

Romney House Surgery Patient Participation Group

...to support the practice to provide safe, high quality healthcare for all

Chair's Report - 2015-2016

This year has been a year of change for the PPG, the practice and the wider NHS.

We have had four new members on the steering committee, myself, Peter Robinson and briefly Keith Skinner, as well as Bridget Wareham who has been doing a great job taking the minutes. Two people have resigned, Alison Hesketh and Pauline Foster, although Pauline has agreed to continue to help with surveys. I would like to thank both Pauline and Alison for all the work they have done for the PPG over the last few years. We are also hoping to welcome new members to the committee at the AGM.

There has also been changes within the practice. We have seen the retirement of Dr Chris Woods, who will be much missed. We have been lucky in this current climate with the shortage of GPs, to be able to welcome Dr Simon Truckle.

This current team of health professionals should be able to sustain the practice in the years to come as we see the increase in both the population of Tetbury and the increase use of the surgery.

To support the practice, especially in this time of change, the PPG meet every month, and we now have both the practice manager and a GP at every meeting. The Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have regular network meetings for PPG Chairs, as well as six monthly meetings with our local cluster group. PPG groups are networking across the country too because now that every surgery has to have one, there are a lot more of us. Additionally, RHSPPG is now affiliated to the National Association for Patient Participation.

We supported the practice's Winter Illness evening, and held a First Aid session with the Red Cross and spent some time looking at the waiting room from the point of view of someone new to the practice as well as disabled patients which resulted in some changes being made.

Communication is very important, and to this end we have set up a blog in order to share more information with the patients. We have also set up a Virtual PPG and a twitter account, as well as continuing with the monthly articles in The Tetbury Advertiser.

The articles on the blog have included detailed information on what happens when you make an appointment, how the dispensary works, and other information that is useful to the patients. Navigating through the NHS can be confusing and hopefully the blog posts will help patients get a clearer idea of how things work.

The biggest change will be the development of the Virtual PPG. Most practices now have one as it is a way of contacting as many patients as possible. It has taken nearly a year, from finding the 'read code' for the PPG to writing a new Constitution, but we are there at last.

One thing we haven't done this year is a stand-alone survey. There are several surveys being regularly done now, in particular the GP online survey and the Friends and Family Test. Rather than spend time collecting more data, we felt we could support the practice better by helping with the Friends and Family Test. We will be looking at comments monthly now, rather than once every two years, so we will be able to make real time changes. Additionally, we will be adding a question set by the PPG which will change every few months, so it is important that patients continue to fill out the Friends and Family Test cards. So far we have reorganised the leaflets to make them more accessible, and added some new toys and magazines to the waiting room. The feedback is also informing us on what to put on the blog. Thankfully the majority of the feedback is positive.

Which brings me to the changes in the NHS. It is no secret that investment in the NHS has gone down in real terms, and yet more people are demanding appointments, especially in primary care. Savings can be made but the low hanging fruit has already been harvested, so instead of doing things the same only cheaper, it is time to do things differently. That is why the PPG is working alongside the practice to make sure that the patient voice is not lost during this difficult time of change.

In order to meet this increased need for appointments we now have Choice + where people wanting a same day appointment can go to the Choice + clinic in Cirencester. We have a nursing team with additional skills who will be able to see more patients allowing the GPs to spend more time seeing patients with chronic or complicated conditions. We also have a Social Prescriber which is a new role created to meet the non-medical needs of patients. The PPG will be going out into the community to explain the new model of care at Romney House Surgery in the coming year, and reporting back to the surgery when things go well, and where there can be improvements.

Finally, the best news of the year was our Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection. Three members of the PPG were interviewed by the inspectors, who spent the day at the surgery looking at everything from how drugs were stored to what was on the notice boards, as well as talking to patients. We are pleased to say that we received 'good' on each of the 30 categories assessed.

This being my first year, not only in the chair but also with the PPG, has meant a steep learning curve for me. I would like to thank the committee for their support and patience during this time as well as the support I have received from the practice manager, the GPs, the nurses, the reception team, the dispensary, and the rest of the staff.

Next year will be another challenging year; we will no doubt have more changes within the NHS, both at county level with the CCG, and at practice level. We will be working towards a solution for the current premises problem, helping more patients access their medical records online including booking appointments online, and making sure that the patients are at the centre of all we do here at Romney House Surgery.

Let's build on the 'good' we received from the CQC, and make this practice the best.

