

RUSHBOTTOM LANE SURGERY

PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP MEETING

Minutes of Meeting final Held on 17th March 2021 (On-line meeting)

Present: Dr Chana, Katherine Smith Practice Manager, Sabina Janaqi Deputy Practice Manager, Cheryl Kirby (Chair), Brian Porter, Jill Reeves, John Hall, June Sales, Marie Howard, Rachel Kilsby

Apologies: Debbie Dennis, Terry Clark

	Subject	Action by
1	<p>Welcome, introductions and apologies.</p> <p>The meeting was held virtually via Microsoft Teams as we could not meet in person due to Covid restrictions.</p>	
2	<p>Matters arising from previous meeting</p> <p>KS informed the group that the Surgery has contracted with My mHealth to provide Apps to support patients with long term conditions to manage their health covering diabetes, asthma, COPD and heart. The Surgery will contact patients with these conditions to let them know how to access the Apps. Both CK & JH had done some research and testing of the Apps and welcomed the fact that the Surgery had gone ahead with the contract.</p>	
3	<p>Activity Statistics</p> <p>The following activity statistics for February have been published on the Surgery Facebook Page</p> <p>8,290 incoming calls answered by reception team 2,342 telephone appointments 2,021 face to face appointments 20,885 prescription items issued</p> <p>These statistics exclude the vaccine appointment bookings made by the Surgery from Benfleet Clinic.</p>	
4	<p>Telephone Problems & Appointments</p> <p>4.1 CK advised the Surgery that patients were making complaints on social media about the telephone and appointment system. As a result CK had commented on social media that she would collate the complaints to present at this meeting. Several patients had also emailed CK direct to provide further information. The patient complaints, questions and suggestions have been summarized in the discussion.</p>	

	<p>4.2 A key complaint is that patients are being cut off whilst waiting in the telephone queue. KS stated that configuration changes had been made to the comms software to remove the initial queue which is where the system fault was deemed to be incurring but the fact that patients had posted about recent cut offs has identified that the problem has not been corrected. CK has provided SJ with information received from patients on times and dates Action KS will arrange a meeting with comms supplier to discuss</p> <p>4.3 Patients have also complained of long waits in the telephone call queue including some waits of more than an hour. KS replied that to address the high volume of calls at peak times the call queue is monitored in real time and they have restructured the admin and reception team so that these staff are now multi skilled so that they can be called upon to increase the number of people answering the phone and book appointments when the number of waiting calls are high. This also provides cover on the prescription desk if staff are absent. To manage the high number of patients calling the Surgery there is a message on the phone asking patients not to phone regarding Covid vaccinations as the Surgery will contact them. Patients are also advised that they can use Doctor Link , to check their symptoms and book appointments if applicable. Despite the Surgery implementing these changes to reduce the long waits patients are still reporting long waits sometimes of more than an hour even though more staff are available to answer calls. The Surgery will be contacting the comms supplier to investigate if this is a system issue and whether any further changes to the telephone infrastructure or configuration can be made to reduce the call waiting time. Action KS will arrange a meeting with comms supplier to discuss.</p> <p>4.4 When you phone the prescription desk there is no queue number given which means that patients are left wondering if they are in the queueing system. KS explained that currently the prescription desk line is not on the live hub so staff cannot monitor if there is a queue so this will be raised as a potential system change with the comms supplier. Action KS</p> <p>4.5 Patients receive texts to phone the surgery regarding test results, medication reviews etc. Can the surgery phone the patient instead to avoid the patient having to call in as this adds to the call queue and can lead to anxiety if they can't get through. KS responded that some texts are necessary if those staff are working offsite but this can be reviewed when all staff are back onsite. From experience there is also have a higher success rate in contacting patients when they send a text rather than phone and this is especially important when contacting about test results. KS added that the surgery is planning to implement a dedicated test result extension selectable from the telephone options</p>	<p>KS</p> <p>KS</p> <p>KS</p> <p>KS</p>
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4.6 Would having separate numbers for the two Practices reduce the call waiting time. KS explained that this would not work as all admin and reception staff are shared across both Practices and will multi task across the Practices in response to high demand.

