

Minutes of Patient Forum Held on Monday 4th November 2019 at Waterloo Health Centre 6.30 to 7.30pm

Present: Practice Staff Dr George Verghese, Chair
Rona Sian, Practice Business Manager
Eileen Marriner, Patient Services Team Manager
Audrey De Souza, Lead Patient Services Assistant
Dorothy McManus, Patient Services Assistant

Facilitator: Wai Ha Lam Development Officer, Lambeth Patient Participation Group Network

Patients in attendance: KA, DA, LR, ML, PL, NL, PC, SM, MC, JG, AM
HA, KK AH AM MB MH KH DS AMW BZ SW
RW PM MD PC PF BA NB CL MF MM
MS PC DS CA JM AS GB JSG SB AS
BD LLG (44 patients attended)

Background

A text invitation had been sent to all patients aged 16 and over inviting them to attend our Patient Forum Meeting to learn about changes within the practice and changes within the local health services. Over 70 patients had confirmed their attendance 2 days prior to the Forum. Unfortunately, as we could only accommodate up to 40 patients safely, around 30 patients had been asked not to attend on this occasion but that priority would be given to them to ensure they could attend our next Forum. The number of responses on this occasion had been quite unexpected. For future meetings alternative accommodation is to be secured if we again have such a positive response.

Introductions

Dr George Verghese, Partner and Clinical Director of Lambeth Primary Care Network (PCN) introduced himself and practice staff present. He explained that he had been a Partner at the practice for several years now and was also Clinical Director of Lambeth PCN. Dr Verghese thanked everyone for coming to the Forum.

Agenda Items

1. **Introduction to Primary Care Network (PCN) & North Lambeth PCN:** Dr Verghese explained that from 1st July 2019 all practices in England were mandated to join wider Primary Care Networks, the most significant reform to general practice in England in a generation. The purpose of PCNs is to integrate primary care with secondary and community services. Since January 2019 practices have been organising themselves into local networks to provide care at greater scale by sharing staff and funding. Waterloo Health Centre is now part of the North Lambeth Primary Care Network; this comprises 6 practices including WHC as follows:

- Hurley & Riverside Practices
- Lambeth Walk Group Practice
- The Vauxhall Surgery
- The South Lambeth Rd Practice
- Mawbey Group Practice

The total list size for North Lambeth PCN is approximately 70,000 patients. Dr George Verghese is the Clinical Director of Lambeth PCN.

As part of a PCN, GPs will be able to work within multidisciplinary teams, including Pharmacists, physiotherapists, paramedics, Physician Associates and Social Prescribing Support Workers.

Social Prescribing: Over the coming months practices will work closely together, sharing staff and funding to deliver better care to our local population. For 19/20 the focus is on “Social Prescribing”. Social prescribing, sometimes referred to as community referral, is a means of enabling GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services.

Recognising that people’s health is determined primarily by a range of social, economic and environmental factors, social prescribing seeks to address people’s needs in a holistic way. It also aims to support individuals to take greater control of their own health. Social prescribing schemes can involve a variety of activities which are typically provided by voluntary and community sector organisations. Examples include volunteering, arts activities, group learning, gardening, befriending, cookery, healthy eating advice and a range of sports.

2. **North Lambeth Primary Care Network Patient Participation Group:** Each practice within a PCN will have their own Patient Participation Group. However, each PCN will also have a PPG. Dr Verghese asked those present at the meeting to consider becoming active on our PPG and to consider representing our practice at the wider North Lambeth PPG. This would give our practice a voice at the table. Three patients had indicated their wish to consider representing this practice by meeting further with Dr Verghese, Wai Ha Lam (Development Officer Lambeth PPG) and Eileen Marriner (Team Manager, WHC). This is to be organised shortly.
3. **WHC Staffing & Partnership Changes:** Dr Verghese explained that we have increased the numbers within our clinical teams. The practice now has 3 salaried GPs and 3 Physician Associates as well as 4 Nurses and 1 GP Pharmacist. Dr Verghese explained the role of the Physician Associates e.g. that they are qualified and trained to work at primary care level. Dr Rachel Aarons (Salaried GP) had returned from maternity leave and was joined by two new salaried GPs, Dr Daphne Dhas and Dr Pushpam Chadha.

