

Drs A M Lewis & R M Patel

Patient Participation 2011-12

The practice Patient Participation Group held its inaugural meeting with representatives of the medical and administrative staff at Whitwick Health Centre on June 30th, 2011. Expressions of interest had first been sought, with a notice in reception, as far back as 2009. Only this year however, following a little gentle prompting from the medical staff, did we achieve a quorum.

Our patient group comprises four individuals, three men and one woman, whose ages range from mid twenties, to mid seventies. Two are employed and two retired. They all have experience of treatment in both primary and secondary care and would appear to represent a fair cross section of our patient population. We would welcome further volunteers to join the group, who would expand its representation.

When the group met again in September, its main task was to identify the priority areas on which to concentrate in the annual patient survey. Unsurprisingly these were defined as “access” and the “quality of care provided”. The patient survey was jointly compiled from sample questions, with its emphasis on these priority areas.

The patient survey was conducted during the month of November, 2011. It was accessible via the new practice website, although all received responses were actually via the paper version. The doctors and nurses offered the questionnaires to all suitable patients until one hundred had been given out. Of these eighty-one were returned. The questionnaire responses have been collated using a statistical package and will be published both in reception and on the practice website.

At its December meeting the task for the patient participation group was to review the patient survey results and to agree an action plan with the practice. To this end the group made reference not only to the question responses, but also to the free text comments made by the respondents.

There were four areas of patient dissatisfaction highlighted by the survey and identified by the group for action. These were:

1. The use by the practice of the Coalville phlebotomy service.
2. A perceived inability to book appointments in advance.
3. The availability of parking spaces at the Health Centre.
4. A perceived lack of appointments later in the day.

Having reviewed the operation of the appointment system, the patient group agreed that, contrary to some perceptions, the ability to book appointments in advance was already provided. They did suggest that this might be further extended by allowing booking via the practice website when this became fully operational.

In fact by December the practice was already committed to providing all adult phlebotomy in house, with the Coalville clinic scheduled to close. A new “Extended Opening Hours” service had also been negotiated with the PCT, which would provide an additional two hours of appointment time on a Monday evening. The patient group welcomed these developments. In respect of the parking issue it was suggested that the practice approach their landlords and request the provision of a sign, stipulating that parking was for Health Centre users only.

The final task for the group in 2011-12 will be to review the publication of the report and action plan and to monitor subsequent achievement by the practice. This will continue into 2012-13, when the cycle of obtaining patient feedback and responding to issues raised will continue.

The Patient Participation Group presently comprises:

1. Mr
2. Mr
3. Mrs
4. Mr