

Virtual Meeting of Crich Medical Practice's Patients' Participation Group

19th May 2020

Present:

David Ashton (Co-Chair)
Simon Barraclough
Paul Devlin
Colin Hoskins (Co-Chair)
Peter Ireland
Frances James (Co-Chair)
Heather Livesey
Sue Jelf
Linda Philo
Alan Richmond
Laurence Robinson
Kate Smith
Celia Winkworth

1. Apologies and welcome

Susie Brighthouse
Sue Paul
Ian Whitehead

2. Matters arising from notes of Meeting held on 14rd January 2020

A question was raised about the status of the Patients' Participation Group's action plan for the current year. It was agreed that due to the current extraordinary circumstances the development of the action plan was on hold.

FJ said she had an action plan that she had to develop to ensure that the community maintained its "Working Towards Dementia Friendly" status with the Alzheimer's Society. She will circulate this to the Group.

Action: FJ

3. Report of Crich Area Covid 19 Mutual Aid Group (David Ashton)

DA's comprehensive report had been distributed before the meeting and read by all. DA, LP and FJ are all members of the Mutual Aid Group which is helpful, given the many overlapping areas of interest and concern.

FJ reported that, due to the assistance of the Fire Service, the Mutual Aid prescription delivery service was able to deliver to areas such as Wessington and she asked LR to spread the word, as far as social distancing restrictions allow, amongst the community.

Action: LR

4. Crich Area Dementia Friends Report (Frances James)

Everyone had received the report in advance.

There was some positive feedback about the “early” edition of the Dementia newsletter and its design. FJ said she had been very grateful to a number of deliverers who kindly helped to ensure that the delivery was made as speedily as possible to the various communities.

She said, in response to a question from PI, that the Gentle Yoga DVD had been very well received by the regular attendees at the sessions. Cathy Bowness had delivered some DVDs to people who receive a hot meal through the current home meal delivery service and they, too, had found it very helpful.

FJ has about 10 more DVDs and would be pleased to give them to anyone that members of the Group identify as potentially benefitting from them. She asked people to send her names of any possible recipients.

Action: All

FJ confirmed that the current budget total was £1,046.58

5. National and Regional Update (Paul Devlin)

PD informed the meeting that the NHS was now definitely in the “restoration” phase of its response to the Corona Virus pandemic. The message was loud and clear that the NHS is “open for business”; he noted that some areas never closed.

There is an emerging concern that, due to patients being reluctant to engage with NHS services due to their fear about contracting Covid 19, there will be an increase in deaths of people from other conditions. The message that the NHS wishes to promote is that if someone needs treatment for or investigations of other conditions, they should go. The NHS Trusts and hospitals are putting in place many precautions and adhering to strict social distancing guidelines to endeavour to minimise the risk of people visiting a hospital catching Covid 19. This includes establishing Covid 19 free areas and departments.

PD strongly emphasised the need for people to continue to maintain strict adherence to social distancing rules as the danger for another infection spike was

very real. He felt that the messages coming from the ministerial briefing sessions were not necessarily always helpful and some were confusing.

PI raised the concerning issue of a number of scams circulating via text and email services. They purport to come from a number of different, seemingly bona fide, services – for example the National Covid Service, which doesn't actually exist – and ask people to respond. These responses cost, those targeted, a lot of money. One example he cited was of people being alerted to appointments for bogus smear tests.

SB said he, too, had heard of a number of “phishing” communications and shared everyone's concerns. He said it was important to reinforce that any texts or communications coming from the Medical Practice always state quite clearly their origin.

These scam messages appear to be targeted at people from vulnerable groups. It was felt important that as many people as possible are alerted to the circulation of the scams. Various communication channels were suggested – Facebook, Whatsapp groups, via the hot meal delivery service co-ordinated by Cathy Bowness, a notice on the post office window. LP and FJ will follow this up.

Action: LP and FJ

PD said that there was a recognition that many of the ways of working in the NHS, that had been necessary due to the shutdown, had actually proved to be more effective than previous working practices, and, once the initial shutdown was over, the NHS would not necessarily be reverting to “old practices”.

PD highlighted the high level of concern in all NHS sectors about the negative impact that the pandemic, the associated restrictions and the undoubted economic fallout will have on the mental health of many. The difficulties are associated with many factors including increased alcohol and substance abuse, the increased incidence of and impact of domestic abuse, social isolation, poverty and post traumatic stress disorder.

