

**MINUTES OF PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP MEETING
AT EASTFIELD HOUSE SURGERY
Tuesday 20th February 2024 at 6.30 pm**

Present: Mark Galliver, GP Partner
Liz Pope, Practice Manager
Tania Coker-Davies, Operations Manager
Tania Hart, Reception Manager
Kathy Sandell, Social Prescriber
20 x patients attended

1. Welcome & Introductions

Liz Pope thanked everyone for coming, it was lovely to see some familiar faces and new ones too.

2. Staff Update

Sadly, our new Practice Nurse who specialised in Diabetes has resigned due to illness, after a short period of employment. Judith, our Practice Matron who also specialises in Diabetes, will be looking after our diabetic patient annual reviews. We continue to advertise for a new Diabetes Practice Nurse.

We are also advertising for a new member to our Reception Team.

3. New Premises

The planning application for the new premises has been submitted to West Berkshire Planning. Applications usually take up to 12 weeks before a decision is made. However, West Berkshire Planning are notoriously slow when dealing with applications and we have been told that it could be up to 6 months before a planning decision is made.

When planning has been approved, Eastfield House will submit a Business Case to our Integrated Care Board (ICB) for funding of rent. Our ICB have informed us that we will be competing for funding with other surgeries in Berkshire, Oxford and Buckinghamshire, but we are seen as a priority. Greenham Trust have been very supportive, reiterating that they are not in the market to make profit like commercial companies, they are a charity who reinvest any profits made, back into the community.

Greenham Trust will be the developer of the new premises. If the Business Case is approved, Greenham Trust anticipate 18 months to construct the new premises.

Patients can go online to West Berkshire Planning to review the planning application and have an opportunity to comment. The planning application number is to be confirmed.

In addition, we are holding a patient engagement event, which at the time of the PPG meeting, was scheduled for Wednesday 13th March at St John's Church Hall from 4pm-7pm. However, this is being rescheduled to the end of March. Date to be confirmed.

Our architects, Osmond Tricks will display plans and drawings for the new premises at the Engagement Meeting, and will be available to answer any questions about the proposed development. We are grateful to all patients who will be able to provide feedback about the plans and development. After the Engagement Event, the plans and drawings will come into the surgery to display in our waiting room with feedback forms available.

4. CCTV

CCTV is being installed in our existing premises this week. We have taken this decision to show our commitment to the safety of our staff, patients and visitors, protecting them from abuse, theft, vandalism or damage to the premises. The cameras will be in operation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The system will not be monitored but may be viewed in the case of an incident occurring, requiring such a viewing. Access to the system is restricted to a limited number of staff. Patients can view our Privacy Policy on our website.

5. Appointment System – Anima

From Eastfield House perspective the Anima GP appointment system is working well. All requests are being triaged by a GP and patients are being seen by the right clinician within the appropriate timeframe. GPs are seeing their own patients which aids with continuity of care. We are continually discussing the appointment system in practice and make positive changes where necessary. Patients can also feedback directly through their account (settings: feedback).

The most common feedback from patients is about the time it takes to complete some of the forms on Anima, or about finding the most appropriate form. We are in touch with the developers at Anima with a view to finessing the form filling process.

We have 9500 out of 15300 patients now registered with an Anima account. Approximately 150 patients are registering each week. There will be cohorts of patients who may not register as they do not use the GP services (lucky fit and well people!).

In addition, patients have said they are frustrated at not being able to send a quick message to their GP. To address this patients are able to send a message to their GP via the 'envelope' icon on our website. This facility is open during the opening hours of the surgery.

6. NHS App / Anima/ IT Support – Rav Gopal, Digital Services Officer - Newbury Library

Rav Gopal, a volunteer at Newbury library, is offering support to our patients, with installing and navigating the NHS App for our patients. Posters are displayed in the surgery with about his service and he can be contacted via email rav.gopal@westberks.gov.uk to arrange a 30 to 60 minute 1:1 appointment.

In addition, our Social Prescriber, Kathy Sandell is currently in negotiation with a volunteer via Newbury Volunteer Centre, to offer patients group training in the use of Anima. We anticipate our first session to be held on a Saturday morning, date to be advised. More details will be displayed in our reception area and shared on our social media soon.

7. West Berkshire Patient Panel Meetings

The Patient Panel is a group acting as a communication system between the Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group, together with member groups and the Patient Information Point.

The Panel liaises with West Berkshire GP PPG's representatives who feedback from their practices. Each of the practices are represented on the Patient Panel, enabling their views to be communicated to others and to the CCG. We need two volunteers from our Patient Panel to attend the meetings and provide them with feedback from Eastfield.

Gill T and Lorraine C are currently our representatives for the West Berks Patient Panel, and Christopher S would also like to join the group. We will send details of the PPG, Chair Adrian Barker to Christopher.

8. Patient Questions & Suggestions

A PPG member was concerned about Eastfield House moving premises to the new site by the college as this site is further away from the town centre and it will be more challenging for patients to reach the surgery.

Liz explained that we have looked at 17 different sites over the last 5 years, and have not been able to find anything more suitable than the site South of Newbury College. Liz reassured the meeting that there will be transport links to the new site. Infrastructure for transportation is already in place as there are free buses from town to the college.

