

## School Lane Surgery

# Patient Reference Group (PRG)

(Condensed)

Meeting: Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2019

### 1. Previous minutes

No issues were raised concerning the previous minutes.

### 2. Guest Speaker – Jo Loads

Jo is a former cardiovascular nurse who has decided to set out on a completely different career path, though still operating within the world of healthcare, she now acts as a self-employed advocate for of the Breckland Alliance of GP practices; amongst others.

Continuing changes to the NHS contract mean that GP practices will no longer operate independently and Jo hopes to provide services to the alliance that will help to recruit the new doctors and other practitioners that will be required to cope with the expanding population. GPs are finding themselves increasingly busy and it is no secret that young doctors are not enticed by the prospect of a heavy workload: practice lists have grown while the number of GPs has remained static, or fallen.

It has become notoriously difficult to recruit new blood, and there has been more than one case of qualified people from overseas having been put off by the uncertainty surrounding Brexit; we know of one case in particular that involved a GP from Lithuania, who has now returned home.

We are fortunate in this part of the country as our local practices are seen to be leading the way, and are in some cases, ahead of the game. Professionally, we have quite a lot to offer a doctor who is looking for a challenge.

Jo will shortly hold a meeting with a ‘GP film maker’, a chap with a degree in media studies, and the plan is to produce a short promotional video featuring the local GP practices: it will cover other aspects of the area such as the close proximity to centres of excellence, the many good schools, leisure facilities and the comparatively good value of local housing. The finished article will be able to view online, as well as at recruitment fairs and other promotional events.

There are no plans to extend the Breckland Alliance, with the surgeries having between 30,000 and 50,000 patients to care for, this is judged to be the right range in numbers for the development of local services.

The primary care network model will see new services being introduced locally, one of which is likely to be cardiac rehabilitation.

Jo was thanked for her presentation, and we look forward to hearing from her in due course.

### 3. How to increase uptake for long-term condition checks, flu jabs, smear tests etc.

There is a general problem with health checks in that patients, if they are not feeling unwell, have the tendency to forget about screening reminders. Invitations to have a smear test in particular have seen a disappointing response rate and the surgery will try a different approach by sending appointment letters to patients and then following it up with a phone call to confirm that the patient will be attending.

Patients coming to the surgery for other reasons should automatically be flagged up for questioning about which other health issues they should be addressing, as a part of their general care. They could be guided towards clinics and asked, if appropriate, why they are not turning up for screenings. Leaflets should be available to explain the importance of long-term condition checks, as well as smear tests and flu jabs etc.

#### **4. Avoidable hospital admissions**

Lacey Walls will be taking on the role of Care-Coordinator for those patients who are considered to be 'at risk' of an avoidable hospital admission. She will be looking to contact every vulnerable patient over the age of 65, in order to find out if they are OK and managing at home.

