

Charter Patient Group

Newsletter

June 2014

The view from the Chair

Welcome to our latest newsletter, which is full of interesting articles about how your Patient Participation Group (PPG) has been representing you and how you can get involved.

Next Charter patients' meeting

Our next meeting for Charter patients and their carers is on Monday, 16th June. The topic, 'Dental Care and Oral Health', is relevant to us all and, once again, we have an experienced local health professional as the main speaker – more details on page 3. Please come along and make sure that other Charter patients know about the event. We have small posters for pinning onto notice boards where you live, so let the editor know if you would like to receive one or two of these for future Charter patient events. Our on-site pharmacy is also spreading the word by placing notices about the quarterly meetings in prescription bags.

PPG in the surgery

On some occasions between 2nd and 7th June, members of Charter PPG will be available in the surgery to talk with patients about what we do and ways forward.

Increasing patient involvement

Four committee members attended a whole-day conference on 30th April for PPGs in Brighton and Hove, and a short account is included in this newsletter. We discussed ideas for getting more Charter patients involved and invite suggestions from you: about how to improve services and about how to make sure we ask this question of the full range of registered patients, including those who are healthy most of the time. We want to

arrange more types of activity and means of communication. Come along on 16th June or send in your ideas. We also need more active members – even if you can offer what seems only a little time, every little helps, so please volunteer.

Public consultation

There are several forms of public consultation taking place both locally and nationally. In this newsletter you can read about a public meeting on mental well-being in Brighton and Hove, and there will be similar consultations about priorities for health and social care in the city. Members of Charter PPG also attended one of the 'listening events' encouraged by the Care Quality Commission in the run-up to their inspection of local hospitals.

If you would like to find out about such events, one way is to read the monthly newsletter issued by Healthwatch Brighton and Hove. This is available online at www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk or you can pick up one of the paper copies that are available in the waiting area at the surgery. National bodies for receiving views from the public include Healthwatch England and the National Association for Patient Participation.

At all levels there is a statutory responsibility for health and care professionals to listen to patients. On the Charter website you can read about how to ask questions and make suggestions to the clinicians and managers in our medical centre, or you can always place your written comments in the box at the entry to the reception area. And you can use the Healthwatch helpline (01273 234040; 10.00–12.00 noon, Monday to Friday) to get advice about finding the right support services. In

hospital, as an in-patient or an out-patient, there is the Patient Advocacy and Liaison Service (PALS). How effectively health and social care services are both listening to and acting upon patients' views will be just one of the criteria that the Care Quality Commission will be looking at some time in May or June when they will be in the City. If Charter Medical Centre is one of the sample of GP practices that is to be inspected, then the PPG and the practice will have to be clear about our methods of involving patients and listening to their views.

At any rate, it would be good to meet more Charter patients and to exchange views and experiences at activities other than meetings. Please remember about the gentle walk that we take in St. Ann's Well Gardens at 1.00 p.m. every Monday. All are welcome to take part, to meet others and to chat. What other activities might we consider?

Clare Tikly, Chair

2013–14 Survey and 2014–15 Action Plan

Some of you will remember completing a 'mini-survey' in September last year. The results identified that patients cared most about clinical care, followed by 'access' issues. The PPG survey sub-committee met with the practice to discuss the results, and it was agreed to do a more detailed survey of clinical care for all the GPs, advanced nurse practitioners and nurses in January 2014. The results of the clinical care survey were very good, with very few negative comments, which the practice has raised with the clinician concerned.

The practice was at the time organising the recruitment and training of additional receptionists, installing a new computer system and planning for major changes in the building layout, so it was decided not to do a further survey on these issues at this time. They will be surveyed in 2014 when the changes have had time to settle in.

The survey and issues ongoing from previous surveys have formed the basis for the actions to be undertaken by the practice in

2014–15. More details of the survey and Action Plan can be found on the Charter Medical Centre website: www.chartermedicalcentre.co.uk (note that the actions for 2014–15 are entitled Action Plan 2013–14, as this is the survey it is based on – confusing I know!).

Prescriptions

One of the main ongoing issues raised in earlier surveys concerns prescription requests, which were considered to be not always completed in a timely fashion and not always as requested. The practice receives around 600 requests a day and is finding it difficult to always achieve the 48-hour deadline, and recognises that this issue is a growing source of complaints.

It was agreed in March 2013 that the practice would move towards batch prescribing as a way of reducing the workload on issuing repeat prescriptions. This involves a monthly prescription being issued for a number of months (usually three or six), which the pharmacist keeps and uses to supply the patient's medicines at the appropriate time and without a further request being needed.

Following the implementation, various issues were encountered. Firstly, batch prescribing requires the patient's consent – some patients are not keen and even if they are willing, consent cannot be obtained unless they visit the surgery. Secondly, some patients are not suitable and thirdly it was found that some pharmacists are not familiar with the system.