PD felt that the Patients' Participation Group could play an important role in working with others to bring together a community response to try to support those who are vulnerable to mental health difficulties. Ways in which this could be realised could include:

- Building awareness
- Highlighting “it is OK, not to feel OK”
- Building even greater connectivity within the community
- Strengthening and extending the range of support systems within the community

PD added that he has good connections with the Mental Health Trust in Derbyshire and would be able to disseminate any relevant information that it has.

PD was thanked for his informative and highly relevant update.

6. Practice Report (Simon Barraclough)

SB said that the Practice staff felt that the prescription delivery service, run as part of the Covid 19 Mutual Aid group was operating well and that it was helpful. FJ will convey this message to the prescription delivery team.

Action: FJ

Since the restrictions associated with the pandemic were introduced, the Practice have made a number of changes to the way in which they operate to maximise social distancing and limit the potential for infection. Patients with suspected Covid 19 are only seen in the Crich surgery, in a small room near the entrance. The surgeries at Holloway and South Wingfield are deemed as “green sites”; in other words, Covid free. The Glebe Field Centre is being used for a few services, including those associated with blood clotting, the PT (prothrombin time) clinics.

Securing Personal Protective Equipment has, at times, proved to be a big issue. A local company made some visors for the Practice. The practice has plenty of gloves and, at the moment, sufficient masks, although SB noted that the price of these has soared in recent weeks. There are no long sleeved aprons anywhere in the UK. PD agreed that the situation in Crich reflected that nationally; the provision of Personal Protective Equipment had been poor at best. The focus had been on the acute services and primary care was much lower down the order of priority.

Crich Medical Practice is linked to Hollybank, the local care home. The doctors undertake “ward” rounds using a mobile phone which seem to work well. The staff at the home appear to be managing comparatively well, although, sadly, there have been some deaths at the home.

The Group wished to convey their gratitude and sincere appreciation of the work undertaken by all the practice staff under ridiculously challenging and stressful times. Empathy was expressed by the Group for the staff and their families and the impact that managing the pandemic must be having upon them. All agreed that the staff at the Practice had responded in a well organised, efficient and positive way.

SB echoed PD’s comments about the practice embedding a number of working practices that have been developed during the shut down as they have proved to be effective. SB said that many of these had a technological element, including the effective Triage system. The staff had identified many advantages, principally ensuring that a patient gets to see the right member of staff quickly: apparently

using this system 99% are able to consult a doctor on the day that they make contact. Patients have seemingly adapted to this new system very well.

Everyone felt that this sounded very encouraging and that it was good that some positives will emerge from the pandemic

It was noted that for everyone to have a basic competence with technology will become even more important as the Medical Practice adopts the new approaches to service delivery and therefore the project, initiated by the Covid 19 Mutual Aid group of introducing those who are new to technology and the various forms of communication associated with technology, assumes even more importance. DA will link this into any bids that he makes on behalf of that group.

Action: DA

7. Role for the Patients' Participation Group in disseminating information

As was noted above the Patients' Participation Group has an important role in disseminating information about the current situation and the challenges and community responses in the future. There are a number of well established and effective community communication routes at the moment – the Crich Standard and its website, village Facebook pages, the Twitter account, various newsletters etc. It was felt that a Facebook page dedicated to the work of the Group would be an important addition to the Group's communication strategy.

During the course of the meeting AR set up a Facebook page for the Patients' Participation Group! Everyone was most impressed.

DA and FJ will send him the logos of the Crich Patients' Participation Group and Crich Area Dementia Friends respectively.

Action: DA and FJ

This Facebook page can become a major communication channel to complement the existing methods. AR offer to have oversight of the page. This was gratefully accepted by all.

Action: All

8. Future Thinking

DA informed the group that he, CH and FJ wished to step down from holding offices in the Group. They would still wish to be involved, and FJ would still be happy to lead the work associated with Crich Area Dementia Friends, but they had all been involved in the Group for a long time, during most of which they had held the roles of Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. They felt, for a number of reasons, it was time for a change.

DA, CH and FJ considered that there could be merit in talking to the Covid 19 Mutual Aid group to see if there were members of that Group, and the wider volunteer group, who would like to join and link with the Patients' Participation Group. There seemed to be considerable logic in this as so many of the areas of concern and interest overlapped and it seemed sensible to tap into the energy generated by the Mutual Aid Group.

There was unanimous support for this idea. DA, LP and FJ will take this forward with the Covid 19 Mutual Aid Group and report back to the Patients' Participation Group at its meeting in September.

Action: DA, LP and FJ

9. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 23rd September 2020 at 19.00.

Venue and mode to be confirmed!

10. Any Other Business

There was none.

