



St Thomas Medical Group

St Thomas

Exwick

Exeter University Student Health Centre

Patient Participation Group (PPG) Minutes of Meeting 20th March 2023

Practice staff in attendance:

Dr Emma Green – GP Partner

Chris Stoppard – Practice Manager

Nina Smith – Operations Manager and PPG Coordinator

Shilpa Parnandi – IT Lead

Denise Knowles – Carer Coordinator

Simon James – Social Prescriber

Introduction by Dr Emma Green

Presentation detailing services now and new GP contract

- Explanation of the Primary Care Network (PCN) and funding available
- Additional roles which have been funded by the PCN – Paramedics, Pharmacists, Advanced Nurse Practitioners
- New GP contract:
 - Prospective access to medical records via Online Access – St Thomas Medical Group (STMG) have already enabled this feature
 - Use of cloud-based telephone system – STMG have already moved to this system
 - Improved access to GP services. We will be introducing a new duty system from 1st May 2023
- New PPG coordinator now in post

Discussion regarding access to the Health Centre

EG explained about an increase in the use of online consultations to support our new assessment model, this was successfully piloted at the Student Health Centre

What are we doing to support patients who may struggle with online consultations?

- Receptionists will have a template to work through on the phone with a patient in order to gather the necessary information to support a clinician in their decision to treat/prescribe
- Patients will not be discriminated against – if they do not wish to provide details of their medical complaint, they will still be booked onto an available triage appointment slot – need to make this clear to our patients
- Consultations will be reviewed by a clinician and booked into the most appropriate appointment, this may be an initial blood test – with a clinician follow-up, or an appointment with a physio, nurse, advanced nurse practitioner or a GP
- Has the added benefit of continuity of care – the triaging clinician can see who has been supporting the patient and book in an appointment with them – the group thought that this was a positive aspect of the new system

Discussion regarding levels of dissatisfaction

Communication – how can this be improved?

- Costs associated with paper correspondence too high
- Emails can be sent in bulk – but this is quite time/resource consuming
- Text messages can be sent in bulk – service provided by local CCG – no cost to STMG
- EG encouraged the PPG to get involved in reviewing the practice communications out to the patients
- Possibility of utilising local groups/services to display information – but this would need to be clear that this is to do with STMG as not all practices have access to a Social Prescriber, Pharmacists etc.
- Look at a display in practice premises, or ‘floor walkers’ expert patients showing others how to access the practice online etc
- We need to use an alternative word to ‘triage’ – ‘assessment’ is better and clearer to all patients
- Rather than texting all patients, could we just text 1 member of the household?
- Development of PPG section on website

Patients unhappy with the service and moving to other practices

- Reports of patients not being happy with the service. CS explained we receive practice numbers weekly and we have not seen a decrease in patient numbers
- EG/CS encouraged patients who are dissatisfied to make contact with the practice – can call in and ask to speak to a member of the management team or email with their concerns. We can only investigate and act on any problems if we are made aware of them – specifics are helpful.
- EG explained the context of declining GP numbers and imposed budgets; however, we are trying to do what is best for our patients
- Patients expectations may need to change with the new NHS, often may be better suited speaking to a pharmacist or another healthcare professional.

Social Prescriber Introduction

SJ introduced himself and provided an overview of the Social Prescribing service

League of Friends Introduction

DK introduced herself and explained the role of volunteers and volunteer drivers within STMG. Is happy to come and provide a more in-depth presentation at a future PPG meeting – perhaps tie this in with Volunteers week 1st June 2023. Information pack handed out to those in attendance.

AOB

Look at blanket/warm clothing project later in the year

A PPG email address has now been set up - d-icb.stthomas.ppg@nhs.net – patients encouraged to use this to contact us, several staff and Dr Green have access and will be checking inbox regularly.

Actions for next meeting

Encourage patients to approach the surgery with concerns – **ALL**

On-going promotion of ‘Awareness Weeks’ – **STMG**

Send draft communications to members of the PPG for review – **STMG**

Review and development of the PPG section on the STMG website – **STMG**

Patient education on current GP Service model - **STMG**

Next meeting: Monday 5th June 2023 at 18:30