

# Denton Surgery Patient Group



## Patients' Voice

and

## AGM Minutes

Denton Surgery Patient Group

Held on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2022

at 7:00pm in Yardley Hasting Village Hall

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### Patients' Voice

- 1) Welcome and introduction of speakers

In the absence of our Chairman Herbert Cave chaired the meeting

- 2) Dr Wade – Running a rural practice, challenges and benefits –

Dr Wade started by comparing a town practice, his previous experience, to his experience in our rural situation. Town practices are much busier and there is a higher patient/GP ratio. He was also more likely to come across patients with English as a second language and this made some diagnoses difficult. There was also a greater 'churn' of patients, those leaving and joining the practice unlike Denton where patients tend to remain with the practice unless moving out of the area. Being able to build relationships with patients leads to being a better doctor too. The benefits of a rural practice, and a slower pace are now making them more attractive to GP's looking for their next post. This in turn also leads to lower staff turnover in general at the surgery.

Maintaining a range of services is a challenge to rural practices who unlike those based in town who have greater patient numbers.

Denton also benefits greatly from the convenience of having a dispensary and now through Pharma24, the ability to collect their prescriptions 24 hours a day. Apart from the convenience to patients there are other benefits to the practice including being able to subsidise certain services that would otherwise not be financially viable and therefore not available to patients at the practice.

### 3) Dr Pickering – Access to patient services

(Note: Although Now retired Dr Pickering is a member for the Denton Surgery Patient Group and provides a valuable insight into many healthcare practices)

Dr Pickering reflected on his own experience both as a GP and patient (at a different surgery)

It may be unusual to think of our relationship with the NHS as one of supply (resources) and demand (our needs), but it is helpful to view it this way if we are to improve patient satisfaction. We are aware of the old family GP with whom we made an appointment and through which we accessed care we needed, things have changed, and we need to change too. The Patient Voice is important part of this process and the role of your Patient Group critical. As a patient group we need to know about the issues you have & receive ideas so that we can inform and work with the surgery and other groups on your behalf to improve supply.

What can we do as patients to help the GP to help us?

Reputable websites such as the NHS website can be used to look up symptoms, this could help you in explaining to the GP what your problem is in understanding any diagnosis. Reflecting on family medical history can also help if relayed to your GP.

As patients we can help by making changes to the way we approach the NHS to get the care we need, we need to become an active partner with the GP in a joint venture towards health in the widest sense of the word. A good way to start is by reflecting on the reason for wanting to see a GP as some of these things can be done by letter, e-mail or phone call, is it for:

- giving feedback on treatment e.g. all is well or things may need tweaking.
- letting the GP know there has been no difference and need to rethink diagnosis
- to express a concern after investigating NHS website and asking for tests before appointment

- asking for a possible referral for a service not available at the surgery such as the removal of a skin tag.

Advice on contacting the surgery.

It is helpful to distinguish between instinct and worries, consider your worries but never ignore a deeply felt instinct, especially regarding children.

Be clear about urgency, you can walk in and wait for a gap. Be ready to clearly describe the site and severity of symptoms when conveying them to the receptionist and explain that you need resolution the same day or within 'x' days.

You can contact the surgery in the following ways:

- Telephone – tricky and time demanding
- Text – coming soon
- E-mail – be brief and be clear about what you need.
- Letter – if e-mail and txt are not options a letter can be sent to the surgery

#### **4) Practice and Dispensary managers – how the dispensary works**

Nicola (Practice Manager) presented an enlightening description of the prescription dispensary process, it's far more complicated and time consuming than picking an item off the shelf!

It is fair to say that through the DSPG the Patient Voice has been extremely valuable in re-evaluating how the dispensary works and looking for ways to improve the service.

(Secretary Note: I have presented the talk and discussion as a series of questions and answers to help in presenting the information and comments)

##### **How busy is the dispensary?**

Over 99% of the 6200 registered patients use the dispensary meaning that over 500 repeat prescriptions are prepared each day plus any new requests totalling 13,000 a month on average. The role of Claire Breckon, the Dispensary Manager also includes searching for prescription items, liaising with suppliers, ordering, checking, and recording deliveries as well as other staff and administration duties as well as talking to patients. Just considering the authorising of prescriptions, drug compatibility checks, overcoming drug shortages, badging and delivery arrangements for some patients it's a busy role, a bit like an iceberg, there is a lot going on we don't see to ensure safety and accuracy of the prescriptions we receive.

### **How have you responded to the patient needs?**

A key issue has always been collection times, especially being closed mid-day, but the dispensary is not closed to the patient for staff lunch, it is so they can carry out some of their duties without being interrupted. To help alleviate the problem of collection the pharma24 has been installed providing 24/7 collection service. To help save time, along with a restructuring of the dispensary including how and when drugs are ordered, a dispensary scanner has been introduced. The issue patients had with part completed prescriptions has also been resolved with the dispensary now informing patients of what is and is not ready for collection allowing them to choose to collect in part or wait for all items to be present.

