

Thaxted Surgery – Patient Participation Group

Minutes of meeting 16 September 2016

Attendees and apologies. Meeting chaired by practice manager, Sara Carruthers. 19 patients attended. A further 15 sent apologies but expressed an interest in attending future meetings. Details available on request, but not published.

Introduction and Patient Participation Group Revitalisation

This was the first meeting of a revitalised patient participation group. The meeting included both members who have served on the PPG for several years, and new members.

Sara reiterated that the current group had worked together very successfully for a number of years, but had recently lost a few individuals. We therefore sent out an appeal for new members to replenish the group and inject some new perspectives and ideas. The response has been fantastic.

The purpose of the PPG is to provide the surgery with ideas and issues from a patient perspective, to act as a sounding board for decisions affecting patients, to get involved in supporting surgery initiatives, and to lead fund raising (see below).

Membership is voluntary, and very much appreciated by the surgery.

News and Views

• Saffron Walden Community Hospital/Dunmow Clinic – Saturday and Evening Appointments

- Weekend and evening appointments (7pm to 9pm) are available for Thaxted patients in Saffron Walden Community Hospital and Dunmow clinic. This is a pilot.
- The appointments are pre-booked (not urgent), and must be booked through the surgery.
- The doctor can be any doctor, but will have access to Thaxted GP records (with the patient's consent), and will directly update those records, thus facilitating continuity of care.
- Thaxted receptionists are consistently offering these appointments to patients, but take up from Thaxted is low compared to Saffron Walden and Dunmow practices.
- PPG discussed that this may be partly geography, and partly that Thaxted provides better access to patients than other surgeries (National Patient survey puts Thaxted top in West Essex for patient satisfaction with opening hours).
- However, the PPG agreed that this is a good initiative, and that we should promote it strongly, to ensure patients are aware. Use it or lose it!
- Sara confirmed it is already publicised on surgery website, and roller board in the waiting room. Agreed to include as an item in the next surgery newsletter in parish mag, and by direct e-mail of newsletter to those patients for whom we hold an email address.

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- **Dementia Friends Accreditation**

Sara reported that Thaxted Surgery has now achieved a Dementia Friends Accreditation. This involved working with the Alzheimer's Society over a year to hold patient and carer events, increase awareness of support available for dementia patients, train staff in understanding how things might be perceived by dementia patients, and to make the surgery environment more supportive to dementia patients.

- **Data Sharing - My Care Record**

West Essex CCG are currently introducing "my care record." This is an IT platform whereby patient records held by the GP surgery, are made available to other local healthcare organisations for the purpose of direct patient care. healthcare organisations accessing data without consent.

The initial application is planned to be in the emergency department of the Princess Alexandra Hospital, Harlow.

The surgery needs to make a decision to opt in to the initiative or to stay out, and wanted to use the PPG as a sounding board in making this decision.

Key points discussed in making this decision are as follows:

- The surgery is legally responsible as the data controller for its patients' data, under the data protection act.
- Patients will be asked for consent by the healthcare professional to access their record at the point it is needed (e.g. in hospital). Nevertheless, should the surgery opt in, there is a risk of rogue employees/poor data governance resulting in access to patient records in hospitals or other organisations without consent.
- If the surgery does opt in, then individual patients can still elect to opt out, in which case their record cannot be accessed. West Essex does not require a positive opt in, but is currently publicising the initiative in local press to give patients appropriate opportunity to opt out.
- The surgery has nearly 10% of patients already opted out of historical initiatives like summary care records and Care Data. This is above national average (2%). The surgery therefore recognises that data protection is an important issue for our patient body. However, we also note that, unlike Care Data, this initiative is about direct individual patient care at the point of need.

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- PAH, the site of the initial application, accounts for only around 5% of hospital contacts for Thaxted patients. Addenbrookes accounts for 90%, and Broomfield for the rest. Therefore, the initial application will not be relevant to the vast majority of patients.
- Nevertheless, should the surgery opt out, the 5% of patients who do end up in PAH will not be able to have their records accessed in an emergency. However, we did note that summary care records remain available at the point of need in ALL hospitals, should the hospital choose to access them.
- This is a new initiative, not yet live, and there may be teething problems.