Patients were advised that Dr Mark Smith, Partner is to leave the practice in January 2020 and will be going into the GP Training field. The Partnership had been preparing for this change for some time. Dr Smith has been a real asset to the practice and will be missed by the whole team and patients alike.

4. **eConsults:** Dr Verghese reminded patients of this service accessible via our website. Patients can use this for clinical and non clinical queries such as requesting private referral letters, medical report requests and repeat sickness certificates. Further details available on our website. www.waterloohealth.co.uk.
5. **Restructuring of Practice Access:** Dr Verghese explained our morning triage system. Between 8am and 12 noon Monday to Friday (and some afternoons) all calls to the practice are triaged by a Senior doctor (Partner). This means our senior doctors are inevitably less available to see patients. However, the triaging system results in best use of clinical resources and is meant to be mutually satisfactory for both patients and doctors. Patients can be seen if appropriate much quicker than the national average wait to see a doctor which is currently 15 days. Patients can be seen either the same day or within 24-48 hours. In view of the restructuring of the access model, senior partner availability for clinic (ie Dr Maynard, Dr Morris and Dr Verghese) will be down to one day per week as a result due to increased triage, managerial and clinical supervision duties.
6. **Flu Vaccinations:** Dr Verghese reminded patients to have flu jabs and advised that our uptake had improved this year. Our final dedicated flu clinic is to be held on Wednesday 6th November 2019 6-7.30pm.

7. **Questions/Feedback from Patients:** Those attending were happy to engage and raised the following questions which Dr Verghese responded to:

“What IT back up systems does the practice have as your IT systems were down when I telephoned”. Dr Verghese advised that some instances are beyond our control and that on this particular occasion our server went down and was fairly quickly restored. The Practice does have a robust Business Continuity Plan we are frequently updating.

“Why can’t I ever get to see my preferred GP. Dr Verghese explained our triage system, para 5 above refers. He reiterated that our triage system is meant to be mutually beneficial. However, there may be times when it may not be possible for patients to see the doctor of their choice. Drs do of course aim to consider continuity of care in the course of triage. Patients were advised to state if they were unhappy with the outcome of a call.

“It is sometimes difficult to get through on the phones” Dr Verghese responded that we currently have staff absences due to sick leave and that the practice can have as many as 300-400 incoming calls especially on a Monday morning. However, the PCN is looking at smart telephony systems as a future option.

“How does the practice train and develop practice reception staff” Dr Verghese advised that all reception staff are provided with a full training & induction programme which includes shadowing more experienced staff. There are also plans within the PCN to develop admin staff skills by offering medical assistant training for example taking blood pressures, giving flu jabs etc.

“ What is a Social Prescriber and are they clinical ?” Dr Verghese advised that Social Prescribers come from diverse backgrounds. They will usually have worked in the community or a charity in a support capacity. Their role is to support and signpost patients with medical conditions onto support services e.g. befriending services, debt advisors etc. It is widely recognised that social issues are a determinate of health outcomes. One impacts upon the other.

In respect to social prescribing one of our patients (RW) advised that the Colombo Centre have an over 50s community programme- see link below for further information:

<https://coinstreet.org/events/categories/older-adults/> or contact Colombo Centre directly on 0207 261 1658. Colombo Centre is located at 34-68 Colombo Street, South Bank, London SE1 8DP.

Conclusion of Meeting: Dr Verghese once again thanked the patients for engaging with the practice and attending the Forum. It was agreed that a further meeting is to be arranged early in the New Year. In the meantime, Eileen Marriner is to arrange a meeting with the patients who expressed an interest in representing our practice at a wider North Lambeth PCN PPG. Dr Verghese and Wai Ha Lam Development Officer, Lambeth Patient Participation Group Network will also attend.

Eileen Marriner
Reception Team Manager

5th November 2019

CC; Dr Verghese
Wai Ha Lam
Website
Staff