### **How important a resource is the dispensary?**

It is important on two accounts convenience for the patients and a financial benefit to the practice.

It very convenient for patients attending the surgery to collect their prescription at the same time. It is the nearest pharmacy for several villages within the surgery catchment area. There is a delivery service available for vulnerable patients as well as those who are unable to visit the surgery with some prescriptions being delivered to villages for collection. The value of having the dispensary located in the surgery was shown during Covid lockdowns with prescriptions being delivered by volunteers. The newly installed Pharma24 machine has further improved the service by allowing collection at a time convenient to patients, even during their lunch time or late evening and at weekends.

The dispensary also provides an income to the practice, an income that allows the surgery to employ more staff without which some services would be lost. If patients decide to use online delivery services for their prescriptions it would mean a loss of income to the practice. The loss of the dispensary would be critical when considering the viability of the practice.

### **What is the best way to ensure I get my prescription on time?**

You can order online or drop in a repeat prescription but please allow five working days (excluding holidays and weekends) for your prescription to be ready for collection. The day you order is day zero so if you ordered on a Monday your prescription would be ready by the following Monday. The best advice is to plan ahead, this includes when taking holidays or travelling, make sure you have enough medication to last until at least seven days after you return in case you need to re-order on your return.

If you need any tests before renewing your prescriptions, please arrange these in good time so there are no delays in processing your prescription request.

#### 5) The role of the DSPG – our recent work and key achievements

Kevin Hewitson (Secretary to the DSPG) started by reminding us of that the DSPG is a member of the National Association for Patient Participation whose role is:

#### **Empowering Patients influencing Primary Care**

Since our last meeting on 2019 Covid has challenged both the NHS and communities. The DSPG was able to respond to the community challenges and helped to coordinate the many volunteers who came forward to collect prescriptions, check in on neighbours, friends and the vulnerable in our communities. I know that this work was appreciated by many, and people got to know their communities much better, getting to know neighbours and making new friends.

The patient voice is critical if we are going to meet the challenges of a NHS system under the ongoing impact of Covid, changes to funding and the re organisation to services that is taking place.

The nature of the village practice and family GP is changing. In part this is due to organisational changes but also the shortage of GP's and other healthcare staff. We may not be able to see the same GP every time or in the same way as we or our parents did before. As Dr Pickering has pointed out in his talk we as patients can take a more proactive role in our care. It's about being a partner in the relationship with the GP, you need to understand your role as well as be clear about what your symptoms and what you are hoping to resolve.

#### **What changes are affecting Denton Village Surgery?**

Denton Village Surgery is now part of a wider healthcare community called ParkWood PCN, this is a Primary Care Network (PCN) and includes: - The Parks Medical Centre, Wootton Medical Centre, Denton Village Surgery and has just over 30k patients (inc. our 6200)

The PCN also employ additional staff to support the GP practices which currently include a social prescribing team, clinical pharmacists, first contact physiotherapists and mental health workers. Some of you may have used these additional services already.

At this point Dr Wall who is the ParkWood PCN Clinical Director and also a GP for Denton, and who joined us this September, outlined aspects of the PCN.

The PCN will provide 50% of the funding for mental health workers, a joint funding with the hospitals. The PCN also supports 'Digital Champions' these are people who *'helps others to*

*understand the benefits of being online and can spend time showing them how. They may be staff or volunteers, and they may also be friends and family members... They can do a range of simple things that can make a big difference to people who can't or don't use the internet.'* (Digital Champions Programme Toolkit, NHS Health Education England)

To aid patients in getting routine medical help there is now a service called 'Enhanced Access' providing appointments (mainly telephone, some face to face) between 6:30 pm and 9:30pm during the week and at weekends between 9:00am and 5:00pm. For Denton patients this is being provided by the organisation *General Practice Alliance Ltd* and will be available at Highfields.

### **What does the DSPG do?**

Our role as a Patient Group is to make sure you have a voice, and your needs and concerns are represented and considered when decisions are made. This is a role we can only carry out with your support. We need to recruit more people to the DSPG to ensure we can reach all the various groups within our community, the parents of young children, those who are carers etc. If you would like to get involved, then please see one of us after the meeting (or indeed any time – we can be reached using the e-mail: [secretary@dspg.me](mailto:secretary@dspg.me))

### **DSPG achievements**

Over the years you will have benefited from the various pieces of equipment we have purchased on behalf of and for the benefit of the patients for use in the surgery.

These include: blood pressure monitor, heart monitors, examination couches, chairs, a Doppler machine, minor surgery equipment amongst other things.

An example of how we can respond to patient needs has been the setting up of the Volunteer Patient Transport Service. You may remember or used the Nene Valley Help Scheme that ran until September 2021. It provided transport to and from the surgery for patients unable to arrange their own transport. When this service ended there was still a need to set to help patients get to their appointments. With the help of Parish Councils who have generously provided grants to cover setup costs we have been able to launch the Volunteer Patient Transport Scheme a couple of months ago and is now regularly taking patients to appointments at the surgery, for jabs and to the hospital. Patients pay the drivers according to a set of predetermined charges based on the length of the journey from the driver's own home and back home again, the minimum charge being £5.

