

RUSHBOTTOM LANE SURGERY

PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP MEETING

Minutes of Meeting Held on 17th October 2020 (On-line meeting)

Present: Dr Patel, Katherine Smith Practice Manager, Kath Hyslop Office/Admin Manager, Vicki Riley Assist to Practice Manager Cheryl Kirby (Chair), John Hall, Brian Porter, Marie Howard (minute taker).

Apologies: Terry Clarke, Debbie Dennis, June Sales, Rachel Kilsby

	Subject	Action by
1	Welcome, introductions and apologies. The meeting was held virtually via Microsoft Teams as we could not meet in person due to Covid restrictions.	
2	Flu Clinics There has been very positive patient feedback on the efficiency of flu clinics this year which were managed by hourly time slots.	
3	Problem with telephone service cutoffs As reported at the previous PPG meeting patients have reported that sometimes the phone line cuts off when the patient gets to number 1 in the queue. KH reported that IT specialists have looked at the system and the Surgery understood it has been resolved as they had not had recent complaints from patients. CK passed on details of a patient who reported cut offs on 7 th October and will pass the information to KH so she can trace through the system. KH needs patients to report these cutoffs preferably at the time they get through to the Receptionist or use the website contact form she can then trace the call through the system software and report to the phone provider. CK said she would suggest this if she sees further cutoff comments on social media. Local Councilors have requested an update on the phone issue and it was agreed that KH would respond on request.	
4	Lengthy queues to get through by telephone CK reported her concern that patients have reported telephone queues of an hour or more. KS reported that this is due to the number of patients phoning at any one time. At busy times there can be 250 callers trying to get through.	

	<p>September has been an extra busy due to patients have been phoning about flu clinics and there is a catch up from the early months of covid lockdown where patient activity was much lower. Waiting time has also been impacted by a receptionist vacancy but will be back to being fully staffed soon.</p> <p>JH suggested promoting making appointments by Dr Link rather than telephone but the Surgery is hesitant at the moment as the system is not fully integrated with the appointment system and this is a problem across all local GPs who are using Doctor Link. Like the telephone supplier the software supplier is having difficulties meeting needs.</p> <p>JH suggested to promote that patients can get test results online.</p> <p>In line with NHS guidelines the surgery does not allow public to walk in to make an appointment to avoid patients presenting with Covid symptoms and spreading to both patients and staff.</p>	KS
5	<p>Appointments</p> <p>The Surgery is operating at full capacity. All appointments are initially by telephone with the patient offered a face to face appointment later that day if necessary. The use of two appointments has not reduced the total number of appointments available pre Covid. The Surgery said it could usually offer on the day appointments to all patients phoning in with appropriate symptoms.</p> <p>If GP/Nurse recommends a followup appointment this can be set up at the time avoiding the need for the patient to phone in to book.</p> <p>CK expressed concern that patients are still not given a time slot for the telephone appointment and explained that this is getting increasingly difficult now that patients are back to work and kids at school which means that the patient may not be available at the time the GP/Nurse phones. DrP said they try to accommodate specific requests and will phone on both home and mobile numbers and will leave a text to call back if necessary.</p> <p>KS reminded PPG that patients experiencing chest pains or other potential life threatening symptoms should phone 999 or attend A&E rather than phone the surgery. This will avoid unnecessary delay in getting the appropriate diagnosis and treatment. KS to include in the telephone recorded message.</p>	KS

6	<p>Receptionists/ Care Navigators</p> <p>It has been raised that some patients have found Receptionists to be abrupt or rude. DrP said the position of Receptionist/Care Navigators can be very stressful with constant calls from patients some of whom are angry and abusive about the time taken to get through on the phone or that they must have an initial telephone appointment prior to face to face. The Surgery does take steps to correct unacceptable staff behaviour but at the same time wants patients to be respectful.</p> <p>We discussed how to remind patients to be respectful when speaking to Receptionists and KS will consider adding it to the phone queue message.</p>	KS
7	<p>Communication</p> <p>The group discussed how the Surgery could improve its communication with patients with the following result</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the Covid letter on the Surgery website to show the latest way of working. • Continue to put informative posts on Surgery facebook page. The monthly stats are important so patients appreciate Surgery is still working. CK will share the key posts to the Benfleet & Thundersley Community Facebook groups. • Turn off comments on the Surgery Facebook page as this should be informative rather than a place where complaints should be aired. • PPG to share informative communications with KS for possible use on Surgery Facebook. BP has provided an Ambulance Service document describing the difference between colds, flu and covid. • Mass texting to patients of how the Surgery is operating was discounted due to cost. 	
8	<p>AOB</p> <p>MH pointed out that Long Term Condition nurses hadn't seen patients face to face since start of lockdown and she is concerned that this could result in patient needing additional GP care. KS to discuss.</p>	KS
9	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>KS proposed next meeting in early December. VR to organise.</p>	VR