

## School Lane Surgery

# Patient Reference Group (PRG)

(Condensed)

Meeting: Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018

### 1. Previous minutes

No issues were raised concerning the previous minutes.

### 2. South Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group (SNCCG) Conference

This annual conference was held at Bawdeswell Village Hall and was attended by 3 members of the PRG. It was a gathering of North Norfolk and South Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Groups along with a good selection of the counties Patient Groups.

On reflection we consider that only around 5% of the discussion directly concerned Patient Groups, while 95% of matters were directed towards the professionals. Nonetheless, the presentations were interesting to hear, but we were left with the feeling that there is little upon which we could act.

There was mention of websites and networks where Patient Groups would be able to communicate and share ideas, but this is a recurring theme and it has not yet come to pass.

It was suggested we contact the SNCCG for guidance as to what exactly we as volunteers can do, in practical terms, to help our surgery.

### 3. Complaints (1-3), Significant Events (None) & Compliments (4-7)

1. A patient complained that their request for a sick note, to be presented as evidence to an insurer, was refused: this sick note was not necessary – not upheld.
2. There was a delay in the referral of a patient in December and a relative has subsequently complained: this problem was dealt with at the time – partially upheld.
3. There was an unintentional breach of confidentiality when a patient spoke to a practitioner about another's experience, and though no names were mentioned or intimate details disclosed, the patients were known to each other and 2 + 2 were put together!

There was obviously no malicious intent involved here, but breach of confidentiality is a serious and potentially sackable offence. This was an unfortunate incident and should serve as a warning to all surgery staff, who should be most careful when talking to patients as they may be acquainted with one another.

4. Dr Meriel Overy was thanked for writing an official letter.
5. Meriel was again thanked, for her clinical input.
6. Dr Jon Bryson was thanked for his 'excellent and fast' care.
7. The surgery in general was thanked for their quick response and appointment for a poorly child.

### 4. Other Business

- a) **Staffing levels:** there is a danger that the surgery could reach a point where it is critically short of GP's, and there is currently a drive to recruit. It is now extremely difficult to find doctors who are qualified or even willing to fill GP positions, with locums proving virtually impossible to find. The surgery advertises widely, but there has so far been no response.

Trainee doctors are not looking at General Practice in enough numbers, having seen that GP's are being overworked they are losing their love and faith in the system.

The surgery is also looking to recruit nurse practitioners to ease the load on GP's, as many patients do not actually need to see a doctor.

The building of 5,550 new homes in the town, the initial phase of which has already begun, is likely to pose a real problem for local healthcare services. There was a plan to include a new GP surgery as part of the development but where are the extra GP's going to come from? The Health Secretary has recently acknowledged that the promise of 5,000 new GP's by 2020 is not going to come even close.

It is now being thought that the NHS needs a redesign. The service has gone far beyond what was originally envisaged as its purpose, and with the relentless advances in medical science it has become a bottomless pit for taxpayers' money.

- b) **School Lane pharmacy:** the surgery is not allowed to recommend the in-house pharmacy to patients, despite the fact it is 50% owned by the practice. The practice receives a payback from the pharmacy each time it issues a prescription, so it is of benefit to the surgery if patients use this service.
- c) **Privacy screen:** a screen has been found for the reception area at School Lane and it will soon be installed, so patients requiring a little more privacy when they talk to a receptionist should feel more confident that they will not be overheard.

Patients requiring more privacy when talking to the pharmacy are taken to a small room inside.

- d) **X-ray Department:** this facility will be reinstated at the Healthy Living Centre from 23<sup>rd</sup> July.
- e) **GP Services:** there is now a pilot scheme running where our local surgeries will provide services that have previously required a referral to hospital. This move makes sense because your GP will know better which services are needed for local patients.
- f) It was suggested that holiday immunisation forms be made available on the surgery website.
- g) **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** is a subject much in the news of late, and it is being looked at seriously as a means of diagnosis. The PRG agreed that it is unlikely to be looked on favourably by the majority of patients, who like the idea of a face to face with their GP.

AI may very well be introduced at some point in the future, but not before consideration has been given to such things as reliability, potential for errors and who would face responsibility for such, sharing of patient data, privacy, liability, disagreement between AI and the doctors, then last but not least, acceptance by the patients themselves.

- h) An issue was raised where patients have had treatment the West Suffolk Hospital but the record of their previous treatment at other places was not accessible. A blood test had to be done for a second time because this information was not available, and this is down to the fact that the West Suffolk and Norfolk & Norwich Hospitals use different computer systems.
- i) Members wonder if it would be possible to give the PRG link more prominence on the surgery website, and add a facility for patients to forward any questions they might have for discussion at our meetings?

**NEXT MEETING: Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> August, 7.00 pm at School Lane Surgery.**