PPG members took different philosophical views on this. The majority, but by no means all, tending to be conservative. In the end, we agreed to opt out until the next meeting, and at that point, once the system has been up and running, review the decision.

- **Use of E-mail**

Thaxted Surgery is piloting bulk communication to patients by email. This is for general administrative matters and bulletin information, and contains no patient specific information. We trialled this in an e-mail regarding revitalising the PPG. This got a very good response, with no negative comments about SPAM! The PPG therefore agreed we should continue to use this channel, e.g. for the upcoming fluathon, and to publicise the new weekend and evening services.

- **Premises Expansion**

Sara reported that the surgery has been negotiating with NHS England regarding expansion of premises. We have NHS support for an extension that is just enough for our current list size, but have applied for a more ambitious scheme which will support our current growth rate and provide for additional health and social care services to be provided from the building. Once we have a decision on this, we will want to move rapidly.

- **On-line Access to Medical Records**

Some aspects of medical records are now available to patients on-line. The Patient Access system is reached via the surgery web-site, but is a national system, provided by EMIS, who provide our clinical records system. It is relatively new, and changes and enhancements are still being introduced. The surgery encourages PPG members to try it and provide us with any feedback. Access can be granted by reception staff, but they need the patient to attend in person and show some id, so that we can be absolutely sure that we are only granting access to the patient themselves.

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- **Fluathon**

Fluathon is planned for October 8th. A number of PPG members volunteered to come and help selling coffee and cake, and/or to bring cakes. Thank you!

- **GP changes**

Sara reported that Dr Milne is retiring at end of November due to ill health. In addition, Dr Howlett has a long standing plan to retire in May 2017. In the current climate, many surgeries are struggling to recruit GPs. However, Thaxted has been really lucky. Dr Leema Jabbar will start with us in December. We believe we have also found a GP for May 2017, but this is yet to be confirmed.

PPG discussed that this will be a big change for the surgery, losing two long-standing doctors. Sara agreed it is crucial we maintain the surgeries values and standards through the change, and very much welcomes the PPGs feedback and help on this.

Feedback and Issues

The PPG reviewed a number of sources of feedback, including:

- Friends and Family Feedback
- Patient Survey
- CQC report

Overall, the feedback is good. In particular, Thaxted Surgery is top in West Essex for overall patient satisfaction, and in the top 5% of surgeries nationally.

The only consistent theme coming across is patients having to wait past their appointment time.

The surgery was disappointed not to get an “outstanding” rating from CQC. No West Essex surgeries had outstanding ratings. The surgery looked at practices in neighbouring CCGs who had received outstanding ratings, and noted that they all provided additional services over and above core GP services. Some of this was funding by neighbouring CCGs, and some by voluntary fund raising.

What should the PPG focus on as areas for improvement?

The PPG identified the following areas as potential areas of focus:

- Appointments system – being asked to call back at 8am the following day. PPG members were surprised that Sara said this was not the surgeries policy. Sara to take this up with the staff concerned. PPG members to feedback experience.
- Waiting times/running late – understanding patients’ values and views on this.
- Disabled patients – understanding their needs and how we can better support them.

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Fund Raising

Sara t asked for volunteers to form a fund-raising group for the surgery, looking at fund raising to support additional facilities and services that are not provided for under commissioned arrangements.

Several volunteers came forward. Sara to organise a separate kick-off meeting to develop a plan of causes and initiatives.

Dates times and formats for next meetings

The PPG agreed to alternate meetings between evening and day time, to allow for wider involvement of patients who are not available during the day. Future meetings as follows:

- Thursday 15 December 2016 - 7pm, in the surgery's waiting room
- Thursday 30 March 2017 – 10am, Guildhall
- Thursday 13 July 2017 – 7pm, in the surgery's waiting room
- Thursday 16 Nov 2017 – 10am, Guildhall