



PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP (PPG) NEWSLETTER - June 2019

New PPG Group

Both The Avenue and St Peter's Road surgeries are now combined as Cirencester Health Group (CHG) and both PPGs have come together to form a single Group to provide a coordinated patient voice. Our Terms of Reference are currently being revised but in the meantime Nigel Collins (The Avenue) has been elected Chair, Philip Young (St Peter's Road) Vice Chair and Ann Coleman (St Peter's Road) Minutes Secretary.

Expressions of interest in the joining the Group should be sent by email to the surgery Practice Manager but the size of the group is limited and we may have to ask you to join a waiting list until vacancies occur. In the meantime, there may be an opportunity to join the "virtual" PPG, whereby you would be kept informed of, and contribute to, the activities and decisions reached by the PPG but not actually attend meetings.

Merger News

While it would appear that not much has changed since the formal merger of the two surgeries, both continue to operate from their established premises and we as patients continue to see the same healthcare workers but behind the scenes it is a very different story.

CHG is now the official name of the practice and all official documents now use this name. For us as patients it means that whenever we come into contact with other healthcare workers it is the CHG name that is used and The Avenue address is given as the main site because the Group is only allowed one official address. Don't worry about this because CHG has procedures in place so that the Doctor or Nurse who referred you to a specialist will see the report and take whatever action is needed.

One of the biggest challenges faced by the new Group was the merger of the IT systems and achieving this required a lot of hard work (and gnashing of teeth!) but all is now resolved.

Patient Awareness Meetings

From time to time the PPG run informal meetings to discuss topical medical-related issues which we believe will benefit the patients of CHG. We are currently considering the two topics below. If either of these would be of interest to you, please let us know so we can judge possible take-up and make appropriate arrangements. The meetings are usually held in the early evening at one or other of our surgeries.

1. *A day in the life of a GP*

This will be about 45 minutes with one of our GPs who will talk informally about what fills a GP's busy workday. It will help us all understand not only the specific pressures our GPs are under but also some of the wider issues the NHS Primary care system faces. We are aiming to present this in September.

2. *How to make the most of your appointment*

We have a limited time for our appointments with a Doctor or Nurse, so how do we as patients maximise the benefit? At this session we will learn how the new appointment system (planned for later this year) will work, what we can expect and what we should and should not do. This should be a very informative and helpful session.



Missed Appointments

For most of us missing an appointment with a Doctor or Nurse is something we would not entertain but in the month from 2nd April to 2nd May 2019, in CHG there were 76 missed Doctors' appointments leading to a loss of 1191 minutes (~20 hrs) of consultation time. In addition, 51 nurse appointments (1025 minutes or 17hrs lost), 24 Health Care (302 minutes), 2 Social Prescribing and 1 midwife appointment were classed as 'Did Not Attend'. Please help us reduce this waste by remembering to call the surgery and cancel unwanted appointments, or ask a friend or family member to remind you to go to the Doctor if that is something that would help you. Incredibly, missed appointments included some made on the day because the need to see someone was considered so urgent by a patient - but not urgent enough to actually go and see the Doctor!

Two telephone appointments were also missed. A Doctor will try to reach you twice and then take no further action, leaving it to you to rearrange the call.

Self Help

We must understand that our Doctors and Nurses work under considerable pressure and do not have the time to follow up with us what we have been asked to do to address our health issues. For example, if a blood test is necessary it is up to us to go and have the test done, even if it is some months hence. Likewise, we must ensure that follow up appointments are made where necessary for such issues as diabetes clinics, etc. One of the aims of the PPG is to encourage patients to become more actively engaged in their own healthcare by giving them a voice in the organisation of their care and being proactive in seeking information.

Telephone Prescription Ordering Line

Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group recently wrote to a group of patients who have repeat prescriptions for Stoma Care or Continence Products delivered by a Dispensing Contractor, asking them to order their prescriptions via a Prescription Ordering Line rather than through the Surgery. If you are in this group, your PPG would be interested to hear how this new arrangement is working for you, but please note we cannot act for specific cases if you have encountered a problem.

This Prescription Ordering Line, 0300 421 1215 can be used by any patient to order a repeat prescription. When you call you will be asked to agree that the call centre representative can access the relevant part of your medical notes. Only repeat prescriptions can be ordered this way and the call centre cannot deal with any other enquiry. This service does however give us the option to use the telephone to order repeat prescriptions.

Practice Website

CHG are currently running the present Avenue and St Peter's Road websites while a new site is commissioned to serve the enlarged practice. We are aware that there are non-urgent issues on both sites but at present it is not the best use of limited resources to resolve these ahead of the new facility. A contract to design the new website has been signed and work should have started, with the expectation that it will be operational later this year.

PPG Contact

This Newsletter has been prepared by your Patient Participation Group for the benefit of CHG patients. To contact your PPG, about any of the issues discussed in this Newsletter or other issues you think we should be aware of, please get in touch via email or letter to the surgery addressed to the PPG Chair, but please understand we cannot take up individual cases where you have a complaint or dispute with the surgery; these must be raised directly with the Management.