

# Minutes of Patient participation group meeting

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**10<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

12 members of the group had indicated that they should be able to attend. 9 people came to the meeting and the practice was represented by Fran Duggan (manager). This was really encouraging, as we had 6 people who were attending for the first time, one of whom was a student. This may have been due to the efforts of the student volunteers in helping to recruit new group members as well as the efforts of the admin staff in reminding people about the meeting. It was really helpful to have so many people attend the meeting and there were lively discussions and new ideas about many of the topics discussed.

Following the introductions there was a discussion about the role of the group and its achievements during the previous 3 years. One new member had been part of her PPG in her previous practice and was able to provide some insight into what had been achieved by their group.

## **Discussion about the patient satisfaction survey.**

Most of the people present had not been at the previous discussions when the questionnaire had been designed and some people felt that it was too long. The questionnaire is reviewed every year by the PPG. When it was reviewed we had not felt able to remove any questions and in fact had added 2 further questions. Although it looked long it does not take long to complete as it mainly consists of tick box responses. It would be important to consider this when the questionnaire is reviewed next year.

We completed more questionnaires this year than in the previous 2 years. There was some discussion as to how many we should be aiming to complete, with some people feeling that this was a reasonable number and others suggesting that in future years we should be aiming for about 350. It has been unfortunate that few people have chosen to complete the questionnaire on line (1 this year) despite this being advertised both in the surgery and on the website. It was agreed that few people read the notices or the notices on the patient call in screen. The admin staff have had to manually enter the data from the questionnaires which is time consuming.

There were several suggestions about how we could improve the on-line completion of the survey;

- See if it would be possible to set up a reminder on the patient log in screen so that patients are encouraged to complete the questionnaire as they arrive.
- Have a computer terminal or lap top available in reception for patients to complete the questionnaire on line while they are waiting.
- Send out a text reminder asking patients to complete the survey on line giving a deadline for completion e.g. please complete within the next week.

- Involving members of the PPG or the student volunteers to encourage patients to complete the survey while they are waiting for their appointment. (The student volunteers had spent some time doing this in January and it seemed to be helpful and means that it is possible to spend more time explaining about the survey rather than the receptionist trying to do this alongside their normal duties).
- To encourage volunteers/ front runners or students studying in the business faculty to undertake the management of the survey as a project either as part of their course or as a voluntary project. The current student volunteers have been helpful but organising the whole survey would be a bigger time commitment than has been possible so far. There was also some concern about patient confidentiality. Fran explained that the current students have had to demonstrate an understanding of patient confidentiality at their interview and have signed a confidentiality agreement. They do not have access to patient data or records but still needed to understand the importance of this in case patients disclose information to them during the course of their conversation. The current students have been chosen from the health sciences faculty as it was felt that they would have a better understanding of these issues.

All the members of the PPG had been sent or e-mailed copies of the survey results. No feedback or comments had been received prior to the meeting. Those present felt that the response to the question about satisfaction with care at the surgery of 88% of respondents being happy or fairly happy and only 1% being unhappy should be celebrated. The key results of the survey have been displayed in the waiting room and this was one of the points that was picked out. One of the group reminded us that this should not make us complacent and we should still be striving to improve further in all aspects relating to patient care. There were similar figures for the questions relating to satisfaction with GP consultations. It was agreed that there was an increased awareness of the role of the practice nurses as nurse prescribers both within the group and patients in general and this was confirmed by the survey results.

There are still issues with phone access although the survey results suggest that this is improving. The surgery had hoped that the online appointment booking would be popular, particularly with students, and that this would ease the pressure on the phones first thing in the morning. Despite advertising this service on the phone message, in the waiting room and on the website, few people seem to be aware of it or making use of it. Several members of the group were having difficulty logging in or getting the system to work properly. It was suggested that the information about how to log in the first time on the website could be clearer. Some people expressed concern that not everyone wishes to use the on line services. Fran explained that this would never replace the receptionists or the phone access but might give different options for patients to use when booking appointments.

