

## School Lane Surgery

# Patient Reference Group (PRG)

(Condensed)

Meeting: Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2019

Dr Martin Hadley-Brown and his good lady wife, Muriel, joined us this evening to reminisce, now that they have decided to slow down and enter the world of the semi-retired. The PRG wished to show its appreciation of them both for their 30+ years of service to School Lane Surgery, and for their dedication to the wellbeing of the people of Thetford.

Both Martin and Muriel will still be making an appearance at the surgery, in their professional capacity, but it will be with much-reduced frequency.

### 1. Previous minutes

Further to the minutes of 4<sup>th</sup> April (the dementia test): each patient detail that is entered onto the computer at the surgery has a 'read code' which records things like the patients age, whether they smoke, suffer memory loss or confusion etc. The read codes produce a 'final score' which determines who should be given the dementia test.

### 2. Senior Area Practice Managers briefing

- a) Dr Mollan of Grove Lane Surgery has been appointed Clinical Director for the Breckland Alliance of GP Practices.
- b) There is now a sharing of staff between the alliance surgeries, for which new funding has been given.
- c) The Clinical Pharmacist is an increasingly popular addition to GP surgeries and they are there to help patients better understand their medication, with an eye to keeping them fit and avoiding the use of medication without very good reason.
- d) Other staff in line to be employed by GP surgeries in the next year is physician associates and physiotherapists, with the following year seeing paramedics join the list.
- e) The Healthy Living Centre, even after all this time, is still underutilised.
- f) There is a new online service called Footfall, which allows patients to input their medical questions and then receive advice that could mean they are able to help themselves. If this is not possible, patients will be directed towards their GP surgery, or if appropriate, another healthcare provider.

This service is designed to aid the triage process and avoid long queues of patients trying to phone through to the surgery in the morning.

### 3. Polypharmacy

The term polypharmacy means nothing more than "many medications" and it is used when a patient is taking two or more medications.

The Clinical Pharmacist at this practice is able to remove drugs from a repeat prescription form as they are seen as the best judge of whether this is necessary, though it will not include the most serious medications without a consultation with a GP e.g. warfarin.

### 4. Palliative care

NHS England is looking for the improvement of palliative care in the community, providing an incentive in the way of brownie points. Surgeries will be monitored and need to show they are prescribing safely and providing a quality end-of-life service.

## 5. Staff changes

Nat, our Emergency Care Practitioner, has now left the practice.

Summer has left and is now a Healthcare Assistant at the West Suffolk Hospital.

Receptionist Kayleigh is now on maternity leave, having recently given birth to a baby girl; Neave.

Receptionist Maggie has announced that she will be leaving the practice.

The practice now employs Gemma, who has joined us as an administrator.

## 6. Complaints (1-2), significant Events (None) & compliments (3-7)

1. A patient complained that there had been an inconsistency with information given at reception: this call was listened to again, following which a letter of apology was sent to the patient and training given to reception staff – upheld.
2. A patient complained, following a call to the surgery in order to make an appointment for their sick partner. They had been advised to see the pharmacist first, but the partner was later admitted to hospital as they require surgery: this call was listened to again and it was clear that there was no sense of urgency from the caller, and they had agreed to call back the following morning. A letter was sent to the patient and the surgery will look at a new protocol which covers both the health of workers and care of the patient – partially upheld.
3. A very nice compliment was received from a satisfied patient, “Best surgery ever, staff, nurses and doctors are so good I have never had cause to complain.”
4. One patient had travelled a distance and then suddenly realised they had forgotten to pack an important medication, and so contacted the surgery. The receptionist was able to send a prescription to the patient's nearest pharmacy: the patient wrote, “Thanks to the team for going the extra mile to help out.”
5. Another patient expressed their gratitude to Claude, “He was excellent, listening and not rushing me.” Dr Letellier is this patient's regular GP and she was also praised for being, “Lovely and understanding.” This patient feels they can trust the GPs and tell them about their fears without being judged.
6. A thank you was received, for “The wonderful service, especially from Debbie, who is the best.”
7. A patient expressed their satisfaction with all the School Lane and Healthy Living Centre staff, and the fact they are able to get a same day appointment when it is needed.

## 7. Other business

- a) **Repeat prescriptions:** some patients are visiting the pharmacy to pick up their prescription, only to find that some items have not been fulfilled: the NHS has introduced a new cost cutting plan which aims to save around 200 million pounds per year, and there is a fair number of items coming off the GP prescribing list, such as emollient cream, paracetamol, treatments for coughs and colds, athletes foot, constipation, dandruff, diarrhoea, warts, ulcers etc.

All items being removed from the GP prescribing list will still be available at the pharmacy, but they will need to be purchased by the patient.

- b) **Patient satisfaction survey:** The practice has done well in the latest patient survey, though we are always looking to improve.

There will be another ‘in-house’ patient questionnaire later this year.

- c) **Befriending service:** the surgery has been contemplating the setting up of a befriending service to help elderly and frail patients but the PRG is not keen at all. It would require the proper training of volunteers and the law demands that each undergo an Enhanced DBS/CRB check to ensure they do not have a criminal conviction.

There is already a service of this type and it seems an unnecessary burden for the surgery, especially when one considers that an unhappy patient might seek to prosecute the surgery if something went badly for them.

**NEXT MEETING: Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December, 7.00 pm at School Lane Surgery.**