

The Lakes Medical Practice

Patient Participation Group Report 2012-13

Introduction

The Lakes Medical Practice decided to set up a Patient Participation Group (PPG) in 2009, and after some low key advertising, and a lot of word of mouth promotion, the first meetings were held in early 2010. Our inaugural formal meeting was March 2010 when a constitution was agreed and members were voted in to the roles of Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. The PPG is run as a Charitable group with annual general meetings held in March/April each year.

Current Executive: Chair Brian Marr

Treasurer: Anne Marr

Secretary: Mark Plenderleith

Although there has been a slight hiatus over Xmas and New Year 2012 the group typically meets once a month on a Monday evening. Currently there is a core of about twelve people that meets regularly.

The group also has a list of about fifty patients email addresses which are used for obtaining a wider opinion on the service the practice provides. Recently we discussed combining the physical group and the virtual email group as this would cover a broader demographic of ages.

The Practice demographics are detailed in the table below.

Age Range	Male	Female	Total
0 – 16	719	639	1358
17 - 24	423	408	831
25 - 34	485	438	923
35 - 44	516	568	1084
45 - 54	787	710	1497
55 - 64	610	648	1258
65 - 74	551	544	1095
75+	450	647	1097

The demographics of the PPG and the virtual group are as follows

Age Range	Male	Female	Total
0 – 16	2	0	2
17 - 24	2	5	7
25 - 34	3	5	8
35 - 44	3	9	12
45 - 54	7	8	15
55 - 64	5	16	21
65 - 74	8	11	19
75+	4	1	5

[The Lakes Medical Practice Website](#)

As of March 2013 we had 119,000 unique visits to the site over the previous year. Patients have been able to order prescriptions on line for the last few years and in February 2013 nearly 160 people did so. Nearly 120 patients are signed up to receiving our quarterly newsletter by email.

This report summarises the development of The Lakes Medical Practices Patient Survey in 2012/13.

It contains:

1. Priorities for the 2012/13 patient survey and how they were agreed with the PPG.
2. Changes in services required as a result of the patient survey (agreed with PPG).
3. Action plan detailing priorities and proposals agreed with PPG.
4. Publication of the Local Patient Participation Report on the Practice website (by 31st March 2013).

1. Priorities for the 2012/13 patient survey and how they were agreed with the PPG.

In the June of 2012 the 2011-12 survey results were discussed and it was decided to meet at an away-day to discuss in more detail an action plan.

On the afternoon of 24th July 2012 at The Lounge in Penrith members of staff and PPG members met to discuss points highlighted in the previous survey.

Away Day Discussion

Minutes 2012

The minutes of this meeting are also downloadable from the website.

Three major problems were highlighted:

- **Car Parking on the Health Centre site**
- **Length of waiting time for routine appointments and resulting lack of continuity of care**
- **Lack of confidentiality in the reception area**

Throughout the year the PPG has been highlighting problems and suggesting ways for improving the service provided by the practice. An ongoing concern is the lack of a wider demographic within the group. Several members, but most notably Roz Niedt, have gone out of their way to try and promote the PPG and drum up more members.

Moving in to 2013 we will continue to attempt to increase numbers and offer more educational events. Although not a problem, the need for regular educational events is an ongoing theme that almost all would like to see continue. In June 2012 the Women's Health Educational Event was attended by well over fifty people. Future events that people have suggested include Mental Health, Asthma, Men's Health, and Dementia.

2. Changes in services required as a result of the patient survey (agreed with PPG).

- **Car Parking at Penrith Health Centre and Hospital**

Both Ken Whitehead and Brian Marr have been actively involved in meetings held with the Trust looking at the terrible parking situation on site. The recent accidental death of one of our patients in the car park has only highlighting the need for an urgent solution to this problem. As a temporary measure the practice has managed to acquire parking spaces in B&Q for staff to allow more space for patients in the main car park. It looks very much as though hospital and health centre staff will be moved to the Penrith Rugby Club car park to allow more space on-site for patients. Ken Whitehead has also been promoting local bus services with timetables displayed around the health centre and hospital. The aim this year is to look at reducing staff use of the on-site car parking without jeopardising safety during the darker months.

- **Reducing waiting times to see GP's and improving continuity of care**

At the time the 2011-12 survey was undertaken the average wait to see a GP had

increased to one week, with waits to see some part-time GP's as long as a fortnight. Although a triage system was in place for urgent problems, it still meant most people were waiting an unacceptably long time to be seen. 45% of respondents stated they had to wait 8 days or more to see the GP of their choice! As a consequence of these delays patients were often making an appointment with any GP just to be seen, and continuity of care was deteriorating. The practice business team started looking at possible system changes early in 2012 and put their preferred option to the GP's in late Spring of 2012. The aim was to improve patient access to GP's and allow for improved continuity of care. This also had to allow for urgent problems to be dealt with on the day.

