

Brixton and Clapham Park Primary Care Network

Notes from Patient Group Meeting

Thursday January 23rd 2024 2pm
Zoom

Present

Jennie Parker, Annika Singh, Magally Nato Paucar, Michelle Green, Abigail Oyedele, Nicola Kingston, Jenny Cobby, Roz Borley, Peter O'Connell, Funke Ogbede, David Ball, Maureen Simpson, Iain Campbell, Helen Stansfield, Michael Sinclair, Tom Maher, Kathy Butcher, Peter Woodward, Ernestine Montgomerie, Lucy Ismail, Philippa Cardale, Makeda Anderson, Joy Wilson, Chris French.

Apologies

Chris Newman, Terry Parker, Peter Watkins, Christine Jacobs.

1. Welcome/Introductions.

Nicola welcomed everyone to the meeting, and asked everyone to introduce themselves and say one thing they will do over the next month to reduce their stress levels.

2. General overview from the surgeries and PCN

Jennie Parker gave an update on things across our surgeries:

- Hetherington surgery now has their new switchboard, which means patients should not now get an engaged tone, should be told their place in the telephone queue, and can be given an automatic ring back.
Two people gave feedback – both were positive, one said it was 'amazing'
There was a suggestion that the initial message was still rather long.
- Econsult, with its lengthy questionnaires will be replaced in April with AccuRx, for online consultations, which will allow patients to enter freetext about their questions and solutions sought. It is hoped that this will make the process much easier, without making it more difficult for clinicians.
- Jennie confirmed that the Patient Access system will not change, and can still be used.
- The NHS App should be working better and will be linking through to more things.

In discussion, concerns were raised about the increased emphasis on digital systems, and it was stressed that many people could not use, or do not like digital systems for medical matters. There was a strong plea for continuing emphasis on face to face communications between patients & health professionals (which is thought to be

somewhat endangered), and the real concerns about the delays in getting face to face appointments.

3. MyChart – feedback from patients- NHS App, and Blood test booking

There was a lively group discussion about My Chart, the NHS App, & SwiftQueue, with varying experience & understanding of each, and the assistance of GP practice staff in enabling patients to navigate these waters is much appreciated.

My Chart is the new hospital digital system in use at Guys and St Thomas and Kings as part of the new EPIC system.

Some patients said that they didn't understand having to use these different systems, and where they could best find the dates of their appointments, and the letters following hospital appointments?

Some people have already used My Chart and found it useful, while others have not, and some shared very real concerns are about how their data will be shared and potentially sold to American insurance companies*.

Jennie said that the **NHS App** will hopefully have details of hospital appointments – but for hospital records and all appointments will be in MyChart,

You can sign up for the NHS App at home, but this requires you to scan your passport etc and photo, but it can also be done at the surgery if you take in your ID -

Our surgeries all part of the Safe Surgeries initiative, and welcome and register patients without ID, but this is different from the NHS App, which requires ID.

Abigail informed the meeting that a group within Citizens UK have been working on this, and are also part of the Patients not Passports campaign, and she can link us in to that.

The new digital system for booking **blood tests** is called **SwiftQueue**, and we discussed this at our last meeting, and the very real issues of inequality it raises.

Some people reported that it had been easy to book blood tests at Gracefield, Guys, St Thomas or Tessa Jowell using the digital system, while others reported the real problems for people who were unable to work the digital system, as we had discussed at our last meeting.

We heard our surgery receptionists were being really helpful in assisting people unable to book themselves.. We heard that some patients who turned up for blood tests without a digital appointment at Gracefield were indeed sent back to their surgeries and we feel strongly that this raises major concerns and inequalities impacts. We know this is the growing trend towards digital booking, and we need to highlight this.

Maureen raised our concerns at the earlier Lambeth Together Board meeting, and repeated the concerns in January as we do not accept the formal response by Sarah Austin of GSTT to our question to Lambeth Together which said that surgeries should

help patients who find it difficult. Maureen has now been given contacts, who we can follow up with, who are dealing with this and My Chart.

There is also the major concern about data sharing, and who will have access to our data, and if it will be sold to private companies, including American insurance companies. Lambeth Keep Our NHS Public is also concerned about this- details below.

Jennie offered that she could provide a demo at our next meeting on April 18th at Pavilion of the different systems, and we agreed this would be very helpful.

We also discussed an additional follow up meeting on the equalities issues, maybe with the people suggested to Maureen and others, and, we will follow up.

4. Development of the Hub at the Cube

Chris French introduced himself, as working for Lambeth Together's Neighbourhood Wellbeing and Delivery Alliance. He wants to involve our Primary Care Network and Patient Group in a discussion about future uses of the Cube Community Centre on Kings Avenue.

He is working with Learning in Action and Nils Bucknell to develop Cube uses to support health and wellbeing, and he wants to hear our views. Metropolitan & Thames Valley Housing Association, who own the building, would like to extend its use and he is working with them. Some small non recurrent funding from Lambeth Together and Public Health is available, but there is limited time to put up recommendations.

There was then quite a wide ranging discussion, and this resulted in our recommendations, building on previous events that have been held. We feel it is important to work with the current users of the Cube, as we did previously, and involve Chin Wah Wong from the Clapham Park Project, as she runs a number of weekly projects, especially for older people, at the Cube, she was central to assisting our previous events success.

Any events would benefit from a regular programme, promoted to a regular group of people, covering our PCN patients plus local residents around the Cube.

The group suggested bi monthly Health promotion workshops, alternating with our regular Patient Group meetings.

We suggested as first topics:

1. Basic Digital updates, including NHS App, My Chart and SwiftQueue – to plan this based on previous information sessions plus discussions on our recent concerns highlighting equalities issues.
- 2 Hypertension and CardioVascular issues, suggested by Jennie Parker which we know are of interest to many.

- 3 Diabetes and healthy eating – this was very popular before, and invitations were targeted by the surgery to relevant patient groups.
- 4 After the meeting we have also had suggestions about mental health and young peoples issues.

We would want to work with people who already attend events there to ensure they develop further issues for discussion.

We would like to know more about existing provision at the Cube eg Tai Chi that can be promoted to patients, is there a Website, can we promote it?

5. **Citizens UK**- Abigail offered to talk more about Patients not Passports at our next meeting, and also update following the Citizens Assembly, on progress on the NHS pledges and future Assemblies and discussions on Housing .
6. Communications- promoting our Patient Group, we haven't seen any notices promoting the Patient Group, and we suggest these are needed for our next meeting.
7. AOB
 - Cataract Surgery – it was raised that Specsavers had made a referral for cataract surgery direct to a private hospital. How was this paid for by the NHS? Jennie explained that there is a Minor Eye Conditions Scheme where some local opticians, not just Specsavers, can make referrals for surgery which now includes options for private hospitals.
 - Specsavers have been commissioned to provide NHS hearing tests and hearing aids in addition to the microsuction service already discussed.
 - UK Biobank- there are concerns , that Biobank have also started to sell on our data to American insurance companies see link:
<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/nov/12/private-uk-health-data-donated-medical-research-shared-insurance-companies>

8. Dates of Next meeting

- Thursday 18th April in person at Pavilion surgery- people will need a map, as its location is not known to many.

Footnotes

* EPIC is American owned, and EMIS is now owned by United Health, an American health insurance company.

Lambeth Keep our NHS Public is the local branch of the national campaign that is concerned about privatisation of the NHS- open to all
<https://keepournhspublic.com/localgroup/lambeth-konp/>

