases (Paediatrics, Gynaecology etc)
- Acute Frailty cases – these need to be assessed within 30 minutes of arriving in the unit.

Referrals to SDEC will come from GPs, NHS 111, ambulance or from A&E.

- SDEC is located on the right-hand side of the main outpatient's entrance – opposite The Cauldwell Centre. (Number 10 on the attached map).

The SDEC Unit is due to be fully operational by Autumn 2025.



6. Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC) Gilbert Hitchcock House, Bedford Hospital North Wing

Opening Hours - will be confirmed nearer the opening date.

NHS England has funded the building and set up of the CDC in Bedford.

The purpose of setting up CDCs across the country are to improve access to diagnostic services for patients. It is expected to increase the trust's capacity by 50%.

It will offer a broad range of elective diagnostics that would normally be done at Bedford Hospital South Wing. This frees up capacity at the hospital for urgent tests that are needed for inpatients or outpatients.

Tests available will be:

- CT scan
- MRI scans
- Ultrasound scans
- Xray's
- ECGs
- Retinol Screening

The existing gym at GHH will also be converted into consulting rooms and rooms to house MRI and CT scanners.

Phlebotomy tests will continue to be provided at Gilbert Hitchcock House.

Therapy Services are now housed in the building behind Gilbert Hitchcock House.

The old Enhanced Services Centre has been updated and is a Community Hub housing several GP Practices. The opening of CDC will give quicker access to diagnostic tests for patients.

Patients have to be referred by Primary Care (GPs) and some from the hospital (secondary care) for non-urgent tests. Urgent diagnostic tests for hospital patients will be done at the hospital. Patients may be asked to go to CDC at a specific time to help with the flow through the department. CDC is due to be fully operational by Autumn 2025. There are also CDCs at Stevenage and Luton Hospitals.

7. **PCN Network** – 5 years ago the government wanted practices to work together and PCN were set up. They have an additional management team with a GP Director – to look at areas that need additional services providing. IMC is now part of Sandhills PCN which is made up of Saffron, Sandy and now IMC and Greensands who are both affiliated members. Sandhills PCN has a new manager and finance lead and can offer services that IMC cannot offer. Enhanced Services are now going to be provided at IMC; this will be 2-3 days in the week (0630-2030hrs) and Saturday (0900 – 1700hrs). Team Clinicians from the Enhanced Services will come to the practice to help - all funded by the PCN. This is an extension of current services. You can request an appointment on a form on TT or ring reception and ask for an enhanced access appointment. The additional services will include changing dressings, Diabetic checks, asthma and COPD reviews etc. Going forwards, IMC will have regular meetings with the Clinical Director and management team and are looking at working in local care homes and other initiatives.
8. **ICB Merger** - BLMK ICB are commissioners for services, strategy for area and pay for all services. This is currently geographic and has been in situ for 4 years. Six months ago, the government mandated all commissioners to become bigger organisations. BLMK ICB is merging with Cambridge & Peterborough ICB and parts of Hertfordshire. Currently BLMK covers 1.1 million residents it is estimated the larger entity will cover 3 million patients. They will have less managers and reduce costs significantly. Unsure of new location. Drawback is we may lose the good working relationship we currently have with ICB.
9. **Leaky Heart Valve Documents in the Mail** – Dr Claire Appleby from Liverpool Heart & Chest Hospital wrote about the problems of people who present with breathlessness and who are not being investigated properly, stating that stethoscopes are not being used frequently. A report has shown that 30% of 60+-year-olds have valvular disease. In 2011 DW had a suspected stroke and went to Lister Hospital – was told it was not but he did have a heart murmur. ECG showed a mitral leak and had open heart surgery 3 years later. Dr Singh said that GPs can't introduce this screening as it needs to be for standard checks under QOF (Quality Outcome Framework). Dr Singh said that IMC had

introduced a Clinical Huddle every 2 weeks, where clinicians can discuss cases and learn what they can do better. These meetings are minuted. She will add use of stethoscopes onto the next huddle. IMC now have new stethoscopes.

- 10. Plans for Next Three Months** – consolidating everything that has been implemented so far. Working with new PCN. New flu vaccinations will start from 1st October onwards. Invites will be sent by the end of this week to those who qualify.
- 11. Topic for next meeting** – Jayne Gilbert talking about Care, how it works and training for staff (I will get the correct title nearer the next meeting).
- 12. Any Other Business** –
Current patient numbers are stable @ 13000.
Synching medications facility is still on IMC website.

Blood Tests – IMC offers these for patients with chronic conditions, cancer and over a certain age. Other patients need to go to Bedford North Wing or Lister Hospital.

Coeliac Reviews – these are not commissioned, unless you are on medication.

IMC Website – Ocimum Healthcare Section – Ocimum is an umbrella company that incorporated IMC in August 2024. Patients do not notice the difference. They have 3 clinical directors and management and use a Board Model to manage both IMC and Malzeard Road sites.

Private Appointments- under Ocimum there is a separate management team for private appointments which is due to launch private GP services. You can access them via Ocimum.co.uk website. Some doctors from IMC are offering private appointments but they will do this work on their non-IMC days. Appointments will be with a GP and initially offering urgent appointments, menopause clinics and obesity clinics. Hope to add surgical and other services. Ocimum is live and appointments will start next Monday. The first 12 weeks appointments will be by telephone only. Patients will be given 28 days' supply of medicines.

- 13. Date of Next Meeting** – December – date to be confirmed.