

Sydenham Green Patients' Forum

Notes of meeting held on 18th January, 2017 at Sydenham Green Health Centre.

Present: 12 Patients, 1 practice staff

1. Apologies: 9 patients, 1 practice staff

New members were welcomed and introductions made. LBO was also welcomed back after her absence..

2. AOB: 4 items to be raised.

3. Notes of the meeting held on 16th November 2016 were approved.

4. Matters arising:

i) NHS Training Day for PPG members - PM said it would have been useful to have a note of which organisations had been represented. When she later asked for a list (NOT contact details) the request was denied because of data protection regulations. There were some difficulties with the loop system and people moving around which made it difficult to hear everything that was said. PM came away with the positive impression that our PPG was a strong group. We were not alone in wishing we had more younger members. SB had also attended a training day and MC had applied to attend one on 7th February.

ii) Non-notification of Flu injections/treatment - This had been addressed by the practice but there were still some exceptions which EH would look into.

iii) Prescriptions - The issue of on-line requests not being dealt with satisfactorily had also been dealt with. The system had been overhauled and checks were made daily.

iv) DL asked whether patients were notified of test results. EH explained that patients were only notified when the result was outside what was expected. JB asked that patients be told that this was the procedure.

v) SJ asked what happened to hospital letters that were sometimes sent to a GP who may have left years ago. EH assured her the letters were read and documented.

vi) EH reported that the Lewisham wide group of practices is working already but they are planning further contract bids.

vii) ID gave feedback on his attendance at the recent CCG meeting which he found it less than positive.

5. National Association for Patient Participation:

JB told the group we had joined NAPP. The annual cost of membership is £40 and he hopes it will be useful; if it isn't we can leave after a year. There is an electronic address and a password to access the NAPP bulletins. We have been asked not to divulge our password.

6. Appointments - discussion/suggestions:

EH explained that the practice is contracted to provide a specific number of appointments per week, including GP, nurse and nurse specialist work, e.g. with diabetic patients. It also

includes telephone appointments. The practice does not get paid for smear tests, immunisations, and travel appointments, or for having a duty doctor who currently deals with sixty phone calls and sees sixteen patients a day.

As two GPs were on maternity leave the practice did not have a full complement of GPs and the registrar will probably be on maternity leave shortly. Any locum who is approved will not take on extraneous work such as being duty doctor. One GP who was interviewed recently, the only one out of a possible five applicants, was offered the job but did not take it. Most practices in Lewisham have a shortage of GPs and are finding it difficult to recruit, the only exception being Blackheath.

The CCGs were not addressing the GP shortage at present, although the company set up for all of Lewisham is doing some work on this.

BT referred to the recent government assertion that some GP practices were closing in the afternoons and this was the reason for insufficient appointments. It was felt this was a disingenuous response by the government to the problem of insufficient GPs.

EH said the issue of people attending A & E when they could use alternative services was likely to be addressed in Lewisham by the use of a filtering service. The idea was proposed by the CCG and was untested. It would involve having two GPs on duty at the hospital who would see every patient presenting there unless they arrived by ambulance. The system had been tried in Bristol and is due to start here in April. Will it work here or will it just mean people travel to another hospital? However, it will mean that it will exempt the practices from providing 8am - 8pm appointments as the hospital will provide that cover through the filtering system. There will be a minor injuries unit within Lewisham Hospital.

From April 50% of the appointments will be on-line although not exclusively. JB noted that there are often no on-line appointments although some will be available the following day. EH agreed the system has limits. EMIS provides the system free of charge and there is no incentive for them to improve it; the CCG is providing £500 towards improvement but this will not go very far.

BT noted it was no longer possible to see a particular GP. EH explained that some appointments were embargoed and wouldn't become available for, a week, two weeks etc. Last year the appointments increased by 20% as we had more GPs working here. Unfortunately this dropped when two GPs went on maternity leave. Locums were also being employed but if a certain level of payment for locums is exceeded a report has to be submitted by the practice. We always exceed the limit. DL asked if locums could make referrals, they can. EH said overall the situation was very difficult. The appointment system was at its limit and the answer was to have more GPs. BT then asked about the possibility of using pharmacists more widely. EH said that the problem is that the need always increases whatever services are provided.

LB-O asked about urgent care centres (for which the practice does not have to pay). She suggested that Beckenham Beacon should be given higher priority in the telephone options offered to people when they phone the practice.

EH said that another problem is that GPs who have been working full-time were now retiring but many new GPs were only working two thirds of the full time hours.

There is an NHS patient survey that covers all practices in England; it has been suggested that perhaps some of these scores could be used in performance indicators and even influence funding in the future.

7. Practice Report - EH:

- The redecoration of the premises had been completed.
- The infection control training had been delayed to illness.
- We were advertising for new receptionists.
- The advanced nurse practitioner was leaving and discussions were taking place to cover her work.
- The Patients' Forum notice board had been relocated to the area just before the shutters so that patients who were queuing couldn't miss it.
- Sustainability and transformation plans involving increasing costs and funding flattening were being discussed. It was not thought there would be cuts but it was unclear how viable the plans would be.
- There was a drive from the CCG for Sydenham Green to work with other practices on a day to day basis. This could involve merging two practices as had happened in Southwark and there was a possibility of it happening here. Jeremy Hunt suggested that 60,000 patients was an appropriate number for a practice.

8. AOB:

i) JB (Vice Chair) had received a letter, via the Patients' Forum Suggestion Box, complaining about litter at the rear of the practice. EH will reply to the letter. He pointed out this had been raised at our last meeting when the bin had been overfull. Lewisham Council had been contacted and responded by taking the bin away! EH now cleans the area occasionally.

ii) Doctors' morale - JB asked how the doctors were feeling. EH replied that they were tired but pulling together. The practice has a good team.

iii) PM thanked EH for the work he does and the support he gives the Forum and asked that our appreciation be recorded. This was agreed.

iv) The next CCG meeting is on 9th March at Cantilever House.

9. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 15th March at 7pm.