

THE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP
MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM ON
MONDAY 4TH OCTOBER 2021

Attendees:

Dr S Tahseen	GP	Sue Osborne	Patient
Aneesa Farooq	Assistant Practice Manager	Clare Bowling	Patient
Cathy Smith	Patient	Janet Goodchild	Notetaker
Anne Fox	Patient		

Apologies: Although no official apologies had been received Martha Haruna had indicated that she hoped to attend.

Jan Bird sent belated apologies.

Introduction:

Dr Tahseen welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for agreeing to attend this first zoom session. She introduced Aneesa who is the Assistant Practice Manager.

Aneesa has been working at the surgery for about 3 years, starting whilst still at university, since graduating she has undertaken a variety of roles within the surgery and six months ago was promoted to her current role.

Dr Tahseen then asked if everyone could introduce themselves.

Janet advised that she retired from active surgery work at the end of January after nearly 6 years on reception but has since done a few tasks on the surgery's behalf including working at the Vaccine Centre in Strangers Way.

Sue advised that she is a housewife and takes a keen interest in the practice and its' operation.

Anne told us that she is retired and has been with the surgery since she moved to the area approx 12 years ago and is also happy to be involved in the practice.

Cathy advised us that she has been with the practice for more than 40 years and that likewise she is motivated to act in the surgery's best interests.

Dr Tahseen advised us that as a GP she has been with the surgery for 12 years and has seen many changes in the way that surgeries operate and most particularly the changes that have had to be implemented due to the pandemic.

N.B. Clare joined in visually after this point.

Minutes:

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 2nd March 2020 were approved as a true record.

Practice Report:

Dr Tahseen gave the practice report saying:-

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

To this end all receptionists are only allowed to book initial telephone consultations with an appropriate clinician. The clinician then makes a decision on clinical grounds as to whether or not the patient needs to be seen face to face and then books an appointment slot direct with the patient. There are a limited number of telephone appointments but reception can also book into the extended hours service which is available evenings and weekends. Some people, particularly those who work during normal surgery hours are happy to utilise these as they can be more convenient.

As you may know our Registrars were all called back to the hospitals at the height of the emergency, which did leave us short-handed for a while. However, Dr Marina has returned to us and is working very successfully at the surgery. Dr Mohammed Ayub has joined us and he is working well. We have also had Dr Narthan is another registrar working with us but she is soon to go on maternity leave.

Dr Tomlinson retired from full time working but he doing one day a week on Thursdays. Dr Ednan Hashmi does a couple of days a week as does Dr Sara Butt and along with Dr Daulatzai these regular locums help to form the basis of consistent care at the surgery.

We also now have an experienced practice nurse Sangeeta Williams. She works alongside Saba our Health Care Assistant, in addition we have a locum nurse who comes in one day a week primarily to keep on top of the smear tests and baby immunisations. We also have support from a specialist Mental Health Nurse.

Some of the procedures that were suspended during the covid outbreak like ear syringing are slowly coming back as and when we are advised that it is safe to proceed.

In addition to the GP's and Nurses we also have 2 Clinical Pharmacists, Harry Ho and Mr Hussnain working with us and they can deal with a wide range of issues and prescribe where appropriate under the GP's supervision. And together with Medical Students and a trainee Physician Associate and a fully qualified Physician Associate Mr Umar Dinah we feel that we can meet the needs of the community. And are fully able to utilise all the new clinical rooms which are now fully fitted out with telephone and computer access as well as full examination facilities.

Sadly, one of our receptionists lost her husband last April due to covid and although she returned after bereavement leave found that it was no longer the right environment for her so had to leave.

There have been quite a few changes to the Reception / Admin team but with Aneesa in place as well as a new Medical Secretary and Administrators on board we hope to move forward more confidently.

All of the building work is now nearly finished. We have installed a better intercom system and a new front door with much better disabled access.

A very successful Flu clinic had taken place on a Saturday 18th September when over 700 patients were seen. It was hard work but well worth the effort for everyone involved.

It has been very hard for patients and staff to cope with all the recent difficulties but hopefully we have done the best that we can in the circumstances.

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.

Clare asked about prescriptions as there had been an incident last Thursday when a prescription had not arrived at the pharmacy as it should have done. She then went over to the surgery and spoke to a receptionist who apologised and printed the script out and handed it over. However, when Clare went back to the pharmacy it hadn't been signed which necessitated another trip back to the surgery. All in all there was a delay of 36 hours before the patient was able to start the antibiotics.