- **Lack of confidentiality in the reception area**

Since the two practices merged in 2008 and the current reception area was redesigned a common complaint has been the reduced patient confidentiality. This occurs on several levels and is a recurring complaint at PPG meetings. Discussions between patient and receptionist are clearly overheard by all staff and patients in the reception area. The wide desk tends to force people to raise their voice. The open plan design allows noise to travel from the back of the office area into the waiting area.

Putting in the radio and waiting area speakers was an early attempt to mask some of this conversational noise. Unfortunately it made little difference. The PPG have made several suggestions over the years, although most entail a redesign of the reception area or else the moving of the reception 'backroom' staff to a different area of the practice.

The practice has had meetings in the past with the owners of the health centre discussing both the poor layout of the original reception redesign, and how to try and correct some of the more major faults. Unfortunately this has never produced any concrete agreements from the health authority. With the pending dissolution of the primary care trust in 2013 this seems more and more unlikely to happen.

3. Action plan detailing priorities and proposals agreed with PPG.

Car Parking

The PPG is still representing the practice at meetings held with the hospital authority. Ken Whitehead was meeting with Penrith Hospital League of Friends in the week before Easter 2013 to keep abreast of progress with changes to the car parking. Most staff and patients have noted the permanent car parking attendant in place this last few months. Permanent crash barriers have been put in place around the immediate entrance to the health centre.

The council is currently relaying the footpath between the health centre and Penrith Rugby Club. I assume the path will have appropriate street lighting in place before long. This will certainly improve safety once the longer, darker nights start to draw in again.

Future plans for the hospital and health centre site include a major redevelopment which may well see the practices moved to a different location in town. Talks about these plans are in the early stages, and with the current financial situation in the health sector only likely to get worse it may be a few years yet before Penrith gets more 21st Century facilities.

For the moment the practice will make sure that staff that do not require a car for work try to park off-site. The continued employment of a car park attendant will be supported by the practice. The PPG will also look at investing more time, and

possibly resources, in supporting the Patient Transport Service.

Reducing waiting times

The introduction of the 'Callback' service these last few months has allowed patients to speak directly with a GP of their choice within the day. All requests for a consultation are now forwarded to a GP with the aim to speak with the patient within a couple of hours. Apart from at particularly busy times, ie. Monday mornings and following Bank Holidays, most calls are returned within half an hour. Approximately 40% of calls are dealt with there and then over the telephone, and initial feedback from patients has been on the whole very positive. Waiting times have almost completely disappeared and as doctors we are aware that continuity of care has definitely improved.

Part of the problem this last year has been due to inadequate numbers of medical staff. With three GP's leaving during 2012-13 it has meant that the remaining GP's have been under considerable pressure to maintain a safe service. Two new doctors are currently in post with a third due to start in May 2013. This will bring the GP numbers up to full strength for the first time in nearly a year.

One of the major audit projects for 2013 will be to look at the quality of the care the practice is currently providing. Over the last few years our satisfaction figures have been declining, and it was evident that this required a major overhaul rather than simply making a few small tweaks. With the introduction of the current telephone 'Callback' system, major changes to the management of the practice, a new clinical computer system, and the closer integration of community and primary care services within Eden, it is hoped our service will start to improve and grow.

Practice Opening Times

Open Closing

Monday 8.00 18:30

Tuesday 8.00 18.30

Wednesday 8.00 20.00 (extended hours 18.30-20.00)

Thursday 8.00 18.30

Friday 8.00 18.30

Saturday 8.30 11.30 (extended hours)

The reception area

In early August 2012 the PCT Head of Estates met with management to discuss the state of the building and what could be done with the reception area. It was pointed out that this was a recurring complaint in the last few satisfaction surveys. The dangerous situation of the car parking was also discussed.

As owners of the property we had hoped the PCT would take some responsibility for the initial poor design of the 'new' reception area and make constructive suggestions as to how best to remedy the problem. Rather naively we had also hoped they may offer to contribute towards work that may be needed.

I think it can be safely said this meeting was a complete waste of time for the GP and practice manager involved!

Changes have been put in place to try and minimise conversation noise at the front reception desk. Receptionists will not take or make calls from the front desk. The practice is looking at ways of damping sound coming from the back of the reception area. The longer goal is to move reception and telephones out of the reception area to allow for a quieter environment behind the main reception desk. We would also like to put in a privacy cubicle in one of the two waiting areas so that confidential

conversations can be had without any concerns about being overheard. The PPG will be actively involved in the development of these changes over the next year.

As of March 2013 we have a new Head of Reception who has been brought in from outside the NHS in an attempt to bring some corporate mentality to the service we provide.

Most patients will also be pleased to know the pictures currently up in the main waiting area will be removed and replaced with more uplifting images!

4. Publication of the Patient Participation Report on the Practice Website (by 31st March 2013).

This full report can be downloaded from the practice website. We will also email copies to all PPG and virtual members, with the plan to discuss at the AGM in April 2013.