

Minutes from the Meadowside Patient Group Meeting 6th December, 2016

Practice attendees: Chris White, Catherine Bradley, Charlie Galley
MPG attendees: 3 MPG members
Apologies: 1 MPG member

Chris opened the meeting at 5.30pm by discussing an article that had been in the local paper about patient led prescribing. This is an initiative being driven by the Medicine Management Team for East Cheshire, Chris briefly discussed the background to the decision. The concept was trialled approximately 18 months ago in Luton where patients ordered their own medication through the GP surgery rather than it being delegated to the pharmacies on their behalf. This led to savings of approximately one million pounds over the year.

Our patients will be sent a letter explaining the changes and the different ways they can order their medication. Patients will still be able to order medication online as patient access is a nationwide scheme, not just exclusive to the surgery. The new way of prescription ordering will go live in the New Year and patients will have to order online or bring their request into the surgery, but once ordered the medication can still be sent to the patients nominated chemist. One member did bring an article in which had been in the national press about medication waste and the cost to the NHS which we discussed.

Chris moved on to the first item on the agenda, the suggestion box. We gave the group options of different lockable boxes. It was agreed that we would purchase a metal lockable post-box using the book fund monies and we would get this in place as soon as possible. One of the Meadowside patient group members will be taking responsibility for the suggestion box on an adhoc basis.

We discussed the Meadowside Patient Group's noticeboard in reception, there is now a bigger noticeboard for the group to use for advertising what they do for the surgery and it was agreed that the suggestion box would be advertised on there. The group enquired if it would be possible for the suggestion box to be advertised on the electronic board in reception it was agreed that he would put it on there for a short time.

It was asked if the group could send out information to patients via email but it was thought that this would not work as we don't use patient's emails for this purpose and also it would be too difficult to manage as we have nearly 8000 patients.

One of our members touched on an item previously discussed which was for a short questionnaire to be given to patients after their appointment to fill in and put in the suggestion box to gauge some understanding of what patients would like to see in the surgery. It was agreed that a draft questionnaire would be drawn up for the next meeting.

Chris briefly touched on Meadowside as a surgery and the building's uses and advised that the surgery is looking at ways to improve services i.e making more room to be able to provide additional services. The dimensions of the Meadowside property might limit what the surgery can need to offer so various options are being considered. Chris asked for input from the group.

Chris informed the group about the appointments system and the changes that will be trialled in the New Year. The fundamental change is the removal of 'telephone triage' allowing more flexibility for patients to be seen on the day. Receptionists will be in a position to arrange on the day appointments if it is felt they need to be seen or dealt with over the telephone. The benefits we hope to see from the trial is that of more appointments with Doctors and nurses becoming available. It is a trial so Chris advised that patients will have to bear with us as amendments may need to be made along the way but explained it needs to be tried.

Chris touched on the NHS choices website with the members and the negative comments the surgery had been receiving. Copies of the comments from the website were distributed to the attendees. The group were unaware of comments being posted and that there was a facility. They all said that as a surgery they were really happy with the service they have always received. One member questioned if Chris had ever replied to the comments and he informed the group that he had not, it was suggested it may be worth replying so that patients can see that their comments are being read and that the practice are taking note.

In 'other business' it was asked why the self check in was out of order in reception Chris explained that the system needed upgrading at a cost of c. £400 and the rent per annum was c. £400. Because of this it was decided that the surgery would try without the machine. The members understood and agreed that at present it wasn't having an effect on reception waiting times. The group was informed that, where possible the desk is manned by 2 members of staff to keep waiting times to a minimum.

The group asked if there could be any flexibility in the 2 week rule for booking Doctor's appointments in advance. Chris informed the group that if we increased to 3 weeks or longer we tend to find we get more patients not attending appointments. So this will be staying as it is. It was asked from this do we send out letters to patients who continuously do not attend appointments. It is something that we used to do but at present don't. Chris said he would look in to this and discuss with the partners whether to re – introduce it.

Chris informed the group that a new sign has been put up at the end of the building now to make it clearer to the public that we are a medical centre.

The meeting closed at 7pm.