

THE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP
MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM ON
MONDAY 10TH JANUARY 2022

Attendees:

Dr S Tahseen	GP	Sue Osborne	Patient
Aneesa Farooq	Assistant Practice Manager	Clare Bowling	Patient
Jan Bird	Patient	Martha Haruna	Patient
Cathy Smith	Patient	Clive Roberts	Patient
Anne Fox	Patient	Janet Goodchild	Notetaker

Apologies: None as everyone was in attendance.

Introduction:

Dr Tahseen welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished everyone a very happy New Year.

Minutes:

The minutes of the last meeting, held via zoom on 4th October 2021 were approved as a true record.

Practice Report:

Dr Tahseen gave the practice report saying:-

It has continued to be very difficult to operate during the pandemic whilst staying within the guidelines to keep everyone as safe as possible.

The staff continue to work hard to deliver a good service to the community.

Recently both administrative staff and clinicians have been helping to deliver the local booster vaccine programme, which has successfully seen approx. 450 patients each day. Unfortunately, the virus is still rife in the area, and everyone should be encouraged to get fully vaccinated to help protect themselves and prevent the spread. Hopefully, this has been achieved without too much of an adverse impact on the operation of the surgery.

New staff have been appointed, we have Liliosa a new Physician Associate and a new Receptionist / Administrator due to start next week both of whom will add to the strength of the surgery.

A new telephone system has been installed which will hopefully help us to deal more efficiently with calls. We are restricting telephone requests for repeat prescriptions to between 10am & 11am, we are keeping this service for those who cannot use other methods but are trying to restrict its use in order to prevent mistakes happening, which can happen when patients ask for medications that are not on repeat or when a patient has similarly named medications on their list. The preferred methods of contact are via email, post, handing in or using the various apps that are available.

N.B. The NHS app includes a facility to order repeat medications.

Patient Input:

As we were online everyone was asked in turn for any points that they wished to raise so that everyone could hear each other.

Anne asked if the problems regarding blood tests had been resolved. Dr Tahseen said that it had been a national supply problem with the bottles used and that this appears to have been resolved and the hospital distribution system is back to normal.

Cathy then asked about the availability of blood tests at the surgery as she was aware of a case where an appointment had been cancelled due to staff sickness, the patient was advised to go online to book an appointment at The Mall as there were none available at the surgery. Using this system, it took the patient approx. 1 hour he was offered an appointment in mid-January which was not acceptable. He then called the surgery again and was given a new slot at the surgery which was acceptable. Dr Tahseen apologised for any inconvenience and explained that sometimes when a clinic has to be cancelled it can be a little while before an alternative can be set up, so it is the priority to cancel and prevent patients having wasted journeys. It may have been that when the patient called back someone else had just cancelled in another session or a replacement clinic organised.

Cathy commented that she was pleased that patients are now being allowed to wait inside the surgery. Dr Tahseen confirmed that three patients would be allowed in at any one time to maintain distancing within the confines of the building.

Jan asked if there was likely to be any change to not having routine face to face appointments that covid has resulted in. Dr Tahseen said that the Doctors and clinicians are continuing to offer telephone triage and then arranging face to face appointments when necessary. Particular care is taken if the patient is elderly or a child. She said that a lot of patients prefer to have a private telephone call or video call. Her personal opinion is that we are unlikely to return to a fully open surgery and appointments as before for at least the next twelve months.

Clare asked about being able to see test results online. Aneesa said that that it depends on whether the patient has "Detailed Coding" activated on their online account. The system automatically sets to no. Aneesa will activate it for those who requested it. Martha suggested that patients could be asked when attending for blood tests and that initial registration forms are changed to include this option.

With regards to test results, one should be able to assume that "No news is good news" as normally clinicians will ask for follow when needed.

Martha stated that she was aware of problems with booking routine Medication Reviews due to the busy phone lines. Dr Tahseen suggested emailing in to request one which would probably be with a Physician Associate although this should not be used as a bypass for ordinary appointments.

Clare spoke about the Diabetes Prevention Programme and asked if this was being funded directly by the surgery as she was not very impressed by what she had seen of the service. Dr Tahseen said no, it is funded by Public Health England and that she would be grateful for any constructive feedback that she could pass on. Clare said the patient she knows of finds it annoying having to duplicate information, that there seems to be three steps when one would be sufficient and that it is frustrating to be told what they already know. Perhaps it is not the case that "one size fits all."

Sue asked about the process of hospital referrals and how long they were taking in the current situation. Dr Tahseen said that some departments are struggling, and some appointments are taking up to six months to come through. Aneesa advised that if a patient has not heard from the hospital in a reasonable time, then they can contact the Outpatients Department on 01582 561385 with their NHS number to confirm that they are on the list. Jan advised that she was aware of a situation and that the patient was reassured that they would be contacted in due course and had not been forgotten.

She also had a concern that patients were having Medication Reviews without having blood tests in the previous two years. Dr Tahseen said that she would follow up on this and issue forms where necessary.

It was also noted that with regards to prescriptions if insufficient meds are prescribed and the patient pays for their items then the Pharmacist should really advise the patient to contact the surgery to get the whole script cancelled and re-issued and not just one for the extra.

There were no further points raised.

Any Other Business:

Sue commented that she was pleased that the telephone hold music had been changed and it was now much better,

Janet asked if patients could contact PALS at the hospital as well as Outpatients and was advised that PALS (Patient Liaison Services) is more for complaints about the hospital.

Date of Next Meeting:

It was agreed to provisionally set Monday 4th April 2022 @ 5.30pm for the next virtual gathering.

Dr Tahseen thanked everyone for taking the time and trouble to attend this meeting and the session closed at 6.08pm.