4.7 Could a message be added to the phone line to advise when no appointments are available which would avoid queueing unnecessarily. KS replied that this would be an unsafe way to manage calls as currently when no appointments are available the Care Navigator can direct the patient to self care or to a pharmacy and if the Care Navigator is concerned that the patient needs to be assessed the patient will be added to an emergency triage list to be reviewed by a GP and the patient is called back either by the GP or by the Care Navigator Team.

4.8 Can patients email for an appointment – DrC responded that it is imperative that all patients book appointments or check symptoms via Reception and emails **must not be used** to request appointments or ask clinical advice as this is clinically unsafe as something urgent could be missed and emails are not constantly monitored especially if the admin team are busy supporting the phones. Therefore telephoning the surgery for appointments or booking via Doctor Link is the only way appointments can be booked at the moment..

4.9 CK asked about the availability of prebookable rather than on the day appointments as patients had commented why couldn't they make an appointment for the next day. DrC responded that each clinic had a set number of prebookable appointments and on the day appointments. Once the prebookable appointments are taken no more can be added for the day. The number of prebookable and on the day appointment is kept under review.

4.10 The Surgery telephone message currently states "if you are phoning to book an on the day appointment you can hold to see if an appointment is available. If the call is non urgent in nature please call from 11am onwards when phones are less busy" therefore patients have assumed that you phone for non urgent appointments after 11 so are frustrated when no prebookable appointments were available when they phoned after 11. KS explained that the message was not intended to cover appointments and would be changed.

Action SJ to contact comms supplier to change the message

4.11 Will the System One appointment booking system which was suspended at the start of Covid be reinstated. DrC responded that the booking system was suspended when the Surgery moved to telephone appointments at the start of Covid measures. Since then the Surgery has been trialing Doctor Link as a replacement which checks patient symptoms and arranges an appointment where applicable. The disadvantage with System One was it did not have a triage system which meant that appointments were sometimes booked with a GP that should have been booked with one of the Nursing Teams whereas booking via Doctor Link asks a series of questions about symptoms

SJ

	<p>allowing patient to be booked appropriately.</p> <p>4.12 Is the Surgery carrying out Health Check appointments which were initially suspended due to Covid. KS replied that these are being offered with patients receiving a letter to arrange a blood test and appointment.</p> <p>4.13 Can patients arrange a time period for a telephone appointment if their circumstances mean that they are unable to receive calls at certain times of the day. DrC explained that the process has recently been amended to a choice of morning or afternoon telephone appointment and if patient required a restricted time slot this could be requested for example a teacher needing an after school appointment. KS advised that experience has shown that not having a rigid appointment time has had the benefit of enabling a higher number of appointments. DrC stated that not having a fixed appointment time enabled the Health Professional to make an early call to those that may need to be seen later in the day for a face to face appointment based on the symptoms provided to the Care Navigator.</p> <p>4.14 A patient had contacted CK regarding the need for reasonable adjustments for patients with additional needs CK will discuss with KS outside the meeting. Action CK</p>	CK
5	<p>Covid Vaccinations</p> <p>JS asked if she will be contacted for her 2nd covid jab. KS replied that patients who had their 1st jab with the surgery will be contacted by the surgery with an appointment for their 2nd jab. KS is currently investigating being able to add Benfleet Clinic to the NHS online vaccination booking site so that patients can book their appointment rather than waiting for the surgery to call.</p> <p>JR asked whether the Surgery will be promoting vaccination at Runnymede. KS explained that the Surgery will receive vaccine for the 2nd jab based on their allocation for the 1st jab and will continue their vaccination service from Benfleet Clinic.</p> <p>Patients wishing to book their vaccination at the mass vaccination centre opened at Runnymede can book via the NHS vaccination website.</p>	
6	<p>AOB</p> <p>JH mentioned that patients signing up for System One online service are told on the website to take documents to Reception as message hasn't been updated for Covid measures. Whereas patients are now allowed to email copies of their document SJ will update website to give surgery</p>	

	<p>email address to send documents. Action SJ</p> <p>JS asked what will happen to electronic prescriptions currently sent to Lloyds Pharmacy as it is being taken over by another business. KS was unaware of the change and asked JS to assist by speaking to Lloyds to see if there will be continuity of business and advise KS. Action JS</p> <p>CK reiterated that the majority of complaints on social media were focused on the telephone and appointment system and in general patients were appreciative of the surgery GPs, nurses, pharmacist and admin.</p>	<p>SJ</p> <p>JS</p>
7	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>TBA</p>	