

## Sydenham Green Patients' Forum

Notes of meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2014 at Sydenham Green Health Centre.

**Present:** 8 patients and 2 practice members

1. **Apologies:** 4 apologies from patients.

2. **Notes of meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> September:** VH had been present at the meeting but her name was omitted. The notes were then agreed as a correct record.

3. **Matters arising:**

a) Mural – nothing to report.

b) Letter to Jim Dowd – PM and PJ reported there was a lot going on at NHS London and they didn't think it was worth pursuing the matter. It was agreed there were other matters we might wish to pursue. With an election looming Jim Dowd was likely to be involved elsewhere.

c) Visit by MP – Dr. Poulter had been invited to attend one of our meetings. He had passed the request to the Rt. Hon, The Earl Howe P.C., Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Quality (Lords). Unfortunately Earl Howe was also unable to accept the invitation but wrote to us, and sent his good wishes for the work of the Forum. (See summary of his reply on separate page.

The Forum did not feel the letter addressed the pressure on GPs. PJ said the service could only offer what can be provided by the number of GPs we are allowed to employ and they were already overstretched.

This led on to a discussion about appointments. Two members said they never had a problem with getting an appointment but for others it was a different matter.

One GP had left because of the pressure of being the duty doctor for the day. On one occasion the duty doctor had to deal with 80 patients.

The receptionists were also coming under increased pressure; sadly one of them had been bullied by patients and subsequently resigned.

A Patient Services Manager had recently been appointed and things were going well. PJ said her job would lead to changes and she would be able to protect the receptionists. She had previously worked in a senior position with a local council and has HR (human resources) experience. It was hoped she would come to our next meeting.

5. **Forum Aims and Objectives:** It had been suggested that there be an additional Aim to the draft document, "To provide volunteer support to help the Practice as needed e.g. assist with tidying the courtyard, updating leaflets etc." The suggestion was agreed and the Aims and Objectives (see attached) were approved by all present. It was noted the Patient Services Manager might wish to be responsible for updating the leaflets.

6. **Revision of Membership list and use of Forum Email address for future**

**communications:** PJ and ID were working on this, there were data protection issues to be addressed as each person had to give their permission for details to be passed on. PJ said he would have to check people who wish to join the Forum as he had discovered that some of them were not Sydenham Green Patients.

Funding for Patients' Forums - Phil reported that a number of practices had their request for

funding turned down because their groups were not sufficiently diverse. We will continue to receive funding this year but the amount has been reduced and will be stopped for all practices next year. The CQC are nonetheless expecting Patients' Forums to continue.

**7. Suggestion Box and update on actions:** JB was still working on the spread sheet. The box was opened prior to the meeting and contained the following comments/suggestions:-

- If appointments for specific doctors are running more than 30 minutes late inform patients when they book in.
- One person had phoned to book a health check and was told she would need a blood test before her appointment with the nurse. As she was not told she should fast before having her blood taken she did not do so and therefore had to make another appointment. "Not good."
- Points raised re appointments - Fix system so sick patients don't have to queue outside waiting for surgery to open.

Fix automated check in and move it to more convenient place; also fix screens so patients can see when they are being called to see GP.

Need more receptionists dealing with patients trying to check in.

Why is it impossible to find out when a GP is working and why can't appointments be made with him/her?

It is unacceptable to call surgery at 9am and be told no appointments that day, no telephone appointments till following week in three days time and have queue outside at 7.45am,. "You MUST stop taking in new patients!"

PM raised the possibility of forum members volunteering to be at the Practice to explain how to use the pod. PJ thought it was a good idea but it had to be discussed with the Partners and other staff. If the suggestion was approved perhaps it could be implemented early in the new year.

**8. Practice Report:** Part of report included under 3c. Last year our service charge was £35,000 but the latest bill was for £250,000; there was no negotiation or breakdown to show how this figure had been reached. Debt recovery policy then followed, instigated by Lewisham. PJ had contacted several organisations including the BMA. It was possible that rent, normally paid by the NHS and twice the cost of the service charge, had been included in the service charge. Now Lewisham was separate from NHS England payment had to be paid directly to them and then reclaimed from NHS England.

**9. Updates:** No news on the fire doors.

The CQC has produced the Intelligent Monitoring Report, grading 1 = dire - 6 = outstanding. Our Practice was given 5. Along with this was the press release with a very powerful political agenda.

A great deal of work was being forced on to GP practices without providing the necessary resources to carry out the extra work.

One of our doctors had been on long-term sick leave and was currently on maternity leave. It was encouraging that the three recently appointed GPs had worked at Sydenham Green previously.

**10. AOB:** JS suggested we have a Christmas get-together or arrange one after the January meeting, date to be arranged possibly after our next meeting on **Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015.**

## Summary of content of letter from Earl Howe

- The Government acknowledged GPs had taken their share of financial pressures in the last 5 years and didn't doubt value of their work. The Royal College of GPs said there are 40 million more GP appointments than 5 years ago.
- Therefore they have to focus their resources on increasing the number of clinical staff. The number of GPs nationally has gone up by 1,000 since 2010. They are also increasing the number of newly qualified doctors who then go on to train to become a GP to 50% by 2020.
- They are introducing measures to ensure people who need to see a GP can do so at a time to suit them. Practices will be allowed to register people outside their local area so it is easier for people to register near their workplace or somewhere else convenient for them.
- Access to online facilities also mentioned.
- All 53.9 million people in England will get a dedicated GP personally accountable for co-ordinating care tailored to their physical and mental health needs, Last year it was initially introduced for all 4 million people aged 75 and over.
- The Prime Minister's Challenge Fund is being extended; this provides more flexible appointments, extended opening hours 7 days a week, email, phone and Skype consultations. 7.5 million people benefited from wave 1 of the scheme,

Earl Howe hopes his response reassures us that the Government and NHS England are committed to maintaining the high standard of GP services that patients expect and deserve.