

Patient Forum Meeting
5th June 2018

Attendees: Alan Wright, Patricia Binsted, John Surridge, Joyce Lambert, Roisin Murray, Wallace Murray, Sheila Harris, Susan Falconer, Gill Auld, Joan Harlow, Mary Venables, Bill Venables, William Graham, Maureen Graham, Edward Goldring, Linda Chapman, Sally Parsons, Stephen Parsons, Iris Connaughton, Cynthia Rosser, Hugh Axton, John Clapson, Christine Brownridge, Marion Vause, David Burton & Moyra Carey

Apologies: Steve Mahoney, Edwina Russell & Judy Hardy

1. Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting

At the last meeting we discussed the action plan following the results of patient questionnaire. It was suggested that we used our text messaging service to inform patients about general surgery matters e.g. notifying patients of half day closings, but we decided to wait until the guidance about the new data protection legislation was more thorough. Becky explained that since the last meeting both Lesley and herself had attended courses on the new GDPR legislation. Becky explained that we can use our text messaging software for this purpose. The lawful basis for us doing so is “legitimate interest” which means that by being a patient at the surgery, you may wish to know about the information which will be sent. Becky did add that whilst we can expand the use of the text messaging service and send messages to all existing text message recipients, we are now required to obtain consent for the service from new patients. Our new patient pack has been amended to ask patients to opt in to this service. In addition the Practice is now obligated to be transparent with how patients can opt out of the service. We will start sending relevant group messages to patients straight away.

The second part of the action plan focused on publicising our Paramedic Practitioner more. Since the last meeting we have started to publicise her on our waiting room Powerpoint and there was also a section about allied health professionals in our recent newsletter. It was also agreed that a leaflet would be created to hand out to patients and this is currently being produced.

2. Feedback from members of the Deal Heath Patient Forum

Cynthia spoke to the group about her recent meeting. She explained that the group has a new chair, Paul Curd, from the Cedars Surgery. At the meeting they discussed how many should attend from each surgery and it was decided that two people should attend. Cynthia informed the group that they are currently interviewing for a new lay member of the group and she will have more details about this post at the next meeting.

The group had previously discussed issues such as lost x-rays and it has been reported that this has now improved.

The group discussed hospital discharges in the early hours of the morning and the difficulties with transport when being discharged at this time.

The group also discussed the number of new houses that are being erected within Deal and whether the local health service can cope with the additional patients that this will generate.

As part of the Deal Health Forum, Cynthia had recently attended a meeting on Stroke Services. She said that there are currently plans to close stroke units within the local area and instead for there to be one central unit, most likely at William Harvey Hospital. Cynthia explained that she raised how difficult it would be for patients in Deal and the rural villages to access William Harvey via public transport, but at the moment this issue is only in the discussion stages and no final plans have been made. One of the group explained that in addition to public transport, patients do have the option of using the volunteer car service to travel to hospital appointments. The drivers need a certain amount of notice, and therefore it is unlikely that they will be able to assist when a patient is discharged in the early hours of the morning, but they can assist with other booked appointments.

At the meeting the group had had a request to ask patients to return crutches to Deal Hospital.

Lesley informed the group that Brenda Donald has made the decision to step down from the Deal Health Forum Group. Lesley thanked Brenda for attending the group on behalf of the Patient Forum Group and explained that Iris Connaughton has agreed to take her place within the group. Iris volunteers weekly in the waiting room at the Practice and therefore it was thought that she is the appropriate person to join this group.

3. Speaker – Sue Baldwin from Channel Health Alliance providers of the new town hub service

Sue Baldwin the Chief Officer for Channel Health Alliance (CHA) came to speak to the group about the Deal Hub. She explained that CHA is a company of which all, but one, of the Practices in South Kent Coast are share holders. The company has been in operation for over one year and has recently appointed a management team and a medical director. One of the aims of CHA is to work with Practices to build resilience in order to cope with the current pressures facing the NHS. Through funding from the NHS Forward View, CHA has introduced Hubs in the locality to provide additional capacity to General Practices. South Kent Coast audited Practices and it was shown that minor illness was the biggest pressure facing the NHS and relieving GPs from some of this work would allow GPs to focus on chronic care. The Hubs have currently been commissioned for one year and Sue explained that Practices were very much involved in developing the Hubs and their commitment is vital in their success.

Sue told the group that are currently Hubs in Deal, Dover, Folkestone, Hythe and Romney Marsh. She added that the Hub in Deal has only been running since 30th April and was one of the last ones to go live.

The Deal Hub currently has GPs, Nurses and Physiotherapists. The aim is that a lot of patients who present with back pain, knee pain or musculoskeletal problems will be able to go straight to see a Physiotherapist at the Hub. Sue told the group that they plan to have nine nurses working at the Hub. They currently have two clinical leads and seven nurses who are in training and starting to see patients. She explained that some of the nurses are prescribers and those who are not may be able to issue certain medications using Patient General Directives (PGDs). It is hoped that in the future the Physiotherapists will also be able to prescribe pain relief to patients using PGDs too.

The Deal Hub is available Monday to Friday from 8am – 8pm and the Hub can only be accessed via the Practice. In order to be safe it is vital that only appropriate patients are referred to the Hub. At the moment the clinicians in the Hub cannot requests tests, but this is something that CHA are currently in discussions with the CCG about. Whilst the Hub in Deal only has appointments Monday to Friday, the Hub in Dover offers weekend appointments, which can be booked by the Practice 48 hours before. Each surgery has an allocation of appointments at the Hubs each day and once these have been used, Practices have to deal with additional requests in-house.

