

The Carers' Network and Café .

The establishment and maintenance of a Carers' network is a PMC PA strategic priority. The PMC is in the process of updating the information it holds on patients who are carers. The Café has been publicised within PMC, and more recently promoted through a text to patients. (which resulted in over a dozen enquires about the café).

The Carer cafe is a joint initiative between the Pinn Medical Centre and the Pinn Medical Centre Patients Association (PMC PA). It welcomes any patient who provides support to a family member, neighbour or friend.

The intention has been to offer a monthly informal drop-in facility, enabling carers to have the opportunity to chat with other carers, exchange lived experiences and learn more about the support available locally from both public and private providers.

The first café was held in December 2018. Until Spring 2020 it was held in the Conference Room at PMC; since COVID it has continued to held virtually – via Google Meet. It is hoped that the café will return to PMC monthly when it is safe to do so. (When held in the Conference Room leaflets and an information booklet was available to attendees. Refreshments have been provided by the PMC at no cost to attendees).

PMC PA has a carer café circulation list which is used to notify café dates and other information relevant to carers. Feedback from those attending the café has been positive. Specific benefits identified include: the opportunity to talk informally with other carers, to learn about experiences with obtaining support – both locally and nationally, to highlight issues of concern to carers and to hear about relevant events. Recent examples of the latter are the London Carers Event – held virtually in September 2020 and the re-launch of the Harrow Carers Card.

Informal links with Harrow Carers (who spoke at a evening event) and the Carer Lead at London Borough of Harrow are now in place.

Jenny Stephany. 1st October 2020.