

Partners:-

Dr M Dhatt MBBS MRCGP DRCOG
Dr VG Tailor BSc MBChB MRCGP DRCOG
Dr A Chesterman MBBS FRACGP

Associates:-

Dr H Chu MBBS MRCGP DRCOG
Dr K Pojak BSc MBBS MRCGP

Minutes of Patient Participation Group Meeting Monday 27th February 2023 19.00 – 20.15

Attendees :

Dr M Dhatt – GP Partner
D V Tailor – GP Partner
Dr A Chesterman – GP Partner
Victoria Wells – Practice Manager
Brian – Patient & PPG Chairman

Patients : BB, SG, GH, JC, MA, JN & AM

Apologies : SD, YN & RC (patients)

1. Welcome and Introduction by the Chairman

Brian welcomed everyone and led a round of introductions. He gave an overview of the purpose of the PPG and activity since the last face to face meeting.

He wrote to all staff during Covid on behalf of the PPG all patients to express thanks for their continuing undiluted service.

A zoom meeting was offered but declined by the majority of the PPG and so updates have been via email although the PPG Chairman has kept in touch with the Practice Manager for regular updates/input.

The five new members of the PPG were welcomed – including Dr Antony Chesterman attending his first PPG Meeting.

2. Changes at Hillcrest

Dr Tailor covered changes at the Surgery since the last PPG:

a) Staff changes

Dr Chesterman has joined the team as a 3rd Partner
Sophie (one of our Practice Nurses) and Dal (one of our Clinical Pharmacists) are both currently on maternity leave. The Practice managed to secure experienced replacements to cover the leave.

There have been some changes to the Reception team.

The role of Hillcrest Surgery as a Training Practice was discussed. Hillcrest Surgery currently has 3 Trainees and positive feedback was received on our current Trainees.

b) Telephone system

The Practice has upgraded to a more reliable and cloud based system. There has been feedback that new system is much clearer to listen to and it also gives the Practice management data, patients the call back functionality and recording of telephone calls.

The general feeling was that this change has improved the patient experience and the call back system in particular is well liked. It was requested that the option for a call back be made on-going instead of an offer at the beginning of the call only. It was agreed this will be discussed with the provider.

c) Prescription processing

Previous process was generating majority of complaints and negative interactions at the Reception desk. A better system has been put in place to improve the recording and actioning of prescription requests from patients.

There was a discussion about repeat prescription requests and the waste generated by pharmacies that auto-request (something Hillcrest and local Practices have worked hard to try to reduce but with limited success)

d) Mix of face to face and telephone/video calls

Covid showed us that by offer video/telephone consultations we could reach patients who have never attended eg for asthma reviews. Many patients are now happy to consult by telephone/video call and by offering a mix of appointment it means its:

- safer for those who do come in
- calmer within the Surgery
- reduces late running
- led by patient choice face to face/Video/Telephone
- helps with room capacity which is an ongoing issue and requires some staff to work from home

e) Booking link for some clinics

The use of booking links as an alternative to the problematic provision by the clinical system provider (SystmOnline) direct booking system has been implemented for bloods and smears for some time but its use has been increased to include bookings for blood tests for patients with HRD, polio vaccinations for children and pneumococcal vaccinations. It has proved successful as makes it easy for patients to choose a suitable appointment.

f) Econsult

Safe online system

Gives patients an option

Uptake varies – 109 patients used it/had appointments booked that way last week.

There was a discussion about the use of email and that it is unsafe and very resource intensive which is why econsult offers the best and safest way for patients to consult online.

Econsult is the platform used by all Practices in Ealing.

3. Access and Patient Experience

The most recent patient survey results were shared with the PPG.

The survey was completed before the change in telephone system.

The Practice can see from the management information it gets from the new telephone system that an additional receptionist is required in the early morning and will look to recruit an additional member of staff to cover that.

The provision of weekend and evening appointments at the Acton hub was discussed. Since October this is now provided for all patients in Acton from a centralised hub on behalf of all the Practices, utilising staff from across the area. Some members of the PPG have used the hub. The range of services as well as limitations on its use (due to software issues with the clinical system Practices use) were discussed.

The role of Healthwatch was discussed and their feedback from patient experience visits to Hillcrest Surgery in 2022 was presented to the PPG.

The new national data collection system for GP appointments was discussed – it is still being refined but will mean regular data is published for all Surgeries on appointments.

Appointment data sheets were shared and staff numbers, appointment provision and access (capacity and demand) were all discussed.

4. New Services for Patients in Acton

In addition to the Acton hub Acton Primary Care Network (all Practices in Acton working together to deliver services to all patients in Acton) now employs:

- A first contact physiotherapist which our Receptionists can book appointments with directly
- Social Prescribers
- Clinical Pharmacists
- Health and Well-Being Coaches
- A Senior Mental Health Practitioner

5. Research Involvement

Hillcrest Surgery has a strong history of involvement in research and development.

The Practice is currently taking part in a wide range of studies (9 currently) offering access to its patients. Dr Dhatt gave an overview of the benefits and examples of studies in the past year are the Principle trials (which pioneered various treatments for covid), Attack (which is looking at treatment for CKD patients) and Treat to Target (which offers alternative treatments for outpatients with gout).

6. Becoming a Greener (more environmentally friendly) Practice

The NHS has a commitment to net zero (carbon emission) by 2040.

The Surgery has undertaken a number of initiatives to try to reduce its impact on the environment eg changing patients to CFC inhalers, recycling all paper, offering telephone consultations to avoid the need for travel to the Practice if not necessary, planning appointments/tests to reduce the number of trips to the Practice (eg for high risk of diabetes reviews – reduced from 3 face to face appointments to 1 face to face and 1 telephone appointment).

7. Concluding Remarks by the Chairman

A number of patients echoed their thanks and mentioned particular staff members who they feel provide exceptional service.

Finally, Brian concluded the meeting by thanking patients for attending and extended his thanks to all staff at Hillcrest Surgery particularly acknowledging the challenges presented by increased demand for our services.

Special appreciation was again made for the understanding shown by Reception staff who normally only meet patients who are feeling at their worst.

Patients did sometimes “share” their frustrations on delays & cancellations – mostly at hospitals & clinics - which are beyond the Surgery’s control.

| Action | Responsible Person | Outcome |
|---|--------------------|--|
| Contact telephone Provider re call backs | Victoria Wells | Is not a function currently available but has been put in as a product development request |
| Additional member of Reception team to be recruited to reduce call wait times early in the mornings | Victoria Wells | Ongoing |