

Aire Valley Surgery's Patient Participation Group

Wednesday 28th September 2022

Aire Valley Surgery – Yeadon site

Notes

From the practice: Introduction to the following staff

Victoria Johnson (Chair) - Practice Manager (VJ)

Helen Colligan (Minutes) – Secretary / PA To Senior Management Team

Simon King – Advanced Nurse Practitioner (SK)

Frank (FJ)

Rita (RS)

Laraine R

Nicola B

Julia B¹

Julie B²

1. Welcome

From the practice: Introduction to the following staff

Mrs Victoria Johnson (Chair) - Practice Manager (VJ)

Helen Colligan (Minutes) – Secretary / PA To Senior Management Team

Simon King – Advanced Nurse Practitioner

Welcome to patient representatives:

Frank, Rita, Laraine, Nicola, Julia, Julie

Victoria Johnson – Practice Manager welcomed everyone to the PPG meeting which is being held at Yeadon today.

Everyone in the group introduced themselves.

Victoria explained that there is now an option available to alternate the PPG meetings between Yeadon and Rawdon because the cleaner's timetable has changed– the group was agreeable to this swapping every other meeting.

2. Agenda

Victoria went through the agenda for today's PPG meeting.

The group will firstly discuss the appointment system and as part of this, to share the results of a recent patient survey with the group and obtain feedback on this.

3. Telephone welcome message and voicemail for covid/flu calls

Before starting Victoria wanted to inform the group that the Practice's welcome message /voicemail has now changed. It was also mentioned that there was a voicemail/message option (option 3) for anything to do with covid/flu so that the main lines and reception staff were protected for poorly patients to get through.

The welcome telephone message encourages patients to complete the health information forms online for themselves. This is because it is more time effective and frees up the lines for those who need to speak to someone.

The computer software that the practice uses is called KLINIK and needs a form filling out to give details of what symptoms the patient is having. Patients can still speak to a receptionist on the telephone or visit the Practice in person to ask for an appointment, however the same questions need to be asked because ALL requests are put in front of the clinical team immediately, so that they can decide how urgently each patient needs an appointment.

FJ suggested that when completing the form on the phone or face to face it would be useful if the receptionist could read back the form they have completed, as FJ has noticed some discrepancies.

Action: This would be fed back to the reception team, providing it didn't have too great an impact on the call length time.

RS mentioned that on the Klinik form it can be difficult to pinpoint on the image of the body exactly where the ailment is. Also, that the form is very long winded. Victoria clarified that there are other software providers that do have fewer questions, and that this feedback would be taken on board as we may be able to find a more simple version moving forward.

Simon King – Advanced Nurse Practitioner then explained to the group what happens when the form is received at the Practice. He explained how these forms are viewed by a GP or an Advanced Nurse Practitioner or a Physicians Associate. All forms are triaged, and appointments are allocated on the basis of how urgently they need an appointment. This system ensures that the most poorly patients are prioritised

RS expressed a concern where by a patient who is not very confident using the internet may not complete the form completely which may result in the patient being triaged incorrectly. Simon clarified that ALL requests are seen by one of the urgent clinical team within not very long of them arriving. If, however the system identifies from responses that a patient is likely to need seeing urgently, it just puts them to the top of the list. The whole list is still reviewed though and fairly quickly even for the non-urgent ones, and there is not opportunity for anyone to be missed.

Victoria explained that when a patient is triaged as “routine”, a text message is sent to the patient informing them of this and that it may be a few weeks before their appointment. It also says in this text message that should the patient have any further information about their ailment, they should contact the Practice by telephone in which case the patient can be re-triaged if they feel it is more urgent if there is anything they forgot to add. Patients should only do so where they feel that they haven’t given all the information, because we don’t offer a second option if they have already been triaged, but only if they haven’t given all the information. This may include such as explaining that they’re really struggling to move today and are now off work, rather than saying in an original that they have just had a back ache for 6 months.

Simon did express the importance of patients completing their Klinik forms and putting in as much information as possible as this does help the triaging process. It was agreed that there are a lot of questions to answer, and many of the questions can’t be changed. The practice would also prefer to ask the patient ‘who’ they want to see, but this isn’t currently possible

JB² expressed a concern whereby patients have to input their NHS number to be able to complete the form. VJ wasn’t aware of this problem and thanked HB for letting her know about this.

Action: VJ to report this technical problem back to the software providers as that shouldn’t happen.

FJ suggested that it may be a good idea to be able to submit pictures on the Klinik system. VJ explained that unfortunately this is not an option due to the current software that is used, and there are also possible risks in terms of safeguarding if patients send intimate pictures before having been asked to do so. It is something we'd like to explore further, and the practice is considering whether any other software provider might be more helpful.

Action: explore options for allowing patients to send photos with their first message - VJ

4. Patient Survey

Victoria shared the results of a recent patient survey to the group. The patient survey is a national survey undertaken randomly by the NHS, and in this particular case it was sent out to 291 patients, these results are based on responses from 113 patients, and this was in January 2022.

This summary document is attached

VJ went through each of the questions from the survey results which related to accessing the practice. Victoria asked for feedback from the patients on each subject and whether they felt it was a correct response and what their experienced were.

