



**Patients' Voices – The Garden City Practice
Meeting 19 – Wednesday 11 January 2017
Annual General Meeting held at The Parish Room, St Francis of Assisi
Church, Parkway, Welwyn Garden City**

In attendance: Dr Shah, Dr Nury, Dr Archdeacon, Sarah Ellingworth, Natalie Cox, David Ball, Tony Baird, Robert Frost, Dominic Cox, Martin Norman, Suzanne Meenan, Margaret Gregory, C Gibbs, Janet Gibson

Apologies: Rox Schultz, P Johnson, Tony Powell

17.01 Welcome

The Chair, David Ball, introduced members and welcomed those attending the meeting.

17.02 Chair's Report on the work of Patients' Voices in 2016

DB reflected on the year and gave the history behind Patients' Voices which is a national movement designed to serve several purposes:

- To provide a channel of communication between the Practice and its patients'
- To provide patients feedback on issues of the day
- To work in co-operation with the Practice on current projects
- To represent the Practice at Patient Forums
- To represent the Practice at external events

Specifically DB drew attention to the CQC – Care Quality Commission with is tasked with inspecting Practices national wide. The Garden City Practice was inspected on 27 April 2016 and the inspector had also spoken to DB about the role of Patients' Voices. DB had reported positively to the CQC about the Practice. One change to our operating system has resulted from the inspection. An annual report will now be given to Patients' Voices from the Practice to ensure that there is two-way communication.

Patients' Voices had attended the Health Fest on 21 May 2016 held in Welwyn Garden City town centre.

A Carers' Event had been held in June 2016. The Carers' champion ran the event. Sarah Ellingworth reported that excellent feedback had been received. The event had been attended by a good number of carers who welcomed the opportunity to talk to other carers/health officers on issued faced as carers. A Herts liaison representative was also there and another such event will take place in 2017.

The Practice held 3 flu clinics in 2016 and Patients' Voices representatives had attended these with the purpose of publicising the group and to bring other notices to the attention of patients. Use of the blood pressure machines and the service offered by 111 were items that the Practice asked Patients' Voices members to help with.

Patients' Voices are represented at:

- Patient Commissioning Group at which discussion on local topical events is held.
- Welwyn Hatfield Working Group – the Borough Council has a broader remit and DB attends to represent the Practice.
- Locality Group – these are occasional meetings of the Practices in the area.
- Workshops – various local organisations arrange workshops around health themes. Patients' Voices representatives are invited to attend.

DB reported on the recent discussions on Dementia Alliance. The aim is to encourage local organisations to adopt a dementia friendly approach. The Practice has joined the alliance and Patients' Voices has cooperated with this as a joint venture.

Another topic discussed by Patients' Voices in 2016 is that of Choose and Book. This is an on-going nationwide project that aims to have all hospital appointments operated through it by 2018. The idea is that all outpatient appointments are offered via the choice of 4 hospitals being offered to the patient who can then decide on the one most suitable for them, with criteria on locality and appointment times.

The Personal Health Budget is a long-term project that the Practice is working on and supported by Patients' Voices.

DB drew the meeting's attention to annual project that is identified at the AGM. In 2016 the aim was to set up a virtual group. This aim has successfully been achieved. DB recorded his thanks to all those involved in helping with the project.

The virtual group, named 'Your Practice Your Voice' seeks to identify a group of people who are keen to be involved in Patients' Voices but who would engage via email or online, with no commitment to attend meetings. The aim is to have a group which mirrors the demographics of the patients registered at the Practice. Patients' Voices has a membership of 6-10 active members at meetings. Your Practice Your Voice has a membership of 70 patients who have shown an interest in being involved in issues such as questionnaires on topics identified by the Practice.

The first survey in October 2016 was on the issue of Electronic Prescribing System (EPS). A questionnaire was sent out via Survey Monkey and asked members if they knew about the system, understood the system and used it. EPS is for those who are on repeat prescriptions so that such prescriptions may be managed by a nominated pharmacy via the Practice. Sarah Ellingworth reported that as a result of the survey a newsletter, specifically on EPS, explaining its function had been issued.

The project of Patients' Voices for 2017 will be the issue of the Practice property and was discussed further in the agenda.

One topic that has been raised at PCG is the cost of over the counter prescriptions, for items such as aspirin and paracetamol. There is concern at CCG level at the costs of prescribing such items which can be bought at pharmacies and a nationwide drive to address this issue will seek the help of Patient Voices groups.

DB thanked all concerned in Patients' Voices this year – members of the group, members of Your Practice Your Voice (virtual group), staff and partners of the Practice.