It is intended to continue the movement to batch prescribing this year, and the practice has committed in the Action Plan to switch 60 patients a month to batch prescribing. If you are approached to move to this method it should help both you and the practice, and hopefully relieve some of the frustrations that have been identified.

It is also easier for the practice when prescription requests are made via Systmonline, the new internet appointment booking and communication system that the practice has recently adopted alongside its

new computer system. In time it is expected that the new computer system will speed up prescription processing, although in the short term it is taking longer because it works differently and the staff have to get used to it.

Please also submit your prescription request in plenty of time before you need your medicines. 'Urgent' requests cause unnecessary work for the practice.

In 2014, electronic prescribing is being trialled in Brighton and Hove. The Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) enables prescribers such as GPs and practice nurses to send prescriptions electronically to a dispenser (such as a pharmacy) of the patient's choice. This makes the prescribing and dispensing process more efficient and convenient for patients and staff. It is hoped that this will become city-wide in 2015, and should improve the service.

Medicine wastage

Whilst talking about prescriptions, it is worth mentioning the issue of medicine wastage. A report by Brighton and Hove LINK (now replaced by Healthwatch) in 2010 indicated a high level of medicine wastage. Batch prescribing was recommended as a possible way forward because it reduces the quantity of medicines issued at one time.

Many pharmacies offer medicines check-ups, where you can discuss how you are getting on with your medicines. This is not intended to replace consultation with your GP but could help you in your self-care.

When you request medicines please only request those items that you actually expect to use and not all those on the form, as once medicines are taken out of the pharmacy they cannot be returned for use and must be discarded.

Maureen Smalldridge (Vice Chair)

Patient Group Meeting Monday June 16th 6.45 p.m.

Improving Dental Care and Oral Health

For those of you who haven't read the Healthwatch magazine for March 2014, it

contains an article entitled 'Improving Dental Care and Oral Health: A Call to Action'.

The article notes that the NHS spends £3.4 billion each year on dental care in primary care and community settings, as well as in hospitals for more specialised care. There are over 1 million patient contacts each week. However, dental professionals agree that more could be done to focus on prevention and to promote self-care and a better appreciation of good oral health generally.

Our meeting takes place within National Smile Month, which is held every year and is organised by oral health charity the British Dental Health Foundation. The campaign hopes to raise awareness of important health issues and make a positive difference to the oral health of millions of people throughout the UK. More details can be found at: www.nationalsmilemonth.org.

Our speaker will be Sabine Watts, who is a Senior Dental Nurse at the Special Care Dental Service. She will talk about this service and mouth care in general, and will be bringing some handouts with her to help you get started.

At the meeting there will also be an update on health and social care issues in the practice and local area, and the opportunity to meet members of the new Charter PPG committee, who organise these events and liaise with the practice on your behalf. We would like to receive your ideas and comments, so please join us; all Charter patients are welcome at the meeting.

Public events for listening and consultation

A small number of Charter PPG members have taken part in two recent meetings organised in Brighton and Hove to gather views and experiences from the public.

A Strategy to Enhance Mental Wellbeing

This meeting, in March, was organised on behalf of the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Public Health Department of Brighton and Hove City Council. It took the form of a

discussion, among about 30 participants, about what makes people feel better about themselves, or worse. Several of those taking part talked of their experiences of mental ill-health and about the local services and voluntary organisations where they gain support. Others spoke of their loneliness on account of disability or feeling excluded from other people, sometimes because they are caring for others in the home. Our attention was drawn to some of the many leisure activities that have been set up to combat isolation and encourage a healthier lifestyle.

This meeting was part of a comprehensive consultation among employees and volunteers in health and social care. There is a large network of support organisations and leisure activities within the city, and one key topic of discussion is how to let people know what is available and how to ensure that those in most need are encouraged to use the opportunities. Outcomes and recommendations from the consultations will inform the nature of the strategy and will be published soon.

Experiences of hospital services

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) will be inspecting the six hospitals within the Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Trust, beginning formally on 20th May 2014. Prior to the inspection, local groups were invited to arrange meetings for inspectors to listen to the experiences and views of members of the public who have used hospital services recently.

This short account is of a 'listening event' held on 9th May, requested and organised jointly between the South East England Forum on Ageing and SpeakOut. As well as the facilitator, there were CQC employees, hospital staff, Healthwatch representatives and other members of the public, three of whom had travelled from elsewhere in Sussex. Those of us present had ample opportunity to talk about our own experiences of the hospital services, and to join in the discussion. We gained from hearing about

information already collected through existing procedures for complaints and suggestions.

Many common features emerged: of dedication and ingenuity among hospital staff, often in the face of lack of space or resources; of regrettable examples of poor-quality patient care; of ineffective management in particular wards or departments; and of lack of coordination between different hospitals – for example, there was severe criticism of systems for referral and some cases of procedures about discharge. A report of the discussion will be circulated to those who attended, and to the inspection team.

