

Blue Dykes Patient Participation Group

Minutes of a meeting held at Blue Dykes on Thursday 14th August 2008

1 Attendance

Dr Tara George (chair). Rae Morton. Ian Morton. Ted Keeton (secretary). Wendie Heading. Roger Cowen. Ann Small.

The chair welcomed new members Katie Slack (assistant practice manager) and John Winter (patient representative).

2 Apologies

Chris Fletcher. Samantha Twigg. Verity Shelton. Jean Slater.

3 Minutes of Last meeting

Comment was made on the late circulation of the minutes of the last meeting. Doctor George apologised citing absences from work and pressure of work. Ann Small said that she was happy to receive the minutes at any time but it was agreed that minutes should be circulated as quickly as possible to give ample time for research and any action deemed necessary. Ted Keeton undertook to circulate the minutes, mainly by email to those so equipped, otherwise by surface mail.

The minutes were adopted.

4 Matters arising

1 Dr. Dilley

Ted Keeton reported that as requested a letter had been sent to Dr. Dilley wishing him well on his retirement.

Action - Item discharged.

2 Practice security and extended hours

Mr Cowen circulated a letter which he had received from Ben Bradshaw MP. The letter expanded on the new Extended Opening Hours Directed Enhanced Service (DES) and the remuneration available to practices who implement it. He spoke of 'new money' and placed the onus on the PCT to implement the scheme as a new service and consider all aspects of staff safety.

Katie Slack explained that Mr Bradshaw's letter was misleading in that there is in fact no new money. The scheme is to be financed from the 'choose and book' scheme which is no longer supported financially.

Mr Cowen said that as a result of Mr Bradshaw's letter he has written to the PCT seeking clarification but has not yet received a reply. He then introduced a

Department of Health Interim Guide to PCTs on the DES and drew attention to those parts relating to practice security.

Dr George was asked if the practice management had considered the suggestions made by the group as to enhanced security in the waiting area. She said that quotations had been received from a number of locksmiths but that the construction of the doors in question made the cost very high. The practice is seeking assistance from the PCT.

Ann Small complimented the practice on the introduction of the red line system in the waiting area but added that it was not always respected.

Action – to next meeting.

3 Notice Board

Mr Cowen asked for clarification as to why a notice regarding problems with blood tests, prepared by Mrs Fletcher, had not been displayed. Confusion had arisen since the notice did not specify the involvement of Clay Cross Hospital. There followed a discussion on the proposed changes to the phlebotomy services offered. See 8 below.

4 Telephone system

Action – to next meeting.

5 Newsletter

Action – item discharged.

6 Booking of advance appointments

In accord with Mr Cowen's request that figures for non-attendance for appointments be brought to the next meeting, Katie Slack produced the following figures:

For the period 1st June to 31st July 2008, patients did not attend for booked appointments:

Doctors	185
Nurses	169
Health visitors	33

This represented a significant waste of staff time and a similar reduction in the service available to patients. Dr George reiterated the policy of the practice in relation to patients who fail to keep appointments (see minutes of last meeting). Katie Slack spoke of her experience in a practice which did warn repeat offenders and who removed from the practice those who failed to respond. She reported a significant fall in the number of patients who failed to attend.

A discussion of the problem followed, after which the group agreed to recommend that the practice should consider adopting a more forceful policy towards such

patients with a view to reducing the amount of time wasted whilst at the same time protecting the interests of the more vulnerable patients.

Action – to next meeting.

7 Car parking at the surgery

Mr Cowen reported his meeting with local councillors regarding road marking to keep the entrance to the car park clear. In answer to questions from Mr Cowen, Dr George reported that the practice had investigated the cost of marking out the car park anew and providing extra disabled parking facilities. The cost was prohibitive and the provision of additional disabled parking spaces, properly marked out, would in fact reduce the total number of spaces available. Mr Cowen provided the practice with details of the councillors to approach should they wish to have single lines, white or yellow, outside the entrance.

Action – to next meeting.

8 Phlebotomy (proposed closure of local services)

In answer to questions, Dr George said that the practice had no knowledge of any developments in the proposed changes in the local phlebotomy service and that they are awaiting the result of the PCT survey and deliberations.

Doctor George explained that if the practice experienced a delay or backlog in the ability to get an appointment their action would be to inform the PCT who would in turn approach the phlebotomy service to lay on additional appointments. The criterion was usually a wait in excess of two weeks. Doctor George also told the group that if she was of the opinion that a patient needed an immediate blood test then she would take it herself at the time or ask a nurse to take blood for her in practice.

Action – to next meeting.

9 Any Other Business

9.1 Ted Keeton referred to the role of the PPG as outlined at the inaugural meeting and questioned the method of conveying the results of their deliberations to the practice management. Some members felt that a 'suggestion' was appropriate; some felt that a direct 'recommendation' could be construed as too dictatorial. After some discussion on the relevance of the PPG and its recommendations, it was agreed that it would be appropriate, and acceptable, for the group to 'recommend' that the practice consider recommendations made by the group.

Action – discharged.

9.2 Mr Winter asked if the demographic of the group represented that of the patient base since the patient representatives appeared to be of mature years. Doctor George confirmed that although the practice has a high proportion of older patients, younger patients are under represented in the group. She felt that steps should be taken to attract more younger patients into this group and, to that end, suggested that new applicants should be screened to achieve a more balanced membership.

Mrs Small felt that the group should make direct contact with younger patient groups, for example Mother and Baby group, and volunteered to undertake that contact. Her offer was gratefully accepted.

Ian Morton warned the group that the effectiveness of a group or committee peaked at a membership of around 12 and after that declined in direct proportion to the increase in membership.

Action – to next meeting.

9.3 Doctor George updated the group regarding changes to personnel within the practice. Doctor Prabu, who replaced Dr Dilley on his retirement, is settling in well.

As mentioned previously the practice now has the first of a succession of final year medical students who will spend about 8 weeks in the practice as part of their studies. The current student is female.

Doctor George that the medical staff in the practice, in terms of full time equivalents, are approximately 50% male and 50% female.

Action – discharged.

9.4.1 Wendi Heading said that on completing a recent survey, she realised that Blue Dykes are achieving their objectives.

9.4.2 Wendi also commented on a reported lack of magazines and children's books in the waiting room. Doctor George said that the reception staff regularly inspect publications for content and condition.

Action – discharged.

Date of next meeting

Thursday 4th September 2008 at 7.30 p.m. Agenda items and apologies to Ted Keeton by 2nd September, either by email ted@border-collies.demon.co.uk or by telephone 01246 590191.