Dr Tahseen will investigate this particular incident and will provide feed back and training to the staff where necessary. She said that 80% of prescriptions now go direct to the patient's chosen pharmacy which generally works well.

Clare also raised concerns about Mums with little babies waiting outside the surgery particularly now that the colder weather is coming.

Dr Tahseen said that patients are asked to come down for their actual appointment time so as to avoid waiting where possible. She also said that once someone was checked in with reception they could perhaps wait in their vehicle and ask reception to call them in and that Aneesa will look into making an appropriate notice for the window.

The problem is that there is no natural flow of ventilation in the surgery which puts both patients and staff at higher risk of covid. This is particularly worrying as the local rates seem to be increasing.

Clare also stated that trying to talk through the window was not ideal and felt particular concern for elderly and infirm patients particularly those who might be hard of hearing.

Dr Tahseen said that the surgery is aware of this, hence the installation of the new and improved intercom. Patients are advised to call the surgery to make appointments and discuss any issues as this is better for most if they can call from a quiet background. Reception staff will go to the door if communication is particularly difficult.

Clare said that she was pleased that blood tests are restarting at the surgery as this is very convenient for a lot of patients. Dr Tahseen said that although it is not financially viable, and a lot of local surgeries have stopped taking bloods, it is a service that we are happy to offer.

Everyone was aware that there has been and still is national shortage of blood bottles, Aneesa advised that we have taken a delivery and are hoping for more supplies soon although this is not guaranteed. She said that the surgery is contacting those patients in need of the more urgent tests to book them in. Once any back log has been cleared it is likely that blood test appointments will be able to be booked approx. 2 weeks in advance.

Cathy queried that there is no longer an option on the telephone system for obtaining test results.

Dr Tahseen advised that it is probably best to call after 10am and use the appointment option rather than at the busiest times of 8am and 2pm. She also advised that some results are available to view online within an individuals account. Cathy said that this could be very helpful.

As the recorded message is going to be changed they will look into adding the tests option back in as well as the call back service. They would like to keep the message as short as possible as it can be very irritating having to listen to a long message.

Sue then mentioned the very irritating hold music, unfortunately this is down to the telephone company and not an option for the surgery to change.

Clare reported that in her experience there had been a better response time to phone calls whilst Cathy said the worst time was when the 1st round of covid vaccines at Strangers Way were being

booked. Aneesa explained that this was due to the very short notice that we were given of the clinic dates and the need to get as many booked in as quickly as possible.

Anne asked if it is possible to pre-book telephone slots for non-urgent matters. Dr Tahseen said that there were a small number of pre-booked slots at the surgery and some at the extended access service. She said that the main problem with this is that patient's book these slots and then don't answer their phone. She says that clinicians often try three or four times to call some patients which is a waste of time for everyone. Regrettably this also happens with some same day booked appointments.

Cathy asked when face to face appointments are likely to re-commence. Dr Tahseen explained that there are still a high number of patients suffering from Covid. At the moment the intention is to continue with telephone triage to reduce the risks to all concerned. She said that she has found video calling to be really beneficial where the technology is available to both parties. Patients can also be asked to send photographs in when appropriate. It is the intention that as the situation improves, and staying within the safety guidelines, more face to face will be implemented.

Anne asked if there were sufficient telephone slots available for the number of patients registered. Dr Tahseen advised that the surgery needs to offer a minimum of 665 appointments per week and the current average is 741 with approx. 350 Nurses appointments on top. She also confirmed that appointments cannot be booked online and that the Receptionists are instructed to ask questions so as to avoid appointments being booked with an inappropriate clinician. Aneesa is keeping an eye on the number of requests to appointment ratio and will release slots early when and where necessary.

Clare mentioned the number of clinics e.g. Asthma & Lung checks that are being outsourced. Dr Tahseen said that these are organised by the local Clinical Commissioning Group for linked surgeries and patients are encouraged to attend when called. Dr Tahseen also said that through this scheme we also have access to a Social Prescriber who can help some of our patients. She stated that these have not been easy days for anyone.

N.B. For your information they can encourage patients to re-engage within the community, some examples of help include volunteering, arts activities, group learning, gardening, befriending, cookery, healthy eating advice and a range of sports.

There were no other issues that anyone wanted to raise.

Any Other Business:

Janet said that although it was overdue, she felt that it would be impossible to arrange a properly inclusive virtual AGM with approx. 10,000 patients on the registers. This is because all patients are entitled to attend if they so wish and need to be invited to do so. It was agreed to delay this until a normal gathering can be arranged.

Date of Next Meeting:

It was agreed to provisionally set Monday 10th January 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 6.20pm.