

Patient Participation Group
2nd November 2011
Initial meeting

The first meeting was attended by 13 members of the patient participation group, out of a total of 21 people who expressed an interest in being part of the group.

Everyone was welcomed by Fran Duggan (one of the GPs) and Deborah Brunger (practice manager).

Following an introduction, there was a general discussion about the role of a patient participation groups (PPGs) and what were felt to be the issues for this particular PPG.

Fran Duggan explained about the current expectations that practices would set up PPGs. Amongst a variety of other possible activities it was hoped that they would help guide the surveys performed by the practice. These surveys have been performed annually for several years and look at accessibility, patient satisfaction, and the services offered by the practice.

Questions were asked about how the results of this survey would be used. It was clarified that a report had to be written on the basis of the collated information from the survey. This would be discussed with the patient participation group, forwarded to the PCT and published on the practice's website.

Towards the end of the meeting, the draft survey which had been prepared by the practice was discussed. Some general issues were raised about formatting and about the length of the survey. There were also some specific issues about particular questions namely;

- question “considering specialist services ...” should have a box that also says “not applicable” as well as the yes/no option.
- the statement that says “please state the option that applies”, should go after the question and not at the end of the choices,
- at the end there should be a box for general comments.
- the question about occupation should have the possibility to include a box saying “please specify”, as well as being able to tick a box saying ‘doing something else’.
- the questions relating to the building only consider cleanliness and décor.

It might be better to ask a more general question such as, “are you happy with the new building? Yes/no” and “if you are not happy please suggest ways in which we could improve.”

A few members of the group have offered to email us further comments and help with the formatting ,which we appreciate.

Other issues that were discussed in our brain storming session included;

- how to generate student interest and involvement in the PPG. We were very appreciative of the 2 students who were able to attend, however, it was felt that if half of the patients of the practice are students then we need to look at other ways of canvassing student views .
- People valued the option of receiving texts messages about appointments.

This is something the practice are also keen on making more widely available. It was explained that currently we were only able to send text messages to patients from whom we have obtained consent,(this applies to nearly all new registrations.) We have been trying to get consent from established patients, but realise we need to do further work on this.

- There was a discussion about the facilities available online in terms of booking appointments and requesting repeat prescriptions. These were felt to be helpful for some people, although we needed to continue to be mindful of the fact that many people are not able to access online services
- The website was discussed and it was agreed that it would be useful to be able to view this during the meeting next time.

There was some discussion about the use of the website and IT in general. It was appreciated that this might be helpful for patients for whom English was a second language as there are some search engines and programmes available to translate material.

- Consistency of being able to see a particular GP as your main GP was discussed. Some patients felt that this had been a problem. There was a discussion about whether it would be possible to have a ‘primary and secondary GP’ so that if your usual GP isn’t available, it would be possible to see another GP who knows about and understands your care.
- A number of issues were raised regarding communication about services we offer and information that we provide. Despite the fact

that the group included patients who had been registered here for many years, many people were unaware of the fact that physiotherapy was available through the sports clinic at the surgery.

It was felt that maybe we could improve on the way that we advertise the services that we offer.

- A concern was raised that although we try quite hard to accommodate requests, patients in the group had personally experienced, or over heard other patients being told that they had mistaken the date or time of their appointment and were not able to be seen. There was a concern that this may cause difficulty to particular patients who may have made considerable effort to get here. Deborah informed the group that it is always possible for patients to speak to one of three managers if they, or anyone else, is not happy about a situation and they would do their best to resolve it.
- It seems that some patients have been informed that you cannot request to see a particular doctor.

Deborah will forward this to the reception manager so that all reception staff are clear that it is important for patient continuity that patients are be able to request an appointment with a particular GP whenever possible.

- There was also a discussion about the upstairs waiting area. Several of the doctors work in upstairs consulting rooms and despite information on the reception desk, above the touch screen and on the calling screen, patients can be unaware that there is an upstairs waiting room which provides better access for these consulting rooms
- A number of people have also had the experience of being able to book in on the touch screen for an appointment with a doctor who was off sick. Fran and Deborah apologised on behalf of the practice for this, which shouldn't have been able to happen. They will look at how this has come about. Usually, once somebody phones in sick, the appointment list is printed out and then the surgery is cancelled. This should mean that people shouldn't be able to book in for these appointments.
- There was some discussion about other activities that the patient participation group might wish to be involved in. It was suggested that there might be a need for a De Montfort surgery based group

for students and non students, offering support, welfare advice, health education around particular conditions, and advice about completing forms and accessing benefits. It might also be possible for the PPG to help the surgery with particular campaigns or education sessions on selected health topics. We are not clear at the moment about how these ideas would be taken forward, but would like to consider this again at a future meeting.

- The new building was discussed. It was agreed that it is spacious and offers more facilities than the old building, but the general feeling was that the current building doesn't really demonstrate either the practice or the individual doctors' personalities and feels a bit soul-less. Deborah explained about the restrictions that we have due to the fact we rent the building, rather than owning it, and therefore have to seek permission from both the PCT and the owners of the building in order to make any changes, even in terms of putting up posters, notice boards or pictures. We had intended to arrange a tour of the building but it was decided to delay this until next time .

Wednesday evening was generally felt to be a good evening to hold the meetings and it was suggested that we should meet bi- monthly.

We will try and arrange the next meeting for early January when we hope we will have some information available from the questionnaires to discuss.

We will also circulate an agenda prior to the meeting.

The suggested topics were:

1. results of the survey,
2. practice website,
3. tour of the building. It was hoped that this might facilitate a more detailed discussion about suggested improvements that the PPG might wish to support the practice in requesting.

Thank you to everyone who attended.