

School Lane Surgery

Patient Reference Group (PRG)

(Condensed)

Thursday 23rd March 2023

1. Previous minutes

No issues were raised regarding the previous minutes.

2. COVID-19 + Flu update

The COVID-19 spring booster will begin to roll-out in the first week of April but this time it will be more limited in scope, being more targeted at the older generations and those with a weakened immune system. The vaccination will be mostly carried out at the Healthy Living Centre again, but all housing with care schemes and the residential care homes will receive a visit.

The booster jab itself is of the Pfizer, Moderna or Sanofi type that has been approved in the UK, all of which have been updated to target the latest variants of the virus.

COVID-19 is very much less of a threat than it was, so workers and younger people in general are not at such risk from infection.

The flu season is now ending.

3. Respiratory Hub

The clinic for Streptococcal A and other chest infections will be running at the Healthy Living Centre until end of March, and is open every day.

4. Appointments

There is a tremendous workload on the surgery since the outbreak of COVID-19 and the levels of stress on individual staff members is terrific; something not always appreciated by patients, who can be under the impression that GPs are deliberately avoiding face-to-face contact through fear for their own health.

As a matter of interest, some resistance to telephone and video appointments was experienced when they were first introduced, but many patients now find it the quickest and most convenient method of contact.

There are 50 reserved slots per day for patients to 'be seen' via the surgery website 'Consult the GP' facility, which is considered a lot, though this number is now recognised as not enough. And there is an average of 383 calls to the surgery every single day plus 190 requests made via the surgery website. Then there is the 'other stuff' to consider: hospital letters, blood test results etc. Finally, there is usually urgent calls and/or home visits to be made. The surgery is dealing with around 365 patients per day, and on average our practitioners are getting to see 67 patients each, both GPs and nurses.

Abandoned Calls: there is to be a new phone system installed at the surgery which will see patients being called back if they abandon their attempt to contact the surgery, as some do when they are not near the front of the queue or have just given up waiting.

Monday and Tuesday are still the busiest days for phone calls to the surgery, and there are currently 5 phones to take such calls.

5. Staffing

1. The practice is currently employing 11 GP's, but when differing contracts and working hours are taken into consideration, this equates to 7 full-time doctors.

2. Dr. Adeniran, a GP Registrar, has joined the practice.
3. Amy, a Prescription Clerk, has joined the surgery.
4. Neide, a Healthcare Assistant, has started training to become a Nurse Associate.
5. Kelly, our new Nursing Team Lead, is due to start in June or July.
6. One new Receptionist, Michelle, has started at the surgery.

6. Thetford Mindful Town – Social Prescribing with Andrea Green

The Thetford Mindful Town initiative is aiming to train up as many barbers, hairdressers, nail technicians, shopkeepers and businesses as possible, trained by Community Champions, to offer mental health first aid to customers and other people they find are suffering some form of mental stress; when chatting to them in the shop etc. It is funded by Breckland Council and volunteers in the scheme will receive the appropriate training to offer support.

Andrea Green, our guest speaker, is a Social Prescriber and is there to offer support in social activities (non-medical), benefits entitlement (though not the filling out of forms), employment, education, in fact pretty much everything and anything. Anybody can ask their GP to refer them, a surgery receptionist or they can self-refer, there is no 'right way' to do it. Andrea is happy to meet people face to face, pretty much anywhere, or talk on the phone. Wednesday mornings sees Andrea and several other support groups meeting at the food bank, to talk about what is going on out there and who might appreciate some form of help.

7. Other Business

- a) The point was made that sometimes an individual patient's medication can be changed without notice to them, which could easily lead to a position where they continue to take their stockpiled supply of a previous prescription. This issue is most likely to arise when a patient leaves hospital and there is a delay before the consultant's letter to the GP is received and then acted upon. The consultant may wish the patient to stop taking a previous medication with immediate effect, but that patient may not be aware of this and could still have a supply of the old medication which they continue to take.

Hospital letters should normally be received by the GP surgery within 2 days of the patient discharge but this does not always happen, so there can be a breakdown in communication between consultant, GP, and patient at this point. The responsibility for communicating this information to the patient is really the job of the consultant and the patient should never be left in doubt as to which medication they should or should not be taking.

There is a duty of care to the patient to let them know what is going on with their treatment and the pharmacy could play their part, contacting a patient to inform them of any change in their medication.

- b) There is the promise of much more clinical space when the Healthy Living Centre is redeveloped, mostly on the upper floor of the building.
- c) The subject of the recycling of used blister packs and pill boxes was raised, since one member had donated their used items at their previous address. This sounded like a perfectly simple and even obvious thing to do, but nobody had heard of such a scheme in Norfolk. The original scheme had to be halted as the pharmacies involved found themselves inundated with material and were unable to cope. The weight of medical packaging going to landfill is tremendous and this is surely something we should all be looking at?
- d) The surgery has asked if anybody might be interested in becoming Cancer and Health Champions? There is a training workshop for those who are interested.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday 18th May, 7 pm at School Lane Surgery