

The Hawthorns Surgery
Minutes of Patient Participation Group Meeting
Friday 12 February 2016

Present – Rob Shuter, Dr Pat Clarke, Joanne Goodwin, YB, LL, AN, DD, TCo, TCa, ST, LB, TM

Welcome

Rob welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the PPG

The aim of these meetings is to put forward ideas and actions to move the Practice forward for the benefit of all patients and specific patient groups.

Rob would like the PPG to create a Newsletter which would update patients on what the surgery is doing behind the scenes, this was taken on board.

Rob outlined the achievements for the surgery during the past year :

- Screens have been fitted in surgery waiting rooms which provide education to the patients, in time our own information can be included on the screens.
- Appointment System – there have been recent changes to the appointment system to improve the booking of appointments.
- New boilers have been installed.
- The surgery front doors have been replaced.
- A grounds maintenance team have been employed to maintain the gardens etc.
- A new cleaning company have been employed who now clean of a morning rather than an evening which gives the surgery a fresher appearance before surgery commences.
- Re-introduction of 24Hr Blood Pressure Monitoring

Appointment System

Rob outlined the recent changes to the appointment booking system :

- Appointments bookable on the day are all now released at 8.30am for the whole day, this avoids the patient being told to call back pm to book afternoon appointments.
- Urgent appointments for acute cases are released at 1.00pm to book with the Duty Doctor.

Clarification on booking appointments was discussed in detail especially what happens when all appointments for the day have been booked. Rob provided a sheet taken from the website was handed out to everyone.

- When all appointments for the day have been booked and a patient advises they need to see a Doctor that day, appointments for acute complaints are offered as a timed appointment. The number of these available depends on the number of Doctors available in surgery, 3 extra appointments per GP are offered at 11.00 / 11.10 / 11.20.

For afternoon appointments the Duty Doctor is available after 1.00pm and then 2 extra appointments per Doctor are available except for Wednesday and Thursday afternoons when Badger cover urgent appointments / visits.

It was also confirmed that if a patient arrives in surgery and needs to be seen urgently this is referred to the Duty Doctor who may see the patient.

- When all routine / urgent appointments have been booked and a patient advises they still need to be seen they are directed to a Walk In Centre, one in Erdington and one in Kingstanding or to contact Badger if they are covering. It was suggested that the location and opening times of Walk In Centres should be available.

The availability of online appointments was raised – a limited number are available each day bookable in advance, however a patient is only able to book with their Registered GP or a salaried GP or Registrar, subject to availability. The number of online appointments available will be changing in March, until the online system has been updated the surgery is not registering any patients for the online service for 2 weeks until the changes have been made .

The availability of appointments is improving as we now currently have 3 Registrars and a 4th returning in May after maternity leave, with an additional locum GP doing 3 sessions a week and Dr Hameed is doing 2 sessions a week, previous Registrar at the Practice.

Several queries were raised regarding the booking of follow up appointments and referral appointments :

- If a patient has an appointment with the GP and then requests a follow up appointment in the future would it be possible either for the GP to book the appointment, if on system, or hand give a slip to the patient advising that they need to book a follow up appointment in a certain time period and if no pre-bookable appointment available the receptionist will be able to book an embargoed appointment for that patient.
- A query was raised regarding appointment at hospital for x-ray etc. and the patient advised to contact their GP to book an urgent appointment. All urgent x-ray reports are faxed to the surgery and shown to the GP for comment, if an appointment is required urgently the GP will advise accordingly. If the hospital feel they should be seen urgently following an x-ray the patient should be referred to A&E.
- The availability of a "Triage Nurse" was brought up – this is not something the surgery would look to introduce as it is the preferred practice of the surgery that a GP would triage any patients.

It was also mentioned that when ringing in for appointments the patient can be given different information by different receptionists, it was felt that all receptionists should say the same.

Also when trying to book an appointment patients are advised to call back next day at 8.30am rather than being offered an appointment in the future – Rob advised he will mention this at the next staff meeting, which are held on a monthly basis.

Patients not attending appointments was discussed, Rob advised that should a patient DNA a letter is sent out advising patient of DNA, if this happens on 4 separate occasions over a stipulated period then the patient can be removed from the surgery list. However since the new text alert service was introduced approximately 2 weeks ago, the number patients who DNA has reduced.

The text service is a new service provided advising patients of appointments booked the following day, unless appointment is on a Monday and the text is sent on the Friday before.

Rob suggested that the PPG come up with suggestions on how to improve the appointment system, any suggestions would then be looked at by the Partners and discussed if appropriate.

PPG

The publication of a newsletter was discussed which would be advising patients of information of what is happening within the surgery. Rob advised that this should be done by the PPG and he is willing to cast his eye over the information provided and get any clinical information clarified by a Doctor but as a whole would be a newsletter provided by the PPG for the benefit of the patients.

TCa and ST kindly volunteered to get this project off the ground with the help of YB and LL.

Rob would like the newsletter to include "mythbusters" i.e. the telephone switchboard is not on reception it is a separate bank of phones in the upstairs office which are answered by other receptionists. The comment has been made "too many patients" – the list of patients has not changed over the last 20 years.

The inclusion of other members of the PPG for future meetings was discussed – the original invitation was sent out to all patients who are registered on the "virtual PPG", it was felt that although the core group who attended this meeting were a good balance of patients, an invite to the next meeting should be extended to all members of PPG and a decision would be taken on the response to this as to who should form the core group. It was felt that a maximum of 12 attendees would be a good number for each meeting.

ACE Excellence

Targets have been set for March 2017 to :

- Reduce number of non emergency admissions
- Reduce out patient activity
- Reduce number of A&E attendances

It has been suggested that surgeries should offer specialised clinics to reduce hospital admissions. The surgery does offer a number of clinics to monitor patients conditions.

The surgery is in ACE Partnership with Ashfield surgery to reduce the number of unplanned emergency admissions.

Patients with dementia are monitored on a regular basis to reduce admissions as this is the highest number of patients admitted.

As a Practice the monitoring of patients with pneumonia and staff have been made aware of symptoms a patient may show if suffering from pneumonia.

CQC

Rob advised that the visit on the whole went well and the Practice is currently awaiting the full report but there is apparently a delay in getting this issued.

ST very kindly spoke to the CQC on behalf of the PPG.

One of the points brought up by the CQC was face to face meetings with the PPG which as a Practice was already planned prior to the visit from the CQC.

Phone System

Rob advised that the surgery is looking to replace the phone system and quotes are currently being obtained which will improve access to patients.

One comment was made that currently the surgery number is withheld when making outgoing calls and a number of patients do not accept calls from withheld numbers or do not answer the phone. A suggestion was made that a generic number for the surgery is displayed to avoid patients not answering the phone as it is also Surgery policy not to leave messages on generic answerphones due to patient confidentiality unless the patient has instructed otherwise.

Other items Discussed

There was some discrepancy when calling in for test results and some patients being advised of readings when requested – this would be clarified as to what readings patients can be given over the telephone as staff who answer the “results line” are not clinically trained and do not want to give patients the incorrect information.

Rob advised that Birmingham Healthy Minds, a counseling service, are holding clinics at the surgery on a Tuesday morning.

Rob advised that Recruitment is ongoing and confirmed that a new Practice Nurse will be joining the surgery who is very experienced and a new HCA is being recruited which will hopefully ease appointments for blood tests, BP, dressings etc.

Unfortunately due to the Practice being unable to employ a GP to cover Saturday mornings these surgeries are now unavailable.

On a positive note comments were received advising the online service and text messaging was very helpful and worked well.

Date of Next Meeting – to be confirmed.