#### **5. Complaints (1-5), Significant Events (6-8) & Compliments (9-14)**

1. A parent complained that the cancellation of their child's travel immunisations was given at too short notice: it was explained to the parent that the immunisations nurse was sick at the time, and that due to a change in the requirement for immunisation it was no longer necessary – partially upheld.
2. The surgery is in the process of changing the frequency of repeat prescriptions from 56 to 28 days and one patient complained that they were unaware of the new policy, having not seen the relevant notice on the repeat prescription form or the posters at the surgery: the surgery is looking at how best to advertise this issue, including a possible advert in the About Thetford magazine – partially upheld.
3. A patient was unhappy that they had been charged for a letter provided by their GP: if a patient asks for a letter from the doctor e.g. to an airline, requesting a seat with more leg room, then it is an entirely private matter: this not the responsibility of the NHS, therefore a charge is incurred – not upheld.
4. A patient was unhappy with the advice given in regard to their lifestyle choice: the GP apologised for any upset caused, but it should be understood that they are acting purely in the patients best medical interest – not upheld.
5. A patient was unhappy that their medication was to be reviewed, with the possibility that it could be stopped: the patient felt that the GP had shown a less than caring attitude and an apology was proffered, along with the offer of a second opinion; as the GP involved has now left the practice – partially upheld.
6. Research information was submitted for patients that had not given their consent: all data had been anonymised and no personally identifiable details were made available. There was no data breach and the information was retrieved, then the proper data was forwarded – a learning has been acknowledged by the surgery: before data is forwarded it must be double-checked and consent gained.
7. A 'sharps' bin at the Healthy Living Centre was left overflowing with urine sample tubs: this is not surgery practice and is believed to have been left by another service provider – a reminder letter has been sent to all staff, as well as to the out-of-hours head office.
8. A loose needle was discovered at the bottom of an external clinical waste bin, which was recovered and then placed in an appropriate sharps bin by a practice nurse – a reminder letter was sent to all staff, as well as to the out-of-hours head office; again!
9. Thank yous were passed on to Dr Jon Bryson and Will Falder for their assistance when a patient's next door neighbour, who had been feeling very unwell, collapsed: the patient was treated and was looking much better by the afternoon.
10. A patient was very impressed with Dr Rajan's treatment of her foster children: "this care was beyond what is expected, she is very caring, following up appointments with phone calls and genuine interest."
11. A thank you to Dr Hadley-Brown and the team at School Lane Surgery was received: "thank you for the first-class service and professional care, which is often beyond their call of duty."
12. Another grateful patient expressed their gratitude: "thank you to all staff for making a difficult time easier, your kind cheerfulness and prompt care was great."
13. Sue Taylor received a thank you from a patient who was grateful for being put at ease and being treated so kindly. Their visit to the surgery was made a pleasant one and they recommend us to everybody.
14. A patient, registered at the surgery for 18 years, expressed their sorrow at seeing the departure of Dr Hadley-Brown as senior partner of the practice: "there are not too many surgeries that have achieved the standard set by School Lane, in terms of associate doctors, support staff, the environment and now the new pharmacy. All of which has been achieved with an ever-growing number of patients and the translation requirements."

#### **5. Other Business**

- a) **Podiatry** at the Healthy Living Centre and also home visits is now a reduced service, with only the most severe of cases being treated: this is in an effort to reduce the number of patients being seen for little more than a cutting of toenails, a service for which patients will now have to pay privately.

- b) **Thetford Leg Club** was wound up on 28<sup>th</sup> January, following the arbitrary decision by the Norfolk Community Health & Care NHS Trust to withdraw the district nurses. It had been running successfully for some 16 years and the decision appears to have been made with little if any consultation, surprising everybody with its abruptness. The club was popular with patients and GPs, having achieved an impressive healing rate for leg ulcers; so much for, “no decision about me, without me.”
- c) **Young baby appointments** can be a trial for parents at the best of times, and turning up at the surgery only to find you have been given an appointment upstairs will not ease the stress. Any parent finding it impossible will be able to see the doctor in a room downstairs, all they have to do is ask at reception; a poster will be placed in the surgery to outline the choice open to parents.
- d) There is a **new computer system** being trialled that will see the West Suffolk Hospital being able to access School Lane Surgery medical records. The system is currently undergoing risk profiling, before going live.
- e) The latest **Care Quality Commission** visit will take place on 5<sup>th</sup> March and PRG members are asked to fill in the ‘patient experience’ cards available at reception.
- f) A pointless **Appointment letter** is an unnecessary expense for the NHS: one member of our group has recently received a hospital appointment letter on the day following her attendance at the hospital, a letter of two pages with the second page having just 2 words printed on it.

Appointment letters tend to be fired off automatically by computer systems, even when a very late appointment is made eg. a cancellation provides the chance for somebody else to be seen, sometimes on the very next day, and it is surprising there is no tick box that can be used to stop a letter being sent when it is perfectly obvious there is no chance the patient will receive it in time?

- g) Two members of the PRG will attend a **Social media workshop** at the Hoveton & Wroxham Health Centre on 15<sup>th</sup> March, and will report back at the next meeting.
- h) **Robert Howes-Ward** has said he would like to attend a meeting of the PRG in order to bring us up to date with ‘goings on’ at the surgery.

**NEXT MEETING: Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> April, 7.00 pm at School Lane Surgery.**