

School Lane Surgery

Patient Reference Group (PRG)

(Condensed)

Meeting: Thursday 16th February 2017

1. Presentation by Robert Howes-Ward (Healthy Living Centre Development Manager and School Lane Surgery Managing Partner)

This evening we had the company of Robert as he wished to bring the PRG up to date regarding all things surgery; Robert is a busy chap and we thank him for taking the time to bring us up to speed.

We were reminded that there is now the chemotherapy and cataract services in place at the Healthy Living Centre, both of which had previously required a trip to either the West Suffolk or Addenbrooke's.

Grove Lane Surgery is now using the Healthy Living Centre and occupies a couple of rooms every day, all part of the new alliance which sees the local surgeries working closer together in order to utilise resources more efficiently.

NHS England is to undertake a full review of the healthcare needs for Thetford. The town is set to expand and the original plans had made provision for a further GP surgery.

If the Healthy Living Centre were to be expanded it could do away with the need for the development of a further GP surgery, and it would surely be the value for money option for the tax payer. There has been much confusion with regard to the provision of extra health services for the town as it expands, and it seems at no point did any of the original planners consult the experts in the field.

Robert is currently liaising with NHS England and clinicians on behalf of the Watton surgery, in the hope that their compliment of GPs can be increased: there is a national recruitment problem, and Watton has struggled to function as a surgery. NHS England has stepped in and asked both GP surgeries in Thetford to help, so now School Lane Surgery and Grove Lane Surgery are in the process of trying to resolve the problems in Watton. Part of the process has seen our GPs spend time at the Watton surgery, which means there is bound to be some impact on patients in Thetford.

The Watton crisis has seen the 2 surgeries in Thetford working closer together than ever, and this closeness is best for both. There is truth in the old adage 'strength in numbers', and as a team we can right the ship.

The extra burden this puts on our GPs is no joke, with their already heavy workload. It is not unusual for a GP to be working on their holidays, or 'days off'. Currently, Watton has just 2 full-time GPs.

All this means there may be some interruption to normal service, but it is hoped that inconvenience will be kept to a minimum.

2. Previous Minutes

The surgery has looked into the possibility of allowing patients to book an appointment further than 4 weeks ahead, in particular for those with quarterly check-ups, but it's difficult. Booking so far in advance means taking the chance that staff are available, and experience has shown that appointment slots tend to disappear quite quickly; we don't want our GPs to be fully booked up for months into the future.

The 'did not attend' issue is not going to go away any time soon, and the Health Secretary has been quoted in print as saying that patients will not be charged for missed appointments. Charging would also mean the surgery having to cater for credit cards, and the storing of those details along with medical records could turn out to be a bit of a minefield. Also, patients with money wouldn't be too bothered by a small charge and would probably behave as normal, while those with little to spare could find themselves in hardship.

Patients failing to attend 3 appointments are now sent 3 reminders, the first 2 as texts and then a final letter.

3. Complaints (1), Significant Events (2-7) & Compliments (8-12)

1. Following 3 individual complaints, clinicians have been reminded that it is vital that patients are made to feel that they have been listened to, and that they have understood the conversation. Patients should feel they are part of the decision-making process, and not just spoken at.
2. Paperwork was found to be missing following a private medical at the Healthy Living Centre: no paperwork should be taken at the Healthy Living Centre, and private patients will in future be advised to present with their paperwork when they come to pay for their treatment.
3. Diabetes nurse Debbie submitted a correct prescription for insulin to the pharmacy but the wrong type was issued. This was reported and the pharmacy is conducting an internal investigation.
4. An incorrect address was entered onto the home visit list for the on-call GP, and they went to the wrong address. Staff have been reminded that accuracy is very helpful when it comes to entering patient information!
5. A patient was given an appointment with a surgery nurse, when in fact they needed to see a GP: staff at reception will now check the relevant medical history to make sure the patient is seen by the most appropriate clinician.
6. A van delivering confidential mail and patient records was left unlocked and unattended outside the surgery, and to make matters worse the driver had dropped some letters and had failed to notice: this incident has been reported.
7. Faxes are still used by the surgery, much to PRG members amusement. One information sharing example was recently forgotten about, having been placed in the *in tray* for later, so from now on there will be a full and proper handover procedure by GPs and staff going off duty.
8. Muriel Hadley-Brown, our Proactive Care Planning Co-ordinator, has received a thank you from the Thetford nursing team for her continued help and support in the community.
9. Nurse Louise Shields has received praise from a particularly nervous patient.
10. Dr Martin Belsham received a note of appreciation following an appointment where he had explained the treatment options available to a patient.
11. Nat Holding, our Emergency Care Practitioner, received a letter of thanks from a mother who had taken her son to see him and found Nat to be caring and professional.
12. Dr Kim Tomlinson received a letter of thanks following a patient diagnosis.

4. Other Business

- a) **crossed wires?** - The surgery has received a letter from NHS England which states, in essence, that 'it is not your place to ask (non-registered) patients where they come from, or how long they have been here' etc. Which came as a surprise to everybody, including the PRG, as we were under the impression that the government was expecting the exact opposite.

It's very different in the case of surgery employees, who undergo a thorough check of their origins.

- b) **E111** - The E111 health insurance card gives EU patients travelling within the EU the right to the same level of free medical treatment they would receive in their own country, though this level can differ between member states. Some EU states offer a very basic free service and then people are expected to extend it with private insurance, which visitors from other EU states would need to take out. Some EU states require those looking for treatment to stump up the money straight away, which means that the patient will then have to make a claim on their insurance.
- c) **School Lane alterations** - There is a question mark hanging over the planned alterations to the School Lane building, and things are currently 'up in the air.'

NEXT MEETING: Thursday 20th April, 7.00 pm at School Lane Surgery