

Higham Ferrers Surgery
Patient Participation Group Meeting
11th December 2024
Minutes

Attendees: MG, KL, DG

Apologies: ER, SR, MD, DW

Agenda Items

Introduction: MG welcomed KL the newest member of the PPG to the team.

CBT: A member of the PPG had requested prior to the meeting if MG could address the new telephony system as they believe that call waiting times are still long.

MG did not have statistics at the time, but since the meeting has an update:

The practice received 4294 inbound calls in the month of November 2024 which is a 1,103 increase in calls since June when the new system was introduced.

The data shows that the average abandoned call time by patients was 31s into the call before joining the que.

In November on average, patients waited 15m 26s before their call was answered. In June on average patients waited 6m 22s, this is an increase of 9m 4s, but is expected when the number of calls inbound has increased as well.

In November on average patients who did que waited 8m 29s before they decided to terminate the call, this is about the same as June which was 8m 39s.

331 call backs were requested, and 296 calls were successful (89.42%).

KL advised that maybe one thing that could help would be if the system stated an approximate waiting time while in the que. MG advised that this could be something the practice could investigate, however it could deem unsuccessful as each call is different, whilst one call could be 2 minutes long another could be 10 minutes long. So having approximations not adhered to or going up or down while the patient is waiting could just irritate them. MG advised that one thing that would almost certainly decrease call waiting times is if more patients who are able, used Anima for their requests decreasing the number of calls coming into the practice.

Online Services: MG advised that NHS England and the PCN are still encouraging patients to use Anima and the NHS App.

MG advised that there are some practices in the PCN that have gone full Anima triage, meaning that patients must submit an Anima request via online. They do not accept walk-ins or appointment bookings via telephone.

MG advised that Higham Ferrers Surgery will also be following this route, however a new Anima app is being designed, so the practice will wait till this is finalised and implemented. DG asked if this looked likely to be in 2025, MG replied he believes they are aiming for 2025, but no date has been confirmed as of yet.

MG also advised that if a patient needs assistance with downloading or setting up the NHS App or an Anima account then he can help, all patients need to do is contact reception, who will take the patients name and contact number and MG will call them back and set up a session with them.

KL asked if the practice have communicated this to patients. MG advised that the practice have sent texts, it has been mentioned in all PPG meetings this year (so is on the Agenda and Minutes) and is also advertised online and on posters within the practice.

KL asked if he was able to make a survey to see what patients think about the NHS App etc MG advised that if KL makes one then he will look into sending it out to patients.

GP Contract: MG advised that a question came up last time about the GP contract and how this will affect the practice. MG has been advised by the practice that it shouldn't impact patients directly, the GP contract is more to do internally with keeping up staff training, adhering to procedures and the practice engaging more with the ICB/NHS England.

DG asked if this meant GP's are back under the NHS. MG advised that practices are still private but are governed by the NHS.

KL asked is training standardised in GP practices or is it customised to each individual practice. MG advised that training should be the same in all practices. In our PCN most training is across all practices, however some practices have different needs to others so some may take an avid interest into other avenues that some practices might not need to.

MG gave an example that receptionists in the ENPCN are 'Care Navigators' and not receptionists as they are trained to triage and signpost patients to the right care rather than patients consistently being booked in with a GP, i.e. Back pain would go to first contact physio, a chesty cough would go to respiratory, a new rash would go to pharmacy first etc.

KL advised that maybe patients should be trained a little more in what reception staff do, MG agreed and advised that the practice and PPG have done this a few years ago and a patient pathway was drawn up by a previous PPG member and is available on the Higham Ferrers website.

Assisted Dying Bill: MG advised that the vote on Friday 29th November had gone through. As far as the practice can see the impact it will have is; The patient need to satisfy two independent doctors that they are eligible, with at least seven days between each assessment. This could put more pressure on the ability of doctors to make a six-month diagnosis.

ENPA: DG advised that he hasn't been able to attend the past two ENPA meetings. MG advised he will contact the ENPA president and vice President to see if he can get their minutes. MG advised that the PPG need to start thinking about another member joining DG in attending these meetings.

MG advised that from our last meeting it was discussed that the ENPA were attending some schools within the East Northants area to inform and build knowledge of the services available to the children in the ENPCN and that one of our PPG members, previously, mentioned maybe the ENPA or NHS England should look into making an app for children to use.

KL advised that Apps aren't cheap to build and take a very long time to make so maybe going into schools and teaching them this knowledge could be more beneficial. MG advised that our PPG could do teaching sessions and set them up ourselves. KL advised there is a template he uses at home with his children as to what to do in an emergency and maybe our PPG could do this and send it to local schools, and for the practice and PPG to hand out to Higham's younger patients.

Winter Newsletter: MG asked if there is anything PPG members would like in the winter newsletter to let him know by Thursday 19th.

AOB: DG asked if we could set up a stall at the Higham Ferrers farmers market again. MG asked why, DG replied so we can advertise to patients what our PPG does. MG advised that we could look into it, but maybe we should focus on getting members to join our PPG and start getting an active PPG going first. Then we can look into raising funds for things like events and stalls etc

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 5th March 2025 at 5pm.