

School Lane Surgery

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

(Condensed)

Thursday 25th January 2024

This evening, we began our meeting with each member of the group being asked to give a description of their life/work experience, by way of introduction to all those present.

Chris: has a vast experience of services. Originally trained as a psychotherapist, has worked as a welfare officer and in various therapeutic jobs, hospice experience included. She has an interest in mental health and end of life care, as well as trying to get agencies to work together. Chris is Joint Chair of the PPG.

Steve: has gone from publishing in London to gaining a degree by retraining as a nurse at the age of 50! He has been in at the deep end, having worked in A&E and with prisons, and is most keen to ensure that patients get the best information so that they can gain the best treatment. Steve is Joint Chair of the PPG.

Kathy: began nursing in London during the 70s, but became uncomfortable with the politics of it all and retrained as a lawyer. In her time, she dealt with some high-profile cases and even represented parents of children with body parts missing at the hospital.

Maralyn: moved to Thetford in 1974, having worked in the City of London, and this year will celebrate her Golden Wedding Anniversary... as well as being a patient of School Lane Surgery for all that time! She has several academic qualifications, including a BSc (Hons) in Geography. Maralyn was Finance Manager at the Norwich Road School, after they became Grant-Maintained, and went on to become a Management Accountant with Norfolk Constabulary, until her 'retirement' in 2014; she continued with her role as Adult Education Tutor, teaching various accounting and bookkeeping courses, including the AAT qualifications. Another member who is passionate about Thetford.

Frank: spent the first 16 years of his life moving around the world with his family, dad being in the RAF, before he joined the Royal Navy at 16... where he moved around the world again! Following a nasty road accident at 18 he became paraplegic and must use a wheelchair. Apart from bookkeeping for his brother-in-law's business, he has spent most of his time trying to avoid hospital(!), volunteering to help the District Nurses with their Leg Club, as treasurer/general dogsbody, and now as secretary of the PPG.

Sarah: surprised everybody by informing us she had been an electrician in London, before deciding on a career change at the surgery; Sarah has a passion to be the best.

Natalie: spent her early life in Rhodesia, up to the age of 25. Having worked at Center Parks before joining the surgery on reception, she has worked her way up to Admin & Reception Manager.

Marc: is born locally, and pretty much fell into healthcare. Having tried teaching, hating just about every minute of it, he returned to practice management. Passionate about the NHS, "It feels like making a difference." Also, he thinks Thetford is beautiful in places; and he is right.

THE AGENDA

1. Previous minutes
2. Practice Updates and News in brief
3. Staffing updates
4. Other Business

1. Previous minutes

The minutes for our previous meeting are yet to be agreed.

2. Practice Updates and News in brief

Sarah handed out her pre-prepared A4 with basic details.

Patients are no longer able to make an appointment up to 3 weeks in advance, as the surgery is having to try a different triage system. An on-call GP now sits in with the General Practice Assistants to triage and decide who is to be seen; a situation that has been brought about by the demand outstretching the supply of GPs. Patients will sometimes go to the surgery website and have an expectation of an Amazon style response, which is not realistic.

A face-to-face appointment is now routinely a 15-minute slot, which it is thought will be long enough to pick up on most issues / health problems.

Sometimes a patient requires a different kind of help, not just medical, and this is why the surgery has introduced the roll of Social Prescriber.

The situation for online booking of appointments is much improved since last year. Though the forms shut off at 9, the phones remain open and receptionists are able to fill in the forms for patients. In the past year there has been 44,500 forms filled, and 26,000 phone calls.

MMR (Measles, Mumps & Rubella vaccine) take-up has proved to be disappointing, and 98% is required for herd immunity to be successful. It is unfortunate that many people reject vaccines because of a particular religious belief, and the scandal of some years ago when Dr Andrew Wakefield linked the MMR vaccine to autism, a finding that was eventually discredited, but led to a 20% drop in take-up. Wakefield was struck off, but the damage was done, and figures are still not fully recovered.

It is now the case that each incidence of DNA (Did Not Attend appointment) costs the NHS some £42.

3. Staffing updates

Dr Llewellyn has finished his training and will be joining the Practice as a GP. The Practice currently has 3 GP Partners and 5 salaried GPs, and is advertising for one full-time GP plus an Advanced Paramedic.

A GP who is salaried can become a Partner, but everybody needs to get on, of course.

4. Other Business

- a) This evening's planned agenda was somewhat curtailed by our lengthy discussion at the beginning of the meeting, but normal service will be resumed at the next session, which is scheduled for...

NEXT MEETING: Thursday 21st March, 7 pm at School Lane Surgery