Recruiting GPs to work in the Hub has been an issue, but it is getting better. They are beginning to have more GPs interested in working there, and using the GP Retention Fund Investment, CHA are trying to encourage GPs to work in the locality by creating a GP Portfolio and career pathway to make it more appealing.

Sue told the group that patient engagement is key is developing the Hubs and CHA would be extremely keen to meet with patients and particularly with patient forum groups. Sue then asked the group if they have any questions about the Hub;

How does the Practice decide who should be seen at the Hub?

Receptionists received some training called “active signposting” quite a while ago, which introduced them to the concept of triaging and signposting patients to the most appropriate provider of medical care. At the time this training was undertaken, the Hubs were very much in the early stages of development and it was not completely clear how much training receptionists would need. Now that the Hubs are more established, CHA are coming into Practices and building on the skills learnt at the active signposting training to ensure that receptionists are trained to an adequate level to ensure that the right patients are seen at the Hub and get the appropriate care.

Can you book online?

No, not at the moment. As the Hub cannot initiate investigations it is vital that the right people are sent to the Hub and therefore patients need to be referred through their surgery by a receptionist.

How do you book appointment on Saturdays and Sundays?

Again, appointments for Saturday and Sundays can only be booked via the Practice and are only available at Dover and Folkestone. Sue said that Saturdays tend to be quite busy at the Hub as patients phone on a Friday for an appointment the next day, but Sunday tends to be quieter as patients are not keen to wait two days for an appointment and CHA are looking into this.

Do you we lose money for patients going to the Hub?

One of the group asked whether we would lose money from patients being seen at the Hub, like we did when patients had their 'flu jabs at the pharmacy. No, money from the NHS Forward View is funding the Hubs and Practices do not get paid per appointment with a GP but rather on a capitation basis, which means that we get a monthly income based on the number of patients on our list.

Influenza vaccinations are what is known as an enhanced service, one which we choose to provide, and for this we are paid on an encounter basis, which is why we lost money for patients going to the pharmacy rather than the Practice.

Does Out of Hours still operate at the weekends?

Yes, Out of Hours still runs alongside the Hubs and can be accessed via 111. The Hubs and Out of Hours are however two separate services and 111 currently cannot book patients into the Hubs. The Hubs are a planned service, not an Out of Hours Service. The Hubs are configured in a way that a patient can consent to the Clinician at the Hub having access to their entire medical record. This is currently not possible with 111 and the Out of Hours Service and therefore insurance for these services is far more costly than within the Hub.

If you see a Physiotherapist at the Hub will they then be responsible for all of your treatment?

No, the Hub is not a follow up service so if you have a physiotherapy appointment at the Hub, it will just be to assess you and then you will be transferred to another Physiotherapist for the rest of your treatment.

Who makes the decision as to whether a patient can be seen at the Hub?

The receptionist makes this decision. They have received training and also have a set of questions to ask patients to ascertain whether or not the Hub is suitable for that patient.

Sue emphasised to the group that it is very much early days for Deal Hub and she encouraged the group to use it, if it is appropriate for them. It has only been open since 30th April and there have been teething problems, particularly with IT. She reiterated that they are keen for patient feedback on the service and are working closely with the CCG to develop the service into that which patients want to see.

4. This year's patient survey

Becky explained that a copy of the proposed questionnaire will be included with the minutes of the meeting. She asked the group to have a look at the questionnaire and feedback any suggestions to Lesley or her. The proposed questionnaire at the moment is the same as last year. Becky told the group that as part of last year's action plan included promoting our allied health professionals, it would be useful to keep in the questions which relate to this group to see if there has been any improvements.

Becky asked the group if any many of the group would be willing to hand out some of the questionnaires in the waiting room, as this always leads to a much greater response and therefore results which are more reflective of the practice population. She asked for members of the group to contact her directly with any availability they may have to assist with this. The two week period that we are planning to hand out the questionnaires is 13th – 24th August.

Becky added that have made this slightly later than in previous years as we want to ensure that last year's action plan is fully implemented before we re-audit.

5. Any other business

i) GDPR

Becky explained that due to the new GDPR regulations, we require all members of the group to complete a form to state that they still wish to part of the group and what their preferred method of contact is.

ii) Is the Paramedic Practitioners appointments available online?

Lesley thinks that they are, but she will check and feed back to the group on this.

iii) Easy Read

One of the group asked whether the Practice offers literature to patients with Learning Difficulties in Easy Read format. Lesley told the group that this not something that we are aware of but we will look into it. The Practice has a Learning Disability Nurse who will accompany and prepare patients for appointments, but we have not been offered any assistance with literature to patients.

iv) Noticeboards

One of the group asked why we have a sign on the noticeboard in the waiting room inviting patients to have a pneumococcal vaccination when the vaccine is not currently available. Lesley explained that although the vaccine is currently unavailable, we still have a duty to inform patients that this is a vaccination that they should receive. Unfortunately it is out of our control when the vaccine is out of stock and we are not informed how long it is likely to be out of stock, therefore we make a practice decision to keep promoting this vaccination so that patients are aware to book in when they can.

v) Shingles

It was asked whether not we are still offering Shingles Vaccinations. We are still offering vaccinations, but only certain age groups between 70 and 79 years are eligible. Lesley encouraged patients to ring the receptionists who have full details of who is eligible for this vaccination this year.

Date for next meeting: 16th October 2018