Experience of booking an appointment

- This depends on the day to day.
- Sometimes it can be very easy and sometimes it feels like you have to climb a mountain in order to book an appointment with the Practice.
- Having to complete a Klinik form is the last thing you want to be doing when you are feeling poorly.

Experience of ringing the Practice

- Very difficult.
- Don't ring in the morning unless you are absolutely desperate to be seen that day.
- Very long waiting times for someone to answer the phone.

VJ said that this is why the Practice is openly encouraging patients to use the online services that are available as this is much more time effective. In the amount of time that a patient has been waiting on the phone lines, they could have completed the Klinik form, this could have been submitted and triaged.

Helpfulness of Receptionists

- There has been lots of positive feedback about the new Receptionists. VJ explained the process involved in how Receptionists are trained. It can vary so much depending on the day.
- Reception staff sometimes be considered rude, in particular at the front desk. There is no “good morning, how can I help you”, it’s more a sigh and “yes”.
- VJ asked whether the patients felt it would be a good idea to do random surveys on receptionists.
- This was well received by the group, they collectively said this would be a good idea and would be happy to be asked.

JB² expressed a concern about the text messages that are received by the Practice.

VJ explained that this system is called MJOG and sends out automatic text messages to patients to remind them of their appointments. There has been a problem with it recently during covid as patients were arriving for an appointment that was a telephone call, because of having received a text.

JB² showed VJ a recent text message that she had received, there were no appointment details in the message, one message was completely blank. It was also noted that texts are not addressed to the appointment holder. This can lead to confusion when a patient has multiple appointments or if a patient is a carer for others, the message doesn’t detail which patient the appointment is relating to.

Action: VJ thanked the group for making her aware of this problem, she is going to turn MJOG off until these problems are solved.

Choice of appointments

Some patients felt that patients do not get a choice of appointments; and this was agreed as an unfortunate flaw of the computer system that doesn’t have this as a question of ‘who is your preferred GP’?. Patients are simply sent a text message with the appointment details on it because of the way the current system works. This is not always helpful for all patients because they may not be available for this appointment if they have gone to work or were not expecting their appointment to be next week. There is currently no option to reply to the message requesting an alternative date. The patient then has to ring the Practice to re-schedule.

JB¹ told the group that she received an appointment for a blood test at the weekend but hadn't expected one on a Sunday.

VJ explained to the group about weekend appointments that are available and they're currently through Park Road Surgery – GP, Physio Nurses and HCAs can be seen there and it's to offer greater access to anyone who needs to be seen outside of usual office hours.

The group were not aware of this and so suggested that this information is shared to all patients.

Action VJ to review what communications can be sent out to patients to make them aware of evening and weekend appointment availability.

5. Waiting Times on the Phone

There has been concern expressed at previous PPG meetings about the time patients have to wait for the telephone to be answered for what one patient felt was about an hour.

VJ has obtained some data from the practice phone system, to show the average times that patients have waited. VJ shared this data with the team and talked through this.

In a random week in April, on average calls are answered after between 3.43-6.27 minutes.

The longest caller was waiting 35 minutes on the random week in April that was highlighted.

In a random week in August, on average calls were answered after between 2.26-3.49 minutes per patient and the longest wait was 23 minutes

6. Test Results

VJ explained to the group that clinicians at the Practice don't just triage Klinik forms for appointments. Appointment requests also come from the GPs who have reviewed the patient record following things like test results coming back to the practice or letters received from hospital.

The GPs and ANPs look at loads of test results that are received and contact patients where follow up appointments are required.

JB¹ said that she usually just looks on her online account for her test results as it's already on there.

JB² expressed concern about the wording of test results. She recently received a test result which said, “abnormal as expected”. This caused her a lot of anxiety. JB² feels that the wording of test results needs to be reviewed or better advertised to patients, so that it is clearer as to what that means, and not all reception staff are clear on how to explain it, it was felt.

Victoria clarified that in cases like this, this is usually as the GP has already discussed the likely result and may have even arranged a referral already or a prescription already.

JB² did say she likes the links that are available to patients using the NHS app, which explains what the tests results mean, but not all members of the PPG / patients were accessing that.

Victoria agreed that this would be a very good topic to explore further with the PPG at the next meeting and so it was concluded that further examples would be discussed at the next meeting, explanations and suggestions for what patients might like to see changed, if at all possible.

Action: Next agenda to focus on test results

7. Any other business

- The Practice are welcoming back four GP`s (Dr Fox-Male, Dr Ridgeon, Dr Naidoo and Dr Sharpe) from maternity leave.
- VJ told the group that Dr Clegg has now left the Practice.
- The Practice are vaccinating as many patients as possible for flu and covid over the next few months, so it`s a busy time.
- VJ explained to the group that the Practice can only order a certain number of covid vaccinations at a time, and the orders are often not confirmed until a week or so before which makes it difficult to invite everyone in as early as we would like. The practice is currently vaccinating patients per age group (i.e., 80 years and above, then 70 years etc).
- Flu vaccinations are available for patients as well, and there are plenty of those. Patients can have their flu vaccine now.

Next PPG meeting will be in November, invitations to follow.