17.03 Practice Manager's Report on the work of the Practice in 2016

Sarah Ellingworth circulated a report from the Practice and discussed the following items:

- Sharing feedback – NHS England issues a national survey which is a detailed questionnaire sent to random patients and which is independent of the Practice. The questions include those such as patient experience regarding appointment times, the performance of the Practice. Data from Garden City Practice shows that we are second in the local table. This data was available to the CQC inspectors and is evidence that the Practice is highly valued by its patients.
- The Friends and Family test – this is available through a form that can be completed at the surgery after an appointment or via an SMS service. The latter has provided a very high response rate. 94% of those asked said that they would be extremely likely, or likely, to recommend the Practice to other people. Patients are able to complete the survey anonymously or can identify themselves if they wish. SE confirmed that all specific comments are addressed.
- Practice surgeries – the Practice has 3 surgeries – Guessens Road, Haldens and Knightsfield. It is the only Practice in Welwyn Hatfield that is not in a purpose built building and a more suitable location has been sought for many years. The area is expensive and there have been few opportunities to relocate. The Practice has successfully applied for funds and a new business case has been submitted.

This has resulted in the Parkway clinic being identified as suitable and purpose built to house the Practice. It has ambulance access, the clinic rooms are on one floor and additional clinical rooms could be housed including community services. The Practice is looking to start a patient engagement consultation shortly with the aim to move as soon as practicable. Patients' Voices will have an important role in communication and discussions with patients.

SE referred back to the CQC consultation which rated the Practice as overall good. It is strongly regarded that a move to more appropriate premises would help the Practice to achieve an outstanding CQC inspection. The report is public access and is available online via a link on the website or hard copies are available at the surgeries.

SE welcomed Dr Archdeacon back from maternity leave.

SE reported that the Practice has achieved its target on the flu programme for vaccinating its target group.

SE reported that the Practice hoped to hold its next Patients' Voices meeting at the Parkway clinic to which all are welcome.

The Practice continues its programme of helping those with long term conditions to avoid emergency hospital admission. The Practice will work with community teams such as physios and trial new ways to support patients. Garden City Practice has been identified to trial the new arrangements in the locality.

The Rapid Response system is another initiative in place to help avoid emergency admission to hospital. In the event of, for example a fall, the paramedic team would immediately be called to assess the patient. If a hospital admission was not deemed necessary the rapid response team would be alerted, for example, occupational therapists/physios to help the patient avoid being admitted to hospital.

The Practice is keen to widen the use of social media such as the Facebook page and with the help of Patients' Voices will consider the direction we want to take it. Social media can be used to promote opening times/local conferences or health events and, for those not using the Practice often, is a useful tool to engage with.

SE circulated copies of all comments made on the Practice via the Friends and Family feedback/questionnaires.

17.04 Election

DB explained the constitution of Patients' Voices and in particular the role of the 3 elected posts:

- Chair has a 4 year post
- Vice-Chair 4 year post
- Secretary – no limit of tenure

The current Chair, David Ball, is entering his 4th year. The Vice-Chair, Tony Baird is in his second year. The Secretary, Janet Gibson is happy to continue this role. All are prepared to continue with the term of office and no elections are necessary.

17.05 Patients' Voices Action plan for 2017

DB reported that with the property issue coming to a head, Patients' Voices would like to adopt this as its plan for 2017. It proposes to be involved as required with public meetings/feedback/Your Practice Your Group questionnaires and with any other help identified by the Practice. This was fully endorsed by those present.

17.06 Questions/Answers

A question was raised about Choose and Book – if, for example, surgery is needed, does the patient choose the hospital? – SE confirmed that a number of hospital options would be given to the patient after discussing this with the GP. A letter is sent to the patient offering 4 choices from which the patient can

choose their preference online after looking at appointment times being offered. Options are largely based on location although this may differ if a particular specialist is needed. Choose and Book is now called e-referrals and all hospital appointments will be on this basis by 2019. For those unable to use the service online or having difficulty calling a number on the letter, the Practice will help those patients who may find the new system difficult to navigate.

It was suggested that the Friends and Family form was not always readily available in reception at the surgeries. SE confirmed that a box should always be available at receptions and she would ensure that this is the case.

A question was raised about the system of holding emergency appointments for the following day. One patient had called the surgery on the afternoon on one day to be told that there was an appointment on the following day but that this could not be released until the next morning. SE explained that this was because Practices hold a number of appointments until the morning so that emergency appointments could be made. Patients are encouraged to call the surgery at 08.30. A higher proportion of such appointments are held during the winter months. These can't be issued earlier as the winter months put a lot of pressure on the Practice resources.

Another question on appointments referred to the time patients might wait to see a specific GP. SE confirmed that this can be the case when it is not an emergency and depends on the nature of the appointment. The Practice seeks the help of patients in identifying an urgent appointment. It is a common issue that is often raised in all forums beyond Garden City Practice. All Practices are under pressure but Garden City Practice does its absolute best to accommodate circumstances, understanding the concerns of patients.

The meeting closed with SE and DB thanking all for coming.

17.07 Date of next AGM

Wednesday 7 February 2018