

## **Patient Participation Report**

In 2011, Westongrove Partnership decided to establish a PPG (Patient Participation Group) that would allow us to engage with our patients, receive feedback from them and ensure that they are involved in decisions about the services that are provided or changes that may be proposed.

This report aims to explain

- How the PPG was established
- How areas of priority were agreed with the PPG for the local patient survey
- How the survey was conducted
- How the results of the survey were published and any comments or feedback were collated
- Which actions were agreed with the PPG following the survey resulting in an action plan

### How the PPG was established

- Westongrove became members of N.A.P.P (National Association for Patient Participation). This allowed us to access supportive materials and guidance on how to set up a productive PPG.
- We wanted to ensure that as far as possible our group was representative of our patient population, so obtained demographic information about all three sites from Bucks County Council.
- We promoted the PPG in many ways, aiming to reach as many potential members as possible
  - Posters and leaflets were displayed within each practice
  - Information was put onto our website [www.westongrove.com](http://www.westongrove.com)
  - Special PPG notice boards were created in each practice
  - The Friends of Bedgrove Surgery and Friends of Wendover Health Centre were kept up to date and invited to join the PPG
  - Information was published in the local parish newsletters
  - Local schools featured the PPG in their newsletters and distributed sign up forms
  - Local pharmacies promoted the PPG
  - Patients were able to sign up for the PPG via our website or by completing a paper form
  - The PPG was promoted during baby clinics and childhood immunisation clinics
- We asked members if they would be happy to attend meetings or be part of a 'virtual' PPG. This meant that they could give us their views and thoughts but would not have to commit to attending a meeting. Having received the PPG sign up forms, it was decided to run the PPGs as virtual groups initially, alongside the existing Friends groups, whose main aim was to fundraise for the practices
- Each patient who joined the PPG was given a code. This enabled us to see the mix of age, sex and ethnicity.
- 134 patients are signed up to be part of the PPG, but the group continues to grow.

## How areas of priority were agreed with the PPG for the local patient survey

The areas we decided to ask the PPG to prioritise were:

- Communication between the practice and the patients – website, leaflets, customer service, letters,
- Information available to patients – website, how to leaflets
- How to help patients and their carers develop self care
- Patient relationships with the practice team
- Telephone answering and access

Each PPG member was contacted and asked to order the options from 1 – most important to 5 – least important.

126 emails were sent out to the virtual PPG. We asked to respond within 10 days.

We received 47 responses ( 37%)

Once the responses were received they were analysed in order to identify the priority area.

The table below shows how many patients rated each subject as '1' – the most important in their view.

Site	A	B	C	D	E
ACS	4	0	5	0	1
BGS	3	1	5	0	5
WHC	10	2	9	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>

A – Communication between the practice and patients

B – Information available to patients and carers

C – Telephone answering and access

D – Managing and developing self care for patients and their carers

E – Patient relationships with the practice team

Telephone answering and Access was voted as the most important priority, and a patient survey was created based around this area.

The results from the initial contact with the PPG were published on the website.

#### How the survey was conducted

We created a survey based around telephone access and answering, which ran for two weeks from Monday 13th February until Friday 24th February 2012.

The objective was to understand patient preferences regarding how they contacted us and when, how they perceived the speed of answering calls and how often they received an engaged tone, along with their preferences for certain features of modern telephone systems. We also asked for some information about the patients that would enable us to have a sex / age / ethnicity / and working status breakdown.

It was available in hardcopy at all three sites and also via our website should patients wish to complete it electronically, and it was advertised on the website and in the practices. It was promoted by the whole PHCT during the two week period.

#### How the results of the survey were published and any comments or feedback were collated

There were 283 responses to the patient survey, which were a mix of hard copy and electronic responses. The PPG were notified of the results, and they were also published on the website and also in poster form within the practices. Notice boards were created to let patients view the results



The results were shown in pie chart form, making it very easy to see how patients had answered the question.

The PPG were contacted and asked to make any comments or give feedback on the results, but none were received.

### Which actions were agreed with the PPG following the survey resulting in an action plan

It was clear from the survey results that a large proportion of the patients who responded used the telephone as the main way of contacting us (74% to make an appointment and 66% for other issues). Most calls were made first thing in the morning (64%) and that 63% of the patients would like to know where they were in the queue to be answered.

The current telephone system at the practice is over 10 years old and has very limited functionality. The GP Partners felt that it would be a good idea to ask the PPG if they agreed that the action plan following the survey would be to investigate what other telephone systems were available, with a view to upgrading the current one, making it easier for patients to contact us, and allowing flexibility in handling the calls.

The PPG were contacted once again, and were asked their views on the proposed plan. Of the 31 responses, every one agreed to the plan.

Additional comments made at this point were:

- A modern practice needs a modern telephone system
- Please do not lose sight that some older patients may get confused with too many options – you must always have the option to speak to a person
- Any new system must be easily understood by those of mature years
- Would you visit sites to see how the systems work in practice?
- We need to find an efficient system that allows for the 'personal touch'
- Please try and avoid having an 0844 number

It was also suggested that we should continue to promote the internet booking system and also investigate using other means to contact patients such as emails.

It was therefore agreed that the action plan would be to investigate potential telephone systems. Following the investigation, we will once again involve the PPG in the next step.

### Conclusion

Establishing the PPG has been a great way of creating a core group of patients who we can quickly and effectively canvas for their thoughts and views.

Having a virtual group means that patients can contribute at a time, and from a place that is convenient for them, instead of having to attend meetings at the practice, which could make it more difficult for some of our members. However, we are aware that not everyone has internet access and will be looking to expand on the virtual group over the next 12 months.

We will continue to promote the PPG and hope that more patients will commit to participating, having perhaps read our report or heard from others that it does not take up huge amounts of their time. It would be nice to get some younger members, and also a wider range of chronic disease patients and carers. We will be looking at ways of promoting the PPG to these groups of patients.

Over the next few months we will carry out the action plan of investigating various telephony options, and will report back to the PPG our findings, before taking any further action.

Thank you to everyone who is already a member of our PPG. Your involvement has been vital to the project. Please do tell your friends and family who are patients at Westongrove about the group – it would be super if we could get some more members.