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Drs BA Hanak, SJ Conroy, PF Shilliday, MG Rimmer, S Gupta, L James and T Archdeacon

Report on patient participation at the Garden City Practice – 2013/14

Composition of PRG

As a new practice manager one of my first actions as part of our Patient Participation Enhanced Service was to put a Patient Reference Group together. In the past, the Patient Group in this practice was mainly a virtual group and did not meet regularly with the practice.

Posters were put in each waiting room to start generating interest (in highly visible green and on empty noticeboards so that patients could clearly see them). Two or three patients came forward through this mechanism.

A letter was drafted explaining the merits of having such a group and this was sent to patients who had expressed an interest in joining a PRG in the past 3 years and any members of a virtual group. This generated a number of positive responses.

Our doctors also asked patients if they would be interested in joining and we gained a couple of members through this method too.

On 26 November 2013 we had our first PRG meeting and a Chairperson, Vice-Chair and Secretary were duly elected.

The group has now met 3 times and has scheduled meetings for the remainder of 2014. We are very optimistic about developing the role patients can play working together at a practice level and at a locality level. Two members of our PRG are also now active members of the Locality patient group.

Some patients are not able to attend the bi-monthly group meetings but are happy to be part of a virtual group and can play a role to support the PRG in this way.

Steps taken to ensure PRG is representative of registered patients

We decided to determine what interest there was for a proactive PRG and assess whether it was representative after the initial set up. Now that the group is up and running we have matched its composition to our patient demography.

We now have 14 active members of the group. Seven are male and seven are female. Ages range from 42 through to 79. The age spread and ethnic composition of our PRG is fairly representative of our patient base.

We are happy that it is representative.

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Some of our PRG have a Long Term Condition or other medical conditions – and this will also support the representative nature of our group

If this changes at any time on the future we may target specific groups of patients. This is not necessary at the moment.

Local patient survey

We discussed the forthcoming patient questionnaire at our meeting on 7 January 2014 whether we wanted to modify the GPAQ questionnaire or send it out unchanged. The practice has used the GPAQ questionnaire in the past and confirmation was obtained that the PRG was happy to use the updated format of this recognised patient questionnaire. Areas of priority in the past have been appointment availability, clinician helpfulness and experience with reception staff. These areas were all picked up by the 2013/14 version of the GPAQ.

Members of the PRG were invited to help with the analysis of the 125 completed surveys. One member with academic experience of conducting/analysing surveys volunteered and this member subsequently conducted the analysis and reported that questionnaires were completed from a broadly representative section of patients.

Results of the local patient survey

Questionnaires were completed by:

- 41 male and 78 female patients;
- 1 respondent was aged under 16;
- 43 patients aged 16-44; 37 aged 45-64; 19 aged 65-74; 13 aged over 75+
- most respondents identified themselves as 'White';
- 50 of the respondents had long-standing health conditions

Patients are at different stages of life and circumstances as indicated by their current activity e.g. 60 were employed, 12 looking after the home, 37 were retired.

Note : not all patients completed every box so not all the question responses add up to 125

Responses to the questionnaire indicate a very high level of satisfaction with the practice. In their comments some patients expressed particular appreciation of their care, some singled out individuals and/or of groups of staff for particular mention.

With regard to the gp the patient saw on the day of the questionnaire they were asked to consider how the gp was as assessing medical condition, explaining the condition and treatment, involving the patient in decisions and about their care and providing or arranging treatment there were no "below the line" (rated poor or very poor) responses.

Assessing medical condition

95% very good or good

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Explaining the condition and treatment	92% very good or good
Involving the patient in decisions about their care	90% very good or good
Providing or arranging care	96% very good or good

Specifically, for any nurse visits over the last 6 months patients responded as follows:

Explaining the condition and treatment	93% very good or good
Involving the patient in decisions about their care	87% very good or good
Providing or arranging care	94% very good or good

Patients were also asked to comment on their experience with the reception team and booking appointments.

99% of patients thought receptionists were very helpful or helpful.

86% found it very easy or easy to get through to someone at the surgery – which means that 14% did not.

With regard to being able to see the GP on the same day if urgent, 64% were able to but 36% said they could not get the same day.

When asked if the current opening hours were convenient, 84% said yes and 16% said no.

On the overall care at the practice, 96% of patients described their experience of the surgery as excellent, very good or good. 95% of patients would definitely or probably recommend the surgery to someone new to the area.

The more critical comments were not about health care but about opening hours and the appointments system. There were two comments re the premises.

Action plans

The meeting to review the patient questionnaire and consider the impact on the existing PRG action plan was held on 18 March 2014.

The existing areas of priority for the PRG were set out on 7 January 2014 and are as follows:

- Communication – newsletter, advertising campaigns (e.g. flu, support for carers, practice website, IT provision in waiting areas)
- Patient feedback questionnaire
- Involvement with Locality PRG
- Offer PRG support to practice initiatives in practice work on proactive healthcare management and self-management

The new actions arising from the questionnaire and to be included in the overall action plan are:

- Appointment booking – review existing system
- Opening hours – review opening hours
- Premises – consider potential improvements

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The practice team is actioned to consider and report back to the next PRG meeting on these 3 new areas.

Details of actions taken from the 2013 action plan:

Specific area of action agreed	Update
Improve patient communications by producing a regular newsletter and developing the website	Our practice website has been re-vamped and is now being regularly updated. Newsletters need to be included in the communications action plan already set out in draft by the PRG for 2014
Decommission the 0844 number	New number 01707 321 500 now in place
Increase PRG involvement in the practice	Re-vitalised PRG up and running with Chair, Vice-chair and secretary – and schedule set for 2014 with draft action plan and regular attendees
Parking to improve	It has been agreed that as disabled users can park on the yellow lines outside no additional provision is required

There have been no changes in our practice opening hours – reception services at both Guessens Road and Knightsfield surgeries are open from Monday-Friday 8.30am to 6:30pm.

Haldens is open from 8.30am until 1pm on Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays.

We also operate a Saturday morning surgery by appointment from Knightsfield from 9.00am to 12pm for the first 3 Saturdays of every month.

An early nurse session is available on Friday mornings at Guessens Road from 7.45am.

Limited online booking is available via our website - www.gardencitypractice.nhs.uk.

Outside these hours patients should freephone NHS 111 – this service should be used when medical help is needed fast and when it is not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is a fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time.

NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

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During surgery hours patients should phone 01707 321 500 to make appointments. These can also be made in person at any of our branches.

Sarah Ellingworth
Practice Manager

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