

Park Farm Medical Centre and Vernon Street Surgery

PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP (PPG)

Minutes for Wednesday 17th April 2024

The meeting opened at 7.00, 'face to face' at Park Farm Medical Centre, and on Teams.

Attendees: Sue O'Key, Richard Smith, Raj Jogia, Nigel Aspdin, Lin Morris, Margot Keats, Bill Keats, Ian Pettitt, Eileen Pettitt, Glenda Youde, Roger Haylett, Val Haylett, Amanda Thorp, Simon Jones, Vanda Vickers, Josephine Oforiwaa Sakyi

Val Haylett (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies: Joyce Wren, Andrew Bilby, Natalie Croker Efraim davies de Vasconcelos, James Elliot, Helen Ansell

The minutes of the previous meeting in October were agreed.

Matters arising & Actions from the last meeting:

Review of communication with patients

For some patients there can be some confusion regarding possible follow-up instructions/ appointments/procedures and how to access them if necessary.

Simon & Amanda ran through current practice when communicating with patients re – face to face, letter, phone, email and texts. It can be a combination of text and email. Texts are the quickest way. If a text fails to raise a response 3 times the default is to email or send a letter.

Not all patients have a phone to receive texts or an email address.

Patients can opt out from receiving email or texts.

Simon read out a typical letter template to illustrate next steps information and response options. It all appeared very straight forward.

Simon asked for any suggestions for possible changes.

Ways to work around potential Team's link failure – all seemed to be working ok, extra joining links were sent by Sue.

Val and Simon stressed that PPG members should feel free to email either of them during the meeting if any access problems occur.

Cost of texts – is it a serious cost? Commissioners cover the cost. Big Group bookings texts can cost but it not an issue. The practice doesn't have a high number of email addresses so texts work.

Amanda Thorp, Reception Team Leader

Behind the scenes on reception

Amanda gave us overview statistics of reception telephone activity. She ran reports from a random day in January.

Mon 29th Jan 9.45am

Total calls 169, total answered 98 = total talk time 7hrs 27 mins (6 still queuing),

Mon 29th Jan 11.46am

Total incoming 272, total answered 186 total talk time 11hrs 29 minutes (0 queuing)

Mon 29th Jan 13.40pm

Total incoming 359, total answered 247 total talk time 14hrs 51 mins (5 queuing)

Friday 2nd Feb late in the day (no exact time)

Total incoming 465, total talk time 17hrs 49 mins (3 queuing)

Tues 16th April 14.14pm

Total incoming 248, total answered 227, total talk time 10hrs 7mins (0 queuing)

Average call time is 3 - 4 mins.

There are also 2 emergency lines for quick access to the emergency services.

Amanda went on to list some of her own and reception staff duties –

- Front desk queries, making appointments.
- Dealing with incoming notes/paperwork/reports, for example tagging, taking information and follow-up actions e.g. scanning and matching letters, emailing, death certificates, logging 111 reports and any contact with Out of Hours.
- Dealing with paper notes for new patients, all to be put on the system and paper notes for patients leaving the Practice.
- Processing Medicines online scripts.
- Letters – Royal mail & hospital post – this must be put on to patient records within 48 hrs.
- Room allocation must be worked from a rota – space is an issue at both surgeries. An appropriate working space for all practitioners is often challenging.
- Stock replenishment at both surgeries and clinical rooms - staff and patient papers.
- Tasks from GPs, the community and any urgent tasks
- Staff training – ongoing everyday queries from staff plus formal outside training organised.
- Website queries average at 1880 - 2125 per week – these and daily emails have to be viewed frequently for safety.
- An average of 235 emails per week are received – requesting summaries for records from other NHS providers or solicitors, queries from patients, hospitals, nursing homes, safeguarding etc. Most emails are complex, and these queries come in where there is no other direct route.

Each person on the team does every task in rotation so they can cover for each other.

Val reported on spending a Monday morning in Reception.

Val has full CRB clearance.

Val arrived at 7.30 and found the staff ready to start

Everyone remained calm and polite even though they were all very busy

Staff on the phone lines no sooner said goodbye to one patient and then they were saying good morning to the next patient, this seemed endless with no stopping.

Some patients queried why information regarding why they wanted an appointment was needed to book an appointment – details are annotated on the appointment slot so GP can make informed decisions.

Amount of 'physical' mail huge

Amanda is very supportive and patient with staff.

Lot of 'firefighting' goes on

Many questions for Amanda throughout the morning, from reception staff and GPs.

Val felt that Amanda does a brilliant job for the Practice.

Q&A:

Q Do receptionists know about GP/nurse specialisms?

Lots of new staff so not all – still training them up but overall yes

Q Is the Practice happy to receive emails? There is no Practice email address on the website.

Simon/Amanda – unaware that was the case so will look into this.

Q The glass panel/window on reception at Vernon St was closed so the receptionist couldn't hear the patient and vice versa. Why isn't the window left open?

Amanda – if the receptionist is lone working, they prefer the window closed, but Amanda will feed back that the window should be open when the patient is known. Simon reported there have been some abusive patients with threatening behaviour – so it is preferred to start with a closed screen & once staff are sure all is ok, and they feel safe then it will be opened. Amanda will discuss this with the staff.

Q Are all phone calls recorded?

Simon Yes.

Q If staff are getting abuse what about a webcam? Perhaps Body cams? This would put people off being aggressive.

Val said she felt some patients might object. Simon – the Practice does not feel a need for CCTV. Simon would consider but it would be purely for Practice security.

Q Do reception trainees need medical qualifications?

No. They don't need medical training – they get specific training in signposting/patient care plus outside NHS training. Amanda & Ellie spend lot of time training new receptionists

Q Are allergies noted on patient records?

Yes

A PPG member commented on how Amanda's report gave him confidence in her leadership and in the reception staff.

Simon Jones gave a Practice Update

- Staffing - currently 10 GPs. Reception STAFF stable, 1 new addition, a good team
- A medical secretary for the past 20 years has just left. She will be replaced as the post is an integral part of team.
- New telephone system to be installed in May (hopefully). It will have call back option. If a patient is way down in the queue they can opt to hang up, without losing their place, when they move to number 1 in the queue they will get a call back. There will be instructions on how to do this, if you use this option you should stay near the phone ready to pick up the call-back.
- Prospective Access to Records – NHS wants every patient to have full access to their medical history going forward. The Practice has resisted this move seeing potential problems regarding proxy access - who else within the patient's sphere might be able to access this information – raising possible coercive/ safeguarding issues. However, the Practice has to adopt this, and it will happen in the next couple of weeks. Patients can opt out from this is they wish.
- Covid boosters are starting – first Care Homes, Housebound then people aged 75 & over & with compromised immunity systems. The Practice will be supplied with Moderna vaccine.

Q&A:

Q Are you concerned about the information being hacked/external leaks?

No, the system is secure.

Q Will this affect Systemonline regarding prescriptions?

Simon unsure and will investigate for the next meeting.

A.O.B: None

Action: Simon

Check Practice email address to website.

Investigate if Systemonline will be affected by Prospective Access.

Consider if CCTV necessary for security in the Practice.

Meeting closed 20.20

Next meeting

Wednesday 10th July 2024 at 7pm

In person in the meeting room at Park Farm Medical Centre and available on Teams.