Kathy S also explained to the concerned patients that they can reach out to Newbury Volunteer driver scheme, once registered they can help with transportation to health appointments especially for those concerned about access to a new site of the surgery. There are leaflets available in the surgery for more information.

Patients can also apply for Attendance allowance, either online or with the help of citizens advice in Newbury. If eligible this can help towards some transport costs.

Please can you ensure that there is a new bus stop directly outside the new surgery?

Liz said that this would be taken into consideration as part of the development. She will feed this information back to our Architect, Osmond Tricks.

Why did we choose Anima for our triaging system?

NHS England are the driving force for improvements in digital technology and patient access to GP Surgeries. We looked at a variety of models available on the market and felt that Anima would best meet the needs of our patients and practice.

Are there any other local practices using Anima?

Yes. Budwood Surgery in Thatcham. Other local GP surgeries are using different models.

What about digital divide?

The digital divide is an uncertain line. There are many people of all ages who might struggle with technology and it is not limited to a certain age group. We provide assistance to patients with submitting anima requests or to help with the setting up and use of the program.

What kind of assistance is available?

Receptionists can always assist to put requests through for anyone who feels, for whatever reason, that they are unable to do so themselves. There are benefits to using the system where access to the technology exists: - earlier access in the morning, no need to discuss problem with the Reception Team and GP can contact the patient directly through Anima if they need clarification or further information on any aspect of their request. If a routine invitation is sent to an account holder, they can choose the time, date, and format of the appointment within the offered date range.

The forms are too lengthy and the system times out

A few PPG members commented on how long it takes to complete a request via Anima, difficulty finding the right form and being timed out.

TH explained that we are working with Anima's development team and sending any comments from patients to them. Patients are able to send comments to Anima directly using the 'Help' facility on the Anima desktop.

I have waited a long time in the phone queue to get through the surgery

Tania H advised that with our new telephone system, it was no longer necessary to wait in a queue. When the call queue reaches four callers in the queue, there is an option to press number one, and enter the automatic call-back system, without losing your place in the queue. This is working very well for patients who cannot wait and who have limited credit on their phone.

The number of callers to the surgery has reduced but unfortunately, the length of the call times has increased for those patients who need help setting up their Anima account for the first time, or require a Receptionist to submit a request via Anima on their behalf for various reasons.

Is there step by step instructions on how to register and submit an Anima request?

Tania H explained that there are resources on our website with this information. In addition our Reception Team are available to set up patients with their Anima accounts help with queries. Tania H will look into some paper resources to help patients with the step by step process.

We can also send out text messages to patients with links to the Animahealth website where there are user videos and help.

Capacity terminology, Criticism of Receptionist handling of patient calls

The word capacity was introduced long before the introduction of Anima and refers to our inability to accommodate any further appointments. We are unable to simply add on extra appointments as the GPs are already working long session and has the potential to become unsafe. Once we reach this point, patients are signposted to 111 if they feel their problem is medically urgent. 111 will triage and direct the patient to the most appropriate healthcare provider.

How can we make sure that the poorly 'vulnerable' patients, who feel to unwell or who cannot use Anima to request an appointment, get seen?

Liz reiterated that patients are still able to contact us by phone, just the same way as they did previously. Our reception team submit requests to the triaging GP on the patient's behalf. In addition, our most vulnerable group of patients have a designated Care Coordinator who review patients records on a regular basis. We also have a home visiting service for patients who are unable to get to the surgery.

We have clear criteria for patients who are vulnerable and are aware that they may need additional assistance with accessing their healthcare. These patients are identified in their record. For others who may need assistance but have not been identified, we continue to offer assistance to submit appointment requests via Reception.

Why can't patients use the Anima system, or send the GP a message when the surgery is closed?

Liz explained that we are not a 24 hour service. When the surgery is closed patients should contact NHS111 who allocate appointments via WestCall at West Berkshire Hospital. In the past we had trialled leaving our messaging service open 24 hours a day, however there were too many messages to deal with when the staff started work in the morning which highlighted a safety risk in not be able to identify any urgent requests in a timely manner.

Outside of surgery hours, other healthcare providers are available to meet urgent healthcare needs. One member of the group indicated that it is possible to start a request while the system is open and save it to continue at a later date/time.

Pharmacy First

The group was informed of this new programme whereby, to alleviate pressure on GP surgeries, pharmacies would now be able to examine and treat (prescribe abx where appropriate) a specific range of minor illnesses. This could be via triage of Anima requests or if a patient presents with one of the conditions outside of Anima open hours. The patient would be directly referred to the pharmacy of their choice for an appointment there. The surgery would also receive feedback from the pharmacy. The option also exists for patients to directly approach pharmacies in this regard. This is an extension of the previous pharmacy referral service for minor conditions with the added benefit of ability to prescribe appropriate treatment.

Eastfield House FaceBook

We were asked if we have a Facebook page which we do but it is not available for patients to comment upon, merely for informing subscribers of anything we feel patients need to be made aware of.

Date of Next Meeting Tuesday 21st of May 2024 at 6.30 pm.