

Notes from the Carers and Patient Group Meeting held at The Nap
Thursday 15.10.15 19:30-20:30

Attending: Dr Caroline Knowlden (GP Partner), Sheila Burgess (Practice Manager), Sue Kinchin & Catherine Farman (staff), David Cadogan (Carers in Herts) and 22 patients.

Apologies: Age UK Dacorum, 2 reps from Dacorum Patient Group, CCG public engagement manager and 3 patients.

Welcome – Catherine welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending and introduced the team to those present

Purpose of the meeting - It was clarified that the meeting was an opportunity to speak to patients and support their wider needs whilst not simply dealing with an acute medical condition in a limited time. We asked for engagement and feedback for the surgery and whilst it was clear this wasn't a complaints session it was an opportunity to raise issues and understand the pressures and issues of our local health economy. It was agreed that the timing of our meeting might have been an issue for some patients and carers but that we had to accommodate the needs of the practice, including when the meeting space and staff were available. It was clear and agreed that notes from the meeting would be available to all via the website.

Catherine went on to clarify that our patient group needed to be reflective of our patients; e.g. age, ethnicity and illness, be involved with services offered at the practice, give feedback and suggestions and be the surgery critical friend. She asked patients to tell the practice when things go right as well as when it goes wrong as the surgery was encouraging patients to take a greater responsibility for their health. She explained about the ways in which feedback and support could be given including Friends and Family cards, NHS Choices and the surgery website

Carers - Dr Knowlden, as Carers clinical lead for the practice introduced herself and her role and explained how the surgery was attempting to reach and support those who were carers including the annual carers healthcheck, an influenza vaccination, flexibility of appointments and signposting to local support networks. She asked the patients present to consider ideas and suggestions of how, in the future the surgery could do more and to feed this back to us.

David Cadogan also explained his role in Carers in Herts and how the system works locally and the types of services that are available. He was grateful for the opportunity to explain this personally to our patients and how, they too could spread the message locally to those who they knew about the services and support provided. He also explained that support was available to those if required even after their caring role was not required and how the bereaved carers support system worked. He highlighted several leaflets and documents available from within the practice, in particular the carers passport and the benefits that this then brings.

Promotion of dates of events locally - Whilst they were not able to attend, Catherine was asked to promote the local monthly Carers Coffee morning held every first Monday of the month at The Toby Carvery on Hempstead Road 10:30-12noon where carers were welcome to drop in, for a talking / listening supportive session. A poster promoting this is also in the waiting room.

Changes

It was agreed that the surgery had had lots of changes recently; a new practice website, change of clinical system, change in ordering repeat medication and also the building changes.

Building – Sheila explained how the building requirements had changed since it was opened over 30 years ago and how, with our expanding patient population further space was required for clinicians to see the patients. She outlined the team and how our extension for nursing cover as well as doctors would enable patients more appointment flexibility. The alterations of The Nap site to the rooms was described including clinical rooms and patient access, waiting room and toilet facilities. She particularly thanked the patients (and staff) for their patience during the building process which continues to be difficult at times and reassured everyone that the outcome would be worthwhile.

Online Access - patients present were familiar with the old Vision On-line system and indeed missed the opportunity to book appointments in this fashion. Catherine explained that whilst the team needed to get to grips with the new clinical system this had been reduced but that the surgery was now intending to be able to offer this again. She asked for willing volunteers to trial EMIS online system out and give support to the admin team for ensuring instructions were suitable and clear for patients. 6 patients of those present were willing to try this and support the practice and their offers were gratefully received. The new service was explained:

Would require the patient to attend for a password and explanation A4 sheet. This could be requested in advance but needed to be collected in person/with authority of the patient.

Patients with caring responsibilities would be able to collect both if noted on the system or brought evidence of caring responsibilities

Online access would only be issued to those over 16 years at the present time due to the difficult nature of access and confidentiality

Patients with online access would be able to 1) book appointments, 2) cancel appointments, 3) view arranged appointments, 4) check and correct demographic details held by the surgery e.g mobile and email 5) view repeat medication and request items.

Patients would only be able to book a limited number of appointments at any one time to avoid abuse of the system, they would not be able to book nursing appointments due to the difficulty in understanding which clinician covered which clinic e.g. not all nurses do smears or baby immunisations. These appointments would continue in the current way. Patients under 16 years would be able to request medication as at the present time through the surgery website. An information sheet and notes would be available on the website as well as through reception about this updated system.

Looking ahead – Patients were reminded about further engagement with the surgery including patient feedback at time of a CQC inspection. All present were reminded about ways in which the practice engages with patients beyond the consultation; the website, NH S choices, twitter feed, posters, notices etc. Sheila highlighted to all present that feedback and engagement with patients was actively encouraged through all channels including friends and family cards and the NHS Choices website or direct to the practice to enable action and ideas to the surgery team.

AOB - It was noted that locally we have a facility called The Centre in the Park which provides support for carers and a safe recreational centre. The group heard about the facilities available and the practice agreed to add this as a link from the website for ease of reference to others.

Sheila asked those present whether a further meeting should be arranged or whether we should concentrate on a virtual group to ensure that more patients could be involved who were unable to leave their home/caring role. After discussion it was agreed that both were required, an opportunity to give input virtually and a meeting as this enabled full discussion and clarity on the interpretation of messages by voice rather than written word. It was agreed that we would arrange a further meeting, most likely to enable the patients to see the building finalised and have an update on other NHS changes.

A patient asked about WiFi in the waiting room as this appeared to have been removed at the present time. It was explained that there was an update to the access for WiFi for patients which would be more reliable and enable more people to access it at once from the CCG IT team. Sheila believed that this would be rectified in the near future.

In summing up the meeting, all those present were thanked for attending and the meeting closed at 20:35 Patients wishing to ask /direct comments to individuals were able to do this.