

THE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP
MINUTES OF THE MEETING AT THE SURGERY

MONDAY 14TH OCTOBER 2024

Attendees:

Dr S Tahseen	GP	Muhammed Waqar	Practice Manager
Clare Bowling	Patient		
Clive Roberts	Patient		
Sue Osbourne	Patient		
Jan Bird	Patient		
		Janet Goodchild	Notetaker

Welcome:

Muhammed thanked those attending and welcomed everyone to the surgery. A photograph of the group was taken to mark the occasion and may be used on the website.

Apologies:

Anne Fox and Martha Haruna sent their apologies.

Minutes:

The minutes of the last meeting, held via zoom on 8th July 2024 were approved as a true record.

Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

Practice Report:

Muhammed was pleased to report that there had been a good uptake of the RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) which is aimed at the 75 – 80 age group as had been of the initial batch of Flu vaccines. The flu vaccines started on 3rd October with a successful Saturday Clinic on 5th October. It was very well attended and with 5 clinicians on site together with 4 staff carrying out Blood Pressure and weight check the whole session ran very smoothly with approx. 450 patients having to wait less than 5 minutes.

The flu vaccines will continue at the surgery with drop-in sessions and pre-booked appointments. Priority will be given to children in after school times.

Fortunately, a member of staff saw a post on social media about a “Flu Clinic” that was supposed to be happening on Saturday 12th October and immediately contacted Muhammed who rushed to the surgery along with one of the GP’s. They contacted anyone that they could from the social media post and invited them to come to the surgery for their vaccine, sent texts, changed the message on the answerphone to say that staff would be available until 3pm and amended the website with an apology and an invitation to attend. Apparently the PCN (Primary Care Network) was conducting a clinic at one of the other surgeries in the group and had contacted our patients in error. The person responsible has apologised most profusely. Sadly only 6 patient attended for their vaccinations.

The Group felt that the staff had handled everything very professionally and dealt with the situation in the best possible way and that no blame could be attached to the surgery for the incident.

Muhammed advised the group that having worked on the “Total Triage” system for the previous 4 months it had been decided at the last minute to delay the start date due to notification of an unexpected CQC (Care Quality Commission) inspection. There is a huge amount of work needed to gather all the documentation required to be scanned and submitted beforehand and preparation by all members of staff. The surgery was only advised of the inspection 3 days before the triage system had been due to go live, but it was felt it would be better to concentrate efforts in one direction only.

There will need to be several meetings before the actual day of the inspection which is 24th October both online and face to face with clinical and administrative staff. The inspection process has changed considerably since the last inspection in 2018 which was pre-covid.

The inspectors will also be looking for feedback from patients and members of the PPG are invited to attend on the day. Patient survey forms are available in the surgery for completion. More up to date views and experiences are being collected as those published in July related to February / March 2024 which was prior to the installation of the new phone lines.

Dr Tahseen advised that between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024 there had been 12 written and 7 verbal complaints received at the surgery ranging from issues regarding prescriptions to a complaint of rudeness, which cannot be tolerated. These had all been discussed in clinical meetings and staff meetings and where necessary extra training had been given. The accusation of rudeness was unfounded as it was a misunderstanding of the language used. Regular customer service training has been implemented for all staff. All staff in training are supervised and given access to advice as and when needed for their progression. The new telephone system has been very well received and is a vast improvement, this has also impacted on and led to a reduction in complaints regarding calls. The surgery deals with approx. 350 -400 calls every day which is huge call volume, everyone is doing their best. Members of the group noted that previously Reception might have been termed “frosty” but the opinion now is that it is much improved. The staff are all pleasant and are much more approachable and come across as kind and caring and keen to help.

Everyone can make mistakes, but it is how you deal with them, how promptly you respond and are flexible enough to seek a good solution. The ethos of the Practice is to help whenever and wherever it can.

Concerns were raised about “Total Triage” and that less technologically literate patients will be disenfranchised. Patients who can access the website and fill out the form online through a computer such as a laptop or iPad, or use the NHS app will gain direct access to the system. However for patients who are reliant on phoning the surgery, a member of the reception team will fill out the form on their behalf, currently estimated to take between 3 and 4 minutes, and then they will take their place in the queue for that day – telephoning will not be a mechanism for queue jumping or receiving preferential treatment, so everyone will be part of the same process.

As part of the process a patient will be able to request a particular clinician to maintain continuity of care, every effort will be made to accommodate such requests, but it may not always be possible.

The question was asked if patients can submit their requests at any time, the timings will be limited and there will still be an element of first come, first served and instead of being in a phone queue patients may be in an online queue and members expressed hope that the system will have the capacity to cope with the amount of online traffic.

Dr Tahseen was pleased to say that the surgery has the lowest number of patients in Luton calling 111 or going to A&E. The staffing situation is stable, and the surgery is now supporting 4 GP Registrars.

Patient Input:

Members of the group were very concerned about the pressure that reception staff are going to be under as they will be taking longer calls from patients regarding appointments, queries, Nurse and Phlebotomy appointments as well as implementing the GP's instructions to book appointments or direct the patient in accordance with their needs. Likewise, the clinical staff, in particular the lead GP of the day, will be under increased strain. The group wanted the staff to know that they are very concerned about the impact that this new NHS system will have on their welfare.

PPG members discussed about launching a new system (Total triage) on a Monday, which is anecdotally the busiest day of the week, Muhammed explained that this best fits in with the rotas and operational needs of the surgery. Dr Tahseen thanked PPG members for their suggestion and explained that it was discussed within the SVP team and PCN and local practices. As discussed with PPG before that other PCN practices started on Monday and they felt that it is better to start on Monday for better service provision and for staff welfare.

The Manager also explained that he has been working with other groups in the PCN that have already implemented the system, and they have not experienced any extra problems with a Monday start.

Any Other Business:

Muhammed was aware of 3 new members for the PPG, and he will send their names and email addresses to Janet so that they can be included in all communications and hopefully they will be able to join us at the next meeting.

Several members of the PPG are happy to talk to the CQC inspectors and will make themselves available on 24th October.

Date of Next Meeting:

Monday 27th January at 6pm at the surgery.

Dr Tahseen thanked everyone for taking the time and trouble to attend this evening and the meeting closed at 7.15 pm.