

Chairman's Report – March 2016

Since my last report we have seen a number of changes both to the Practice and to the Patients Participation Group (PPG). The pressure on the National Health Service at all levels particularly in hospitals and in local practices has continued to grow. One of our tasks has been to understand the effects of this and to see what we might be able to do as a group to help our overstretched clinicians.

What we do and how we do it

To ensure the maximum effectiveness of our group we worked on a Strategy Review which resulted in updated Terms of Reference for the PPG which have been agreed with the Practice. You can read these Terms of Reference which are attached to this report. Essentially what we do is to provide information for patients which will help them to use the Practice in the most effective way and to help them to take responsibility for their own health as much as possible. We also constantly look for ways to represent the view of patients to the Practice. Our recent Coffee Morning proved very useful for this and we hope to hold several every year.

We are also keeping ourselves informed about national, regional and local health matters and to help with this we have formed strong links with the Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS Healthwatch Gloucestershire, our local PPG Cluster Group and we have become members of NAPP – the National Association for Patient Participation, which was kindly funded by the Practice. These links mean that we can take up general problems which you as patients raise at high level and share the experience of other PPGs.

PPG membership

Our group this year has been strengthened by the addition of new members – both a District and a Town Councillor and the Chair of the League of Friends of Fairford Hospital. We are always glad to welcome new members who take an active part in our work. If you would like to become a member contact the Surgery or [click here](#) for further information and download an application form.

The Care Quality Commission Report and problems identified

I am very pleased to say that the report of the Care Quality Commission on the Practice, in which we participated, rated Hilary Cottage Surgery as providing “Good” service to its patients, which meant that it was safe, effective, caring, responsive and well led. This is a tribute not only to our clinicians but also to all their support staff who handle all the very complex paperwork and procedures which are required by a modern practice.

A point which arose in the Commission's investigation is one which is a national problem – getting to see the doctor of your choice as soon as possible. The PPG has been discussing this with the Practice Manager and changes have been made to the appointments system with the evening release of appointment slots becoming available. We have also seen the start of the AskmyGP system and the texting system for reminding patients of their appointment. We trialed the reminder system and it has been successfully implemented and has resulted in a

considerable reduction in the number of patients failing to attend appointments which has made more effective use of the doctors' time. These improvements reflect the move towards more use of the on-line booking, prescriptions and information system which is part of Government Strategy.

Other PPG activities this year

Other areas which the PPG has been involved in are

1. Working with the Town Council to improve the service levels in the Boots Pharmacy in Fairford. We wrote to NHS England and Gloucestershire Healthwatch to voice our concerns and met with the local Boots area manager. We are glad to report that the problems have been overcome.
2. We have worked with Surgery staff to publicize new initiatives such as AskmyGP and Booking On Line and we are currently working with them on the problems which have arisen from changes to the Repeat Prescription system made by the systems supplier. We have also encouraged the setting up of a more user-friendly home page on the website.
3. We have suggested a change to the telephone answering message which advises patients who to ring in the case of emergencies.
4. We have provided new information leaflets on how to use the emergency services.
5. We have placed articles about medical issues in the local magazines.
6. We held a Coffee Morning where we and surgery staff met patients to hear of their problems and suggestions for improvements. All of these are under active consideration by the Practice.
7. We are organizing health information events. The first of these in March 2016 will focus on Kidney Health and we hope to follow this with presentations of Memory Improvement, Diabetes, and other topics suggested by our doctors.

Where next?

We will continue to work on providing you with information which helps you to manage your own health and make best use of the services provided by the Practice and other support and self help groups in the community.

We will also continue to work constructively with the Practice on problem areas which you as patients have identified and help to develop solutions.

Why not join us?