Charter PPG will continue to post links on our website pages to reports arising from such consultations, as soon as they are published.

PPG Conference

Four members of Charter PPG attended the second annual city-wide conference on 30th April, and at least two more would have done so if it had been held outside normal working hours. We sat together and were able to discuss how some of the issues relate to the work of our PPG. Sharing experiences with groups from across Brighton and Hove brought out common difficulties but was also an opportunity to share some ideas about developing an effective PPG for every practice.

What is an effective PPG?

The speaker from the CQC explained the purposes of and methods for the forthcoming round of inspections of GP practices. The inspectors will be seeking the views and experiences of representative groups of patients, including those who are not often heard – such as people who are housebound, homeless or have mental health problems. They will also focus on the over-75 age group, young people, and patients with long-term conditions. It is expected that PPGs will be able to provide insights about the concerns and expectations of patients. Inspectors will also draw on the growing knowledge gathered

by Healthwatch about the provision of health and care services in Brighton and Hove.

The speaker from the National Association for Patient Participation (NAPP, founded 1972) outlined four main ways in which PPGs are known to be effective:

- Providing the patient perspective
- Health promotion information and events
- Improving communication between practice and patients
- Influencing the development of services provided through the practice.

There were useful details within each of these headings that should help each PPG to grow in its own way – the more active volunteers we have, the more Charter PPG will be able to grow towards the NAPP aim to ‘Make stronger the relationship between patients and their practices, which is critical to the provision of modern, high quality general practice.’

The conference had been organised through the Brighton and Hove PPG Network, which is part of the structure supported by the Clinical Commissioning Group to develop links with the public. Other speakers included the Chairs of the Clinical Commissioning Group, Healthwatch and the PPG Network, and the Chief Executive of Community Works. All offered ideas and suggested sources of support for developing effective an PPG within every practice in the city.

News from the practice

The practice would like to thank all the patients who reported a recent problem with the telephone answering service (such as a repeated engaged tone, not moving forward in the queue, or being cut off after waiting in the queue). This has been due to an intermittent fault that the engineers have been unable to trace.

In response, the surgery will buy a completely new telephone system. Quotes have been obtained and the system is expected to be delivered in June.

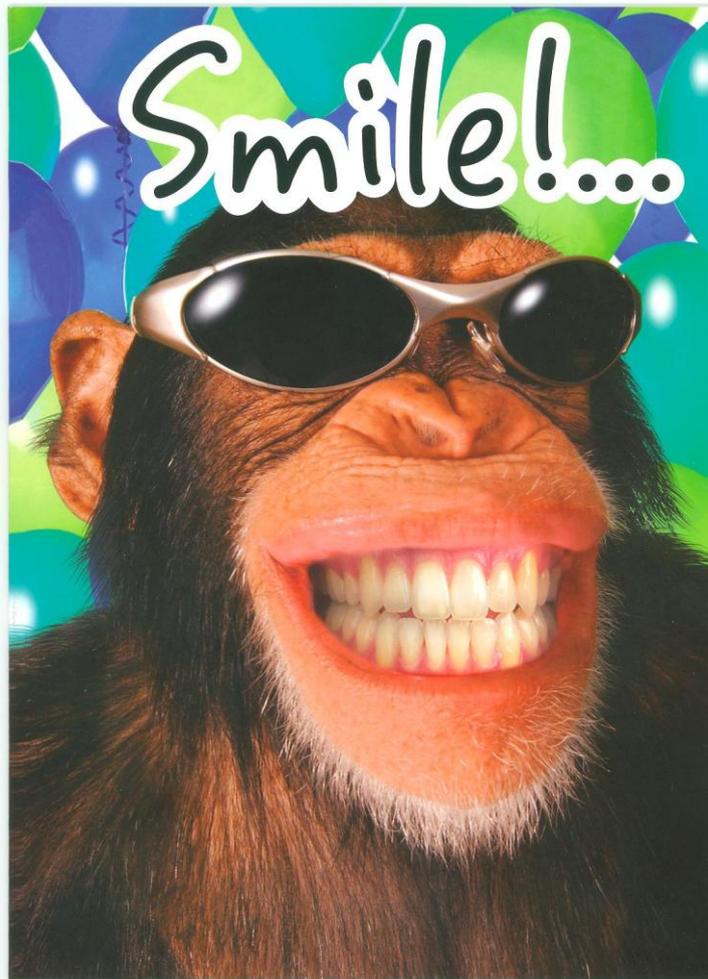
The practice is truly sorry for the inconvenience this has caused and thanks everyone for their patience while the problem is corrected.

CHARTER PATIENT GROUP MEETING

Monday 16th June 2014

Charter Medical Centre 6.45 p.m.

Dental Care and Oral Health



Our speaker will be Sabine Watts, who is a Senior Dental Nurse at the Special Care Dental Service. She will talk about this service and mouthcare in general, and will be bringing some handouts with her to help you get started.

All Charter patients welcome.

