Pelham Medical Group
Patient Participant Group
Tuesday 22nd August 2023

*See separate attendance sheet.*

*Chair: Richard Ellis
Minute Taker: Lisa McGrath
GP: Dr K Turnman*

RE opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the meeting.

RE, LM and KT introduced themselves to the group.

RE asked the patient what made them attend the meeting.
Patients responded that they were interested to know what the practice wants from them as patients, some were curious about the meeting and to received updates.

RE explained that the PPG is for patient to meet with the practice to share experiences, receive updates and changes within the practice.

RE guided the patients through a presentation on the changes within the practice starting with the GP Patient survey results from 2022/2023.
Explanation how the practice has tried to improve telephone access to our patients by changing the way we consult and having a clinician in reception to help with queries.
Online access has been worked on since December to take pressure off the telephone. We have seen an increase in the number of online consultations received.

One patient has recently used the NHS APP to ask a question about vaccinations. She wasn’t aware the feature was available previously and was impressed with how efficient it was and how she received a quick response. Agreed on the need to continue to advertise this feature to our patients. Suggestion made by a patient to have a telephone message directing patient to online services.

Appointment access

The practice has changed the structure of the appointment system and the way they approach the different types of consultations. The practice has been able to increase the volume of appointments by increasing the range of staff. There have been some changes to process such a fit notes. These requests go onto a separate list to avoid filling up the main health appointments. We now have more staff trained who can handle fit notes.
We have a bigger range of clinical staff – advanced practitioner nurses who can prescribe and see different conditions. First contact practitioner which focus on MSK to make assessments and refer on for further investigations. Paramedic can do home visits to make initial assessments.

We have put a clinician working in reception. This is currently a trial. Reception takes the information from the patient to signpost to the correct clinician to know where the patient is best to be seen. This does mean longer phone calls causing queue on phone but helps to free up appointments by ensuring the patient is being seen by the correct person.

Away from the appointments there are additional pressures for GPs daily. The is a big workload of medication reviews, prescriptions, results. Every time a patient sends in a blood pressure reading this needs to be checked by GP.

Recruitment has been a big challenge in primary care. Difficultly with recruiting Salaried GPs so we do use locum GP. There are more GPs training than there has been in previous years so we are hoping this will help with recruitment. This is another reason we expanded our skill mix with additional roles and nursing associates.

Reception recruitment and retention has been a difficulty due to the pressures on reception and the negative communications from patients. Patient asked why there is a turnover of staff? Some are not aware of the role of a receptionist. They do a lot more than just answering the phones. They receive persistent abuse and rudeness.

One patient highlighted that there is a message on the telephone answer machine stating patients do not have to give information to the receptionist. Agreed this needs to be reviewed. Receptionists ask for the information so they can navigate the patient to the correct clinician or service. Suggestion from a patient to add a message to practice social media and the website.

Due to the growing demand on primary care, we identified that our Humberview surgery was taking too much resource, so we reduced from 2 sites down to 1 site. Some patients stayed with Pelham other registered with another practice in the area. 11.5k patients to 10k patients. Reviewed workload slide which showed the figures of the amount of annual pathology results that are being reviewed, the number of referrals sent and the number of medications issued.

Discussed how the number of clinical hours has increased due to increasing our skill mix.
Online consultations increased from 100 a week to 460 a week giving more access to patients and freeing up telephone time. Agreed how some patients do prefer telephone calls than online, and it can depend on the query. One patient praised the recall text system, received a text to book a flu vaccination this week and always received a reminder for health checks.

RE explained how there is still work to be done to continue to improve the access, but we have noticed a big difference in the changes we have already made. Telephone systems are being upgraded however we are tied to a contract for another 18 months so changing prior to the end of the contract would depend on availability of funding. The new telephone system offers call backs so patient isn’t waiting in a queue, they will receive a call back when they reach the front of the queue.

RE asked all in attendance if this PPG meeting was what they expected? Many were interested in what we were going to present. Patient asked what the practice want from them in these meetings? It is a chance to feedback, advertise, update and feel included.

LM asked how patient find the communication from the practices. The website does need updated which is something the management team are working on. We are now using social media to share updates on the practice and services in the area. The practice have begun to produce a quarterly newsletter.

In the next meeting we may touch on sharing more information about our primary care network and how to use the different online access tools for patients. The next PPG meeting will be held in November 2023. Details of the meeting will be sent round and advertised on all our platforms. Invitations will be sent to all who attended.