

PRG Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, the 21st of August 2014

Attendees:

Dr Gail Holloway, Khaled Chowdhury, Sam, Mrs Lesley Dean, Hilary Ball, Mrs Ann Lewis, Mrs Claire Edmunds, Mr Martin Edmunds, Mrs Penelope Caudell, Mrs Marie Searle, Geoffrey Carr and Laurence Brooks.

Apologies:

Cindy Mootosamy, Michael Kaye, Hazel Smyth, Susan Cousins, Hilda Fry and Gill Dance.

Dr GH thanked everyone for coming, and explained that this was the first of this year's meetings, and that the requirements had changed slightly in terms of what should be achieved from each meeting. We are required to have 4 meetings during the year (April to March) with a system of gathering opinions from the group, and also other patients, about areas we would be specifically aiming to improve this year. The name of the group will be the PRG (Patient Reference Group), but the overall subject will be Patient Participation. Apologies for this.

The meeting commenced with a presentation by Barbara Veale about the Save Lewisham Hospital campaign. Essentially, their current piece of work is gathering signatures from Lewisham residents who do not believe that it is in the best interests of patients for the CCG to undertake contracts with outsourcing companies when a traditional public sector alternative is involved. The paperwork for this will be left at all GP surgeries as well as at various other sites in Lewisham.

There was disagreement between certain members of the group about some of the points raised by Barbara, but as it was actually not specifically about Lewisham Hospital, rather about different political views, it was decided that we should spend no more time discussing it. Barbara mentioned that in the inspection of A&E services at Queen Elizabeth Hospital it had been found to be a failing service, and that it was ironic that prior to the Save Lewisham Hospital victory, it had been proposed that the very efficient A&E services at Lewisham be transferred to the failing QEH A&E Dept. There was agreement amongst all members of the group that the campaigners had worked extremely hard, and thanks were given to Barbara for this.

The next point raised was that we need to elect a Chair from amongst the group. This would be a representative for the group, someone who would be able to chair the meeting, and who would be the main link for the practice between meetings. However, this would not prevent any other member, or any other patient, for that matter communicating directly with the practice. As several members were absent, it was agreed that we should request expressions of interest by email, with, if wished, a few lines about why he/she would like this role.

There was then an Open Forum, with a lively discussion about various points.

There were common threads about some of the various concerns raised - several members had had problems with their repeat prescriptions in a variety of ways - the right-hand side of the printed scrip not containing all the medications, difficulties with logging into the

online prescription system, difficulties with prescriptions going astray between the surgery and the pharmacy in the electronic prescription system.

A member mentioned that the website is not completely up to date in other respects eg that there was a very old advertisement on the website from 2012.

It was queried whether the practice boundaries would change, and Marie explained that boundaries would be relaxed, but that there is an issue around reimbursement for patients outside Lewisham, Greenwich, Bromley, Lambeth, Southwark and Bexley.

Another member raised the potential issue of all the new residential buildings in Lewisham, and how that would impact on the ability to provide care to the current residents. Marie helpfully explained that, in fact, the number of residents in Lewisham has not actually increased, but rather, has slightly reduced, perhaps due to the movement of residents from certain estates who have been moved elsewhere. Regarding the practice, Belmont Hill is awaiting a notice board for outside the surgery, in the hope of attracting new patients, and GH explained that this would then increase the practice income, enabling an increase in staffing levels eg: an extra nurse so that patient services would be improved.

Concern was expressed about the possibility of surgeries closing, and GH explained that Lewisham GPs are looking to work collaboratively, mainly in back office functions at the moment, hopefully allowing individual practices to continue.

Concern was also expressed about free access in and out of the car park being hindered by some people parking inconsiderately. It was suggested that lines are painted to allow and help motorists to park appropriately.

In making a decision about agreed areas for this year, it seemed that popular areas might be:-

1. An overhaul of the repeat prescribing system
2. An update of the website
3. Painting parking lines on the drive
4. Broadening the demographic of our group.

Whilst we are hugely appreciative of the time given by the current members, there is no limit on the size of the group, and our group is under-represented in certain areas eg we don't have a carer, a disabled person, anyone from an ethnic minority or anyone under the age of 45! It was noted that generally, in other walks of life, it tends to be older people who have the time and energy to attend such meetings. However, an extra effort will be made to target other groups. Mrs Lewis asked whether the group could do anything to help the practice, and it was suggested that one or two members canvassing the young mums at the baby clinic on Mondays might be an idea, to make them aware of the PRG group, and the fact that they can raise concerns, suggest ideas and communicate with other patients online.

We will formulate a survey which will firstly be approved by the PRG group, then put on the website and distributed to patients attending the surgery. Mr Carr suggested to GH that there could be an online survey, eg on an ipad, at the surgery. This is an excellent idea, and will be discussed at the next practice business meeting.

Thanks to everyone who attended.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 30th October 2014 at 5pm. By that date we hope to have an elected patient chairperson, and approval of a patient survey.