

## School Lane Surgery

# Patient Reference Group (PRG)

(Condensed)

Meeting: Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016

1. **Advance Appointments** - The PRG would very much like to see the facility for patients to be able to book an appointment 3 months in advance. Some patients are seen on a quarterly basis and they are being asked to book their next appointment some 6 weeks ahead, when ideally it would be done on the day they are in clinic; this situation has led to patients forgetting, and it shouldn't be beyond the realms of possibility - a New Year challenge for the surgery.

We do recognise there are issues when it comes to the appointments system, especially as appointment lists are released in blocks of one month and can be fully booked up within the hour. The practice is seeing around 45 new patient registrations every week, which is likely to exacerbate the problem.

2. **Did Not Attend (DNA)** - This is an issue that will not go away, and is proving more than difficult to resolve. One of the most popular suggestions put forward by members is to charge patients that fail to attend their booked appointment, unless of course they have a valid reason, but the powers that be have so far not responded well to the idea.

It was mentioned that some years ago a scheme along the above lines had been piloted in Australia, and that once implemented the numbers of patients who then failed to show up for their appointment were greatly reduced. Some internet research into the Australian experience will be carried out, with a view to drafting a letter to our local MP to suggest that the NHS consider a similar course of action.

The surgery has seen over 1,000 missed appointments in the last 2 months, which equates to 29 weeks of a GPs time.

3. **Hospice Services** - It is clear that the surgery is not aware of all the services that are provided by the St Nicholas Hospice, so the Proactive Care Planning Coordinator suggested it might be a good idea if she made a visit to the hospice in order to find out exactly what services are available to patients.

Support groups should be encouraged, and it helps tremendously if those asked to attend as speakers or advisors have been personally affected by the condition for which the group has been established, or are indeed going through it at the time.

4. **New Reception Staff** - The surgery has recognised that some patients have been less than impressed with the performance at reception of late, but asks that people give the 6 new staff members time to get used to the systems and methods employed by the surgery: the new staff members are learning on the job and there is bound to be the occasional hiccup during their initial training period.

This evening we had the company of one of the 6, and she was able to explain to us some of the difficulties facing the new receptionists. We were told of the occasional abuse from irate patients, something which they have not had to face before, and following which they are supposed to move on to the next patient as if nothing had happened; when they might very well be quite upset.

5. **School Lane Alterations** - At some point in the very near future the building work will begin to alter the layout of the surgery at School Lane. We didn't get much detail this evening, but did learn that part of the current downstairs waiting area will become the new pharmacy facility, and that the new waiting area will be where some of the backroom office space is now situated (behind reception).

School Lane will remain open for business as usual whilst the alterations are being carried out.

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