Our coordinator who will take your details and arrange the driver for you is Sue and there is a dedicated phone number on which you can call her, 07506866298 or you can e-mail her on [coordinator@dspg.me](mailto:coordinator@dspg.me)

The scheme relies on volunteer drivers who are paid their expenses to take patients from the 15 villages within the surgery catchment area to both the surgery and hospital appointments using their own vehicles.

At present our service is limited because of the small number of drivers presently registered with us and we are keen to recruit more drivers to meet the demand we are facing. So, if you would consider being a volunteer driver then see Sue who will be more than happy to hear from you and tell you more about the scheme.

#### 6) Question and answer session

A question about the role of the receptionist when making appointments was asked.

Receptionists are now an integrated part of the surgery and are better referred to as 'Care Navigators' because their role is also to make sure you get an appointment with the most suitable professional for your needs, be that a nurse, a GP or another service. They receive training to help them triage patients' needs and that is why they make ask several questions before making you an appointment.

A question about what service can the Voluntary Patient Transport Scheme offer and to whom?

The scheme is for any patient registered with Denton Village surgery who is mobile and able to get into and out of a car on their own or with the help of their carer and will take them to and from their medical appointment at either the surgery or any of the local hospitals. It serves all 15 villages that are part of the catchment area for the surgery. Patients are charged 45p per mile paid to the driver and based on a pre calculated milage. Patients are told when booking by the coordinator how much their trip will cost but there is a minimum of £5.00

With long waiting lists and limited number of beds how can we keep hospital stays and admissions to a minimum?

If GPs had the funding, they could do more to make sure patients avoided going into hospital and provide for care in the home helping patients return home sooner.

**End of the Patients' Voice part of the evening**





# AGM for the DSPG

## 1) Apologies for absence –

These were received from Reg Coleman (Chair) and Kate Malkin

Present: Herbert Cave (Social Media), Kevin Hewitson (Secretary), Lyn Edwards (Treasurer), Gillian Reynolds (Recruitment), Sue Hayton (Volunteer Patient Transport Co-ordinator), Tony Pickering, Nigel Richmond, Nicola Draper (Practice Manager)

## 2) Minutes of our AGM meeting September 2019

These were read and accepted as a true record of the meeting

## 3) Matters arising

There were no matters arising

## 4) Chairmans Report

This was prepared in the absence of our chairman by the secretary.

The DSPG has been able to play an important role during Covid. Over 40 volunteers in Denton alone registered to provide help and support to members of the community, and this was repeated in many of the other villages.

We welcome the partnership with the surgery and in helping to provide the patient voice during our regular meetings

In a changing healthcare system, the role of the patient group is even more important, and we would like to see each of the catchment area villages represented on the management group in order to better reflect the patient voice. Vacancies exist in many villages so please let us know if you are interested.

The DSPG is funded entirely through the sales of second-hand books in the surgery. During covid income has fallen as Lyn may mention in her Treasurer's report.

We have been able to setup and are now operating the Volunteer Patient Transport Scheme and Kevin has mentioned in his talk about this and how to get involved. Yes, we still need more volunteer drivers!

**5) Patients Voice – issues from patients attending the meeting**

These were answered during the Patients' Voice part of the meeting.

**6) Treasurers report**

Lyn Edwards presented the independent examiners report for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021

This year we bought the surgery for the benefit of the patients an Arterial Doppler machine and baby scales, totalling £1353

We are a self-funded organisation and meet our own administration and running costs through the sale of preloved books at the surgery. It is to be noted that our income has halved since Covid as footfall at the surgery has fallen.

**7) Election of Officers including declaration of vacancies**

The following officers were appointed.

Chairman – Reg Coleman, Secretary – Kevin Hewitson, Treasurer – Lyn Edwards, Recruitment – Gillian Reynolds, Social Media - Herbert Cave, Volunteer Patient Transport Scheme Co-ordinator - Sue Hayton.

Officers without portfolio – Nigel Richmond? , Tony Pickering , Kate Malkin

**8) Time and date of our next meeting**

The next monthly meeting of the DSPG will take place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November, 2:15 Denton Village Hall, during which the next Patients' Voice and AGM dates will be discussed.

**Those present from the Surgery:**

Dr David Wade – Lead GP

Dr William Wall – ParkWood PCN Clinical Director and also a salaried GP for Denton (joined us in Sept)

Nicola Draper – Practice Manager

Claire Breckon – Dispensary Manager

Gina Gyemicseva – Reception Supervisor

Joy Jones – ParkWood PCN Coordinator (works with us on coordinating our many PCN projects and contracts etc).

The meeting closed at 9:30

The next DSPG meeting will be on the 3rd of November at Yardley Hastings Village Hall at 2:00pm