

School Lane Surgery + Grove Lane Surgery

Breckland Alliance Joint Patient Group Meeting

(Condensed)

Meeting: Thursday 20th August 2020

1. Welcome/Introduction

This evening was our first online meeting of the Patient Reference Group, following an understandably quite period for us with the surgeries having to channel all efforts into the containment of Covid-19. We also enjoyed the company of the Patient Participation Group from Grove Lane Surgery, they now being our partners in the Breckland Alliance of GP surgeries.

Introductions were made and it was on with business.

2. Covid-19 Update

Since March there has been a number of stringent measures put in place to ensure that staff are healthy and fit to work, and as there are now more patients coming into the surgery the maintenance of these measures is vital to maintain safety and minimise the risk of infection.

Initially there was some signs of infection among staff members, some of whom felt quite ill, but nobody was found to be infected with Covid and it was more likely down to seasonal factors, common cold etc.

The response from patients to the restrictions at the surgery has been generally positive, and some have been kind enough to donate Perspex shields, face shields, scrubs and cakes! This was lovely and makes the surgery feel appreciated.

3. Flu

At this time of year, the risk of catching flu plus Covid is heightened and is a serious threat to everybody. Flu jabs are now being delivered and will be given in a staggered service through September, October and November: everybody over the age of 50 will be entitled to a jab. A drive-through clinic was considered but might be dangerous for staff, instead the bulk of jabs will be given at the Healthy Living Centre where social distancing is easier. Flu jabs in care homes could be given by pharmacies? If not, surgery staff will need to go in.

4. Screening: Cancer and Cytology, working to improve uptake

Yeti (of Grove Lane Surgery) is working with our Clinical Commissioning Group in an attempt to improve the uptake of screening tests (breast, smear etc.) and one idea is that hairdressers could ask, when talking to customers, why is it that so many are reluctant to visit the surgery for an appointment?

The breast screening service is no longer sending appointment letters as so many patients are failing to turn up, though all will receive an advice to get it done: School Lane Surgery patients are sent letters on pink paper, which will stand out and be easier to spot. There has been much discussion of how to deal with 'no shows' and perhaps an evening and weekend clinic could help there?

There is a Breckland campaign aimed at employers to get people screening. Those that don't understand the system can have a tendency to take advantage of minority workforces and they must learn that they have a duty of care for their staff. Companies must learn that they are responsible and should not be trying to stop employees from taking up the opportunity to have a test or screening.

5. Mental Health

GPs and staff at the surgery are under a terrific strain this year and are not immune from feeling stress, which is not good for patients. Jobs have been stacking up and nobody is paid extra for having to deal

with the load. GPs have been dropping like flies and medics now are reluctant to train, knowing the strain they are likely to find themselves under. The Breckland Alliance of GP surgeries however, finds itself ahead of the game having put in place mental health first aiders and counselling. There will also be a mental health practitioner on site, coming soon, which is good news for the surgery.

6. Care Homes

There is now a dedicated Care-coordinator to work in care homes, a move which is designed to simplify the prescribing of medication. So far, the feedback has been good and the Care-coordinator will touch base on a weekly basis to stay informed of changes in patient/resident status. It is working well.

7. Year of the Nurse

There is to be a health day for the alliance and Yeti (Grove Lane Surgery) is organising and has been nominated, having this year been pushed to the limit and risen to the occasion.

8. Staffing

Claire is now full time in Watton, she is still Compliance Manager but has an overview of the alliance. The surgery has 2 new GPs, they being Dr Jessica Becket and senior partner Dr Ge Yu. We have a new nurse, Sharon (another one!) and her speciality is diabetes.

9. Keystone lunchtime support

The Keystone Innovation Centre is offering 6 weeks of free hot meals, for those in need, and the patient groups are asked to spread the word.

10. Complaints, Significant Events & Compliments

There are no details available this evening, next time we will have an update with an overview of what went on.

11. Other Business

- a) The collection of food and toiletries by School Lane Surgery for the local food bank continues and takes place on Fridays. The surgery has also introduced 'dress down Friday', where staff are asked to donate a small amount of money or food which goes straight to the food bank.
- b) The rate of Covid testing is increasing and it is hoped there will soon be a home-testing kit available.
- c) This area has its fair share of Covid infection but so far, all surgery staff who have had cough or cold symptoms have returned a negative result.
- d) Patient group members have been pleased to be able to have a phone consultation with a GP, thereby avoiding a waiting room full of potential trouble!

It has not been easy to persuade some patients that they don't have to visit the surgery when a phone or online appointment would suffice.

- e) The Patient Reference Group would like to voice its appreciation of the volunteers who have turned up to help things run smoothly at the surgery, well done everybody.
- f) Not everybody was able to connect to the meeting tonight, and one of us (ahem!) could get a picture but no sound (initially). These glitches are to be expected, I/we will get used to the procedure.
- g) Finally, Claire dropped the bombshell that she will not be managing our group meetings in the future and that Gemma will now be in charge. She will still visit us occasionally, but not nearly so often. It was suggested that we show our appreciation of her efforts (and patience!) by presenting a little something to her.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday 19th November, online at 7.30 PM