#### **Action Fran**

Discuss with the IT clerk how to amend the information on the web site so that patients logging in for the first time find this an easier and clearer process. e.g. having a “log in “button.

There was some discussion about the appointment system. Fran apologised on behalf of the surgery as we are aware that we have not been able to offer the number of appointments that we would like due to staff shortages and difficulty recruiting locum GPs. There was a request for information to be made available about which days particular GPs work. This is not easy as the GPs often have to move their sessions to cover days when we are short of appointments. There were questions about the student surgeries and why students cannot see patients with on-going problems. Fran explained that this is due to the particular part of the course that they are studying while they are based in general practice which relates to diagnostic skills. The surgery has worked hard to provide as good a service as possible through some very difficult weeks but is aware that this has impacted on appointment availability. The surgery aims to provide 100 immediate access appointments every day on top of the pre-booked appointments and nurse's appointments but this has not been possible recently. It is obviously frustrating if patients are told that there are no pre-booked appointments but if they phone on the day they will be able to see a particular doctor only to discover when they get through that the doctor is not available or is fully booked already. Fran suggested that in this situation patients can ask to speak to a manager who will do their best to resolve the situation. The information that it is possible to speak to a manager or the on-call GP if there are no available appointments seems to be more widely known according to the results of the survey.

Fran was disappointed that despite advertising on the web site and in the surgery only 27% of patients knew that there was a patient participation group. However some members of the group felt that this was a fairly high figure and that we should not be discouraged by this. Despite the few hours that they have volunteered so far it has been useful having the student volunteers spend some time in the waiting room chatting to patients about the survey results, the PPG and the on line services. They have already managed to recruit new members to the group. There was a suggestion that having people available in the waiting room answering questions and giving information was very useful and had improved customer services in other businesses. It might be possible to do this for periods of time using student volunteers, members of the PPG and occasionally admin staff.

## Action plan 2013-14

We had discussed the action plan at the previous meeting and the group were in agreement with the points that had been suggested so far but felt that we should add some further actions.

### **1. Continue to promote and develop the role of the PPG**

The student volunteers have been helpful so far in the work that they have done and it is hoped that they will be able to continue to develop this role. The PPG is going to be vital for the future development and support of the surgery and we will continue to advertise and promote the group.

## **2. On line services**

It was agreed that the online services may be helpful for some patients although we accept that this will not appeal to everyone. We will continue to actively promote the services. We will also try to make this as easy as possible for patients to use and continually re-evaluate the service.

## **3. Patient satisfaction survey next year**

We will ensure that the survey is again reviewed by the PPG next year. We will aim to increase the number of responses obtained and ideally try to increase the number of on line surveys completed.

## **4. Communication**

We have looked at patient communication throughout the last 3 years. It is as a result of the suggestions from the PPG that we started the text message service. We appreciate that people access information in different ways and we need to offer as many options as possible.

- Ensuring that front line staff are able to give good advice about how to access the services
- Increasing the opportunity for patients in the waiting room to be able to access information through the use of volunteers, members of the PPG and admin staff.
- Improving the display of information in the waiting room both on the notice boards, the call in screen and the patient log in screen and making this as relevant and accessible as possible.
- Creating a news letter which could be sent out by e-mail and available on the web site, with paper copies available for patients to collect or read in the waiting room. There was some discussion about this being sent to all patients but it was agreed that this would be too expensive.

## **Information sharing**

This was discussed again at the meeting. Fran reviewed the various new initiatives and clarified that patients are able to opt out of any of these services. One member of the group was pleased to note that this information is available on the website and that the opt out form for the summary care records is also accessible on the website.

## **Next meeting**

The new business manager has not been appointed so unfortunately it was not possible to set a date for the next meeting. Fran will ensure that everyone is informed once a date has been agreed.