



Patient Participation Group
19th March 2018 18:30 – 20:00
Freezywater Primary Care Centre

In Attendance:

Mrs Maureen Hart, Miss Susan Barlow, Mr Pigot, Mrs Pigott, Miss Patricia Pigram, Mr Alfred Ford, Amanda Ahern, Tina Matthews, Roger Owen, Chris Curtis (Practice Manager, Chair and Minutes), Dr Sadhu (GP Partner), Mrs Carol Kilgallon (Senior Nurse)

1. Welcome and Apologies

Chris, Practice Manager, introduced himself to those present, thanked everyone for coming and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. The Appointment System

A concern was raised by a patient about access to appointments, both bookable and on the day, as well as difficulties in being able to get through to the practice on the telephone. A constructive review of the points raised on NHS Choices was also shared by a patient, wondering why they had not been responded to.

Chris gave a summary of the current challenges the practice faces around access and appointments, along with the work that is being carried out to improve recruitment and the service going forward. The problem is not unique to Freezywater, but common throughout general practice more so now than ever.

Dr Sadhu confirmed the access issues are affecting all practices nationally while in Enfield and in particular North East Enfield, it is more difficult to recruit than in other areas of London and the country.

Access for patients has been improved by opening at 8am a year ahead of when our contract obligates us to do this. This improves access for patients who can attend before work or school and all these slots are pre-bookable. We didn't want to wait a whole year when the benefits for patients could be achieved now. Patient had also reported feeling rushed or limited in their consultation time, and to counter this we've taken the pioneering step of increasing patient appointment slots to 15 minutes. Dr Sadhu reported that feedback from patients has been very positive about this change.

We have been recruiting since October for additional reception staff so that we can have a dedicated telephone team at peak times. This should reduce the wait time on the telephone. Chris also described the Medicus model and how this will give a much better telephone service with improved access. This system is at least 6 months away due to complexity in design and roll out, but will be cloud based, improving the service and messages that patients receive. For example, position in queue, wait time until answering and more automated options to assist patients when calling in. As part of Medicus Health Partners, we will also have a single patient database allowing patients to receive the same service at any one of the 11 partner practices, while improving access to other procedures such as minor surgery.

He also updated the PPG on the different types of pre-bookable appointments, those that can be booked in advance in person and those that can be booked in advance via the online booking system. An explanation was given about how these appointments are all released at different times in order to give us a reasonable spread in their availability and stop them all being used up within a short space of time.

Further explanation was given about how access has been improved with evening, weekend and bank holiday hub access at Carlton House, Woodbury and Evergreen. There is also a walk-in service at weekends and bank holidays between 8am and 8pm at Eagle House Surgery in Ponders End that often has Freezywater doctors working on site. At Eagle House the doctors will have the same access to clinical records and can order the same tests available at Freezywater.

It was asked why patients cannot just book an appointment at any time. Chris explained how appointment slots are a balanced mix of on the day, pre-bookable, online and telephone slots. It would be entirely possible to book every appointment in advance, however this would have a significant impact on book on the day slots.

We are also realigning all our clinics, working to recruit two full time GPs which will allow us to increase the amount of pre-bookable appointments and give greater access to booking in advance.

Regarding NHS Choices feedback, Chris advised that he currently has a case open with the NHS Choices website relating to why practice responses are not being published. There are locally saved copies of all questions and responses ready to be posted once the NHS Choices site has resolved the IT access issue.

3. The potential for an 'Older People's' named contact to discuss practical matters, e.g. appointments, repeat prescriptions, problems with internet access etc.

Chris explained that it is possible to have delegated responsibility to allow relatives or trusted friends to deal with health care needs on your behalf. The document is scanned and added to the patient record as an authority to act.

However it was explained by a PPG member that the context of the question was different and that the enquiry was having a fixed person at the practice to talk to who could take additional time for older patients that might need a little more time and explanation to ensure they understand.

Dr Sadhu explained that while the practice now operates a pooled list, patients should always feel like they have adequate time to speak to the right person to meet their needs. This may be an admin person to help with on line access, a pharmacist to help with medication queries or the practice manager to help with any practice questions or queries. If patients do need additional time then please let us know and we will make sure we do our best to accommodate the request.

4. Medicus Update

The Medicus update had already been given indirectly as part of the discussion on work being done to improve the access and availability of appointments. The aims and objectives of Medicus were well received by the PPG.

5. Eagle House Surgery Hub Access

Access to Eagle House Hub had been covered in The Appointment System section. The Hub is part of a move towards 7 day opening with carefully chosen geographical locations working at weekends and on bank holidays to give patients the opportunity to walk in between 8am and 8pm at a time that suits them. Services available mirror those at Freezywater and access is particularly useful for patients that work during the week. There is also always a doctor on call for this service so if demand is unexpectedly high, the extra GP can be brought in to ensure that wait times are kept to a minimum.

6. Any Other Business

Interim Chairmanship

Chris advised that he was chairing the meeting today because the previously elected chair was unable to attend, nor would he be available for the foreseeable future. It was discussed with those present that the opportunity for an existing PPG member to take on the role of interim chair. Tina Matthews and Roger Owen very kindly offered to share chairing future PPG meetings and those present were agreeable to this.

Chris will contact Tina and Roger by email to liaise on future meetings. Chris also agreed to take responsibility for taking minutes for the meetings on an ongoing basis.

iCan

Carol updated the PPG on the iCan Service, a new project which is aimed at supporting vulnerable adults to remain living healthily and independently in the community, it is aimed at adults of all ages (18+) and not just older people.

The iCan Service will aim to improve health and wellbeing of vulnerable adults by ensuring they have the provision of personalised coordinated care and support across a network of providers, the service will focus on improving the self-management of their health conditions and prevent them from accessing primary and secondary care services.

The Navigators will work with service users in a holistic manner and identify their physical, emotional, psychological social and practical needs. They will then support them in accessing other resources, facilities and services which are available to them and assist in improving their wellbeing.

- The type of support that the service will be offering is as follows:
- Assisting with access to benefits;
- Enabling access to health, social care services and community services
- Helping people to self-manage their condition
- Help in making social connections
- Advising on lifestyle choices, healthy eating
- Helping access power of attorney advice
- Supporting the development of end of life plans
- Running awareness events
- Running peer support groups in the community

Dates and times are currently being agreed with iCan for running their support at Freezywater.