

University Health Centre

Patient Reference Group

Minutes of the Meeting 22 November 2023

Attendees: Lucy Gardner, Neil Simmonite, Rebecca Barnes (Student Class & Social Mobility Network), Judith Coulter (Administrator), Dr Julia Thomas (Partner), Ahmed Aboelnaga (GP Registrar)

Apologies: Diana Sirnikova (Student Union)

Introductions

Dr Thomas introduced Ahmed Aboelnaga who is completing his GP training at UHC and will be working with us until July 2024. Ahmed is a fully qualified Doctor and has his own clinics Tuesday – Thursday.

Practice Update

Dr Thomas gave an update of changes and improvements since the last meeting.

This included an outline of the benefits to individual practices of working collaboratively through the Primary Care Network (PCN) and that UHC had secured the following services for its patients:

- First Contact Practitioner Physiotherapists who can triage, treat and refer patients
- Dieticians
- Social Prescriber
- Health and Wellbeing Coach
- Mental Health nurse
- Clinical Pharmacists
- Advanced Clinical Practitioner (ACP) Paramedics

The Practice is now a training setting for: GP Registrars, Nurses, Medical Students from the University of Leeds, Paramedics undertaking ACP training, trainee ACPs from the University of Huddersfield.

We continue to offer the option of telephone appointments but clinicians all now work from the Health Centre and Face to Face appointments are the norm. Patients who prefer to can also use PATCHs to consult electronically.

Feedback:

- When comparing notes with friends or family registered elsewhere, it is much quicker here to get an appointment than at surgeries elsewhere.
- It is disappointing to see negative reviews on Google Feedback as this is not the experience that PRG members recognise.

JC explained that the practice receives Feedback from a number of sources eg Friends and Family cards and texts, national GP survey, informal routes and that whilst we take on board all the suggestions and comments from patients who have been dissatisfied, the overall picture is extremely positive.

Q: Do you analyse the feedback in order to prioritise improvements?

A: Yes we review the feedback and work to address suggestions etc but further work is currently being done to strengthen this process.

Q: Has the practice considered how it can more effectively manage expectations, communicate timescales and educate new patients on how things work in the NHS ?

A: Last year Dr Thomas wrote a guide for new international patients – this is distributed by the Uni team running inductions for International Students and is on our website – but yes we could do more to manage expectations of all patients.

Suggestions were discussed ranging from more info during Freshers' Week (displays? Information pack?) through to everyday communication when dealing with patient queries.

A new page has been added to the website, outlining some of the processes and timescales relating to Referrals. This has been done to help with managing expectations.

Q. Could improvements/new developments on the website be promoted/shared by periodic text messages to patients?

A. Yes that would be possible.

Action: JT and JC to consider which suggestions on communicating timescales can be carried forward. JC to implement suggestion re texts and website developments.

Dr Thomas also gave an update on staffing – that the practice now has an additional Health Care Assistant Hannah, a new Mental Health Practitioner Zara, 2 new Receptionists and are currently recruiting a Reception Team Leader. Tracy Hey had retired from the Reception team and would be much missed.

The group expressed concern that reviews such as those on Google Reviews could have a negative impact on staff retention and morale. Dr Thomas confirmed that staff are able to see the wider picture on feedback.

Q. Do you have a Zero Tolerance policy and are the Panic Buttons properly accessible.

A. Yes to both.

Minutes from Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the previous meeting.

e-consult and now PATCHs are more prominent on the website so that they are quicker to find when viewing on phone screen.

The Practice introduced its new telephone system in September 2022 which has made a big difference to patient experience – the call queueing system means that patients no not have to continuously redial and are more aware of how long they may have to wait to get through. Formal and informal feedback has been very positive and the group agreed that it had made a big difference.

PATCHs:

Feedback

Dr Thomas explained that the Integrated Care Board (formerly the Clinical Commissioning Group) had purchased the PATCHs software to replace e-consult. PATCHs is a great option especially when

all you want is some information rather than an appointment. Attendees confirmed that for consulting the practice electronically, it is quicker and easier to use than the old e-consult software.

Q. Are there guidelines as to how quickly patients should be responded to?

A: Yes – we promise that we will respond within 36* hours but in reality most are replied to on the same day.

Q. Is PATCHs available Out of Hours?

A. It is closed over the weekend and Bank Holidays but otherwise patients can send in a PATCHs request at any time*

*these details were checked and updated subsequent to the meeting.

Video Consultations:

The group were asked whether they felt that Video Consultations would be popular with patients.

The response was that video consultations would be subject to many limitations such as connectivity, image quality and poor equipment etc and may be of more benefit to a rural practice where face to face consultations were difficult to get to. Dr Thomas and Dr Ahmed both felt that there were clinical limitations to what could be achieved in a video consultation.

Kirklees Health and Wellbeing Strategy 'I Statements':

The group discussed the document and strongly expressed the view that in order to improve Health and Wellbeing in Kirklees, the priority should be to keep Sport and Leisure Centres open and that this priority outweighed an of the 'I statements' put forward.

Experiences with KAL had been extremely positive. Feedback was shared relating to patient referrals to the H&W team.

Action: JC to pass feedback relating to the Health and Wellbeing Team to the Practice Manager so that it could be taken up with the Tolson network.

Any Other Business

Dosette Boxes from Pharmacies

Q. Would it be possible for UHC to add their voice to individual patients to request that more sustainable options are researched. Current dosette boxes are single use and non recyclable due to their construction.

Action: JC to look into sending an email to local Pharmacy networks asking them to consider sourcing recyclable mono-plastic or biodegradable options.

Q. Can empty pill packets still be recycled at Pharmacies?

Action: LG to look into where this service is still available and report back to JC, so that the information can be added to the UHC website.