

VALLEY MEDICAL CENTRE

MINUTES OF PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP MEETING

19TH OCTOBER 2011 AT 6.30PM

Present

Practice Representatives:: Dr D Baron, GP and Liz Sedgwick Practice Manager

Patient representatives: Jim Brackenridge, Janet Kszton, Irene Allan, Beryl Downs, Jennifer Mackinder, Annie Kudangirana

Apologies Anne Payne

Welcome and Introductions

Dr Baron welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. A round of introductions was made

Basic Ground Rules

- Not a forum for individual complaints or specific issues
- Mobile phones to be on silent or switched off
- Everyone's views are valid and will be listened to

Aims and Objectives of the Meeting

Dr Baron outlined the aims of the group and what is hoped to be achieved by creating the PPG.

The idea is to involve patients to help the practice improve its services and facilities. A constructive discussion about the practice followed, driven by the patient representatives.

Attracting Members

How to attract people to attend the meetings was discussed in order to have a full representation of the local population. Whatever time is chosen will be difficult for some people. In the day time people who work can't come, early evening young mums would find it difficult as do older people in the darker evenings. The 'after work' time had been specifically chosen to allow people to get home. An email group was suggested as this could cover a greater range of people unable to get to the meetings. This could be promoted through the website and again in the waiting room.

Online Appointments

It was suggested that the practice offer online appointments for the nurses, as this facility would be welcomed by people who are frustrated at getting through on the phone. This was to be looked into as an option. It hasn't been tried before.

Website Development

The website has been redesigned in the last twelve months. Further enhancement for online nurse appointments was suggested as a potential improvement (as above). A separate dedicated area for the Patient Participation group will also be developed.

Text Reminders For Appointments

It was suggested that the practice use a text reminder service for appointments similar to that used by the dentist. Liz advised the group that 4 doctors and six nurse appointments were not attended on that day and it is a problem. The use of text messaging has been looked at in depth. Initially it was cost prohibitive. However the new surgery computer system can deliver this but it can be fraught with problems. The surgery system cannot send messages to home telephone numbers. There are also difficulties with mobile phone numbers as family members often share them and changes to mobile contracts often come with new numbers. Patients have to consent to being contacted this way but don't always remember to update the records when telephone number changes are made. The practice decided that for confidentiality reasons it won't do this at the present time.

Diabetic Support Group/Daphne

It was suggested that the surgery develop a patient support group for Diabetes. Patients felt that having a group who can discuss how they manage their condition could be useful. Dr Baron mentioned the expert patient programme. The type of group was also discussed; whether it be a self help group or whether it should be led by professionals. A patient member said they would contact a specialist nurse at the hospital to ask if such an organisation exists and how we might develop one.

Health Walk

Dr Baron told the members about the walking group developed by the District Nurses on a voluntary basis that has quite a membership and benefits for Health.

Recall Letters

The practice has a new recall system. One member had received a letter for a recall when an appointment had already been made. This shouldn't have happened as the records are checked.

Same Day Appointments

The group asked about the availability of appointments for the same day and this process within the practice was outlined. About a third of appointments are released on the same day for emergencies.

Prescription Ordering

The prescription line accepts appointment ordering after 1pm which is very difficult for patients who are at work and can only use the telephone during their lunch hour. It would be better if the line operated from 12 noon as this would be of more benefit.

Telephone Consultations

Sometimes a patient just needs advice that could be given over the phone, rather than a face to face consultation. Some practices routinely give formal telephone advice but can't always guarantee what time they can ring back due to visits etc. This is usually between surgeries. We do not routinely offer this service.

Reception Area

A patient said that they didn't feel that the area was private enough as what is being discussed can be heard by people sat on the chairs and in the queue. However the receptionists had to be congratulated for trying to provide people with privacy by asking others to stand back.

Doctors Consultations

Patients said that they didn't like the reliance on the computer and often felt that the doctor was spending more time looking at the computer screen than listening to them. They preferred paper records. The room layout can sometimes add to this.

Practice Survey

Dr Baron told the group that in future practice surveys will be about matters important to the practice, rather than nationally set criteria. This means that we can choose which areas are discussed. It was agreed that for the survey we would concentrate on appointments, the telephone system and consultations.

Future Meetings

Date and time of next meeting 7th December at 6.30

The practice will also encourage new members to join an email group.