

Patient Participation Group Annual Report 2021

The PPG review of the year.

As we entered January 2021, the country was once more in the grip of another wave of Covid 19. The whole of the NHS was dealing with high numbers of patients. Hospital wards were at maximum capacity, high numbers of patients were attending emergency departments, ambulance services were under huge pressure with 999 call volumes far higher than normal and primary care (GP's) busier than normal whilst still having to operate within strict guidance to ensure patient and staff safety.

The shining hope for the country was the vaccination programme that commenced in the December of 2020. The huge success of this programme and the skills and knowledge of researchers in the development of new vaccines and medicines for the treatment of patients suffering from covid 19 undoubtedly saved 1000's of lives.

In Loughborough we saw the opening of a mass vaccination centre at the Southfields Council Offices. This centre was operated by the Charnwood GP Network, (a network of all the GP surgeries in the Charnwood area working together). The set up of the centre and its ongoing operation was heavily supported, and still is, by staff both clinical and non-clinical from the Charnwood Community Medical Group (CCMG). The result of this heavy and important work did however put pressure on the rest of the Practice team.

As a PPG we have stayed together as a group initially meeting monthly remotely via Zoom, and later in 2021 as restrictions eased, we started to meet in a hybrid fashion with some members meeting face to face, whilst others joined the group on Zoom. We were pleased to welcome new members to the group during the year and value their contribution. The group meets on the 2nd Thursday monthly at 5pm. We meet with one of the Practice Partners who shares with us openly the plans for the development and operation of the Practice. As members we have the opportunity to bring forward our views and suggestions looking at how things from a patient's point of view could be changed where possible.

As a group we also work to support the Practice, and in the past have worked on various projects developing information leaflets to help both patients and the Practice.

We do have some vacancies on the PPG, and if anyone would like to consider joining us, please contact me on ccmgppg@gmail.com and if you leave a contact number, I will get back to you.

Due to the pandemic many of the plans that as a group we had made for the year had to be shelved for the future. These included some projects and the important Patient Survey.

Apart from the active involvement of members at meetings during the year, members have provided many hours voluntarily on a weekly basis supporting the Vaccination Centre at Southfields operating as site marshals. Additionally, group members have supported the Practice on vaccination days at Rosebery Medical Centre for both the covid and flu vaccinations clinics. This year the Practice undertook 3547 flu vaccinations, many of these taking place outside of normal surgery time with staff volunteering their time. As a group we commend the Practice on this achievement and of course all those patients who came along.

So, we look forward to a new year, a time when we see national restrictions being lifted and there is a general feeling that some form of normality is being returned. We must not forget though that many of our patients will still be worried about the way forward, those patients who are clinically vulnerable and those who suffer with mental health illness. As a group we will continue to work with the Practice and will offer any support that we can.

We have plans in place to work on 2 projects this year. One looking at bereavement support, and a second launching the patients survey. We have also planned for guest speakers to attend some of our meetings to provide an insight into other health related areas. All in we have a busy year ahead. As a PPG along with the excellent relationship we have with the Practice we will continue to act as the critical friend of the Practice. Giving us the opportunity to give feedback, opinion, and suggestions for change.

On behalf of all the group I would like to give thanks to all the staff within the Practice for the support they have once again given to us, and in particular to Paul Hanlon, Business Manager, and a Partner in the Practice, for his continued and valued support during what has been a very busy and challenging year.

Mick Gregory
Chairman Patient Participation Group (February 2022).