

Local Patient Participation Report 2012

At Lister Medical Centre we have in existence a very well established Patient Participation Group (PPG) known as Friends of Lister House. This organisation has supported the services provided at Lister since 1993. Through their quarterly meetings Friends have promoted co-operation and understanding between patients, doctors and services.

A recent Government initiative has given us the opportunity to further enhance the function of our PPG. Our aim is to engage the broadest possible patient population to form the most representative and inclusive group to shape the future of medical services offered at Lister Medical Centre.

One of the ways we have endeavoured to do this is via a Virtual Patient Reference Group or vPRG, through an email community which already has a database of over 100 patients since its inception in December 2011. This newly formed and expanding email community allows a wide variety of patients to air their views. This form of communication may be ideally suited to housebound and elderly patients, as well as busy commuters and parents. Joining our vPRG will enable you to voice your opinions, without disadvantaging those who may not physically visit the surgery that often or who may find it difficult to attend our regular PPG meetings.

We would encourage you to join our vPRG via the Lister Medical Centre website or simply by filling in a form available at reception. We will continue to encourage active participation via waiting room notices, posters, and attachments to repeat prescriptions as well as during consultations with your doctor or nurse.

In order to engage patients from ethnic minorities, a group traditionally under-represented in our PPG, we liaised closely with Integrated Support Services. This voluntary organisation has been running for several years in Harlow with the aim of helping new migrants to the Harlow area integrate more easily into local society and to gain appropriate access to all that the NHS has to offer.

Having gathered patient details on our database we sought to determine the issues which were a priority for you via an email and include these in our local Practice Survey.

We decided to use the services of a respected organisation to carry out and analyse the survey on behalf of Lister Medical Centre. Electoral Reform Services are the UK's leading independent supplier of ballot and election services with a 100 year old reputation for integrity and excellence.

Our local survey was carried out between 9th February 2012 and 25th February 2012 with just over 210 respondents. As you can see from our published report, the majority of our respondents were female, over 55yrs old and with a long-standing or chronic medical condition. This does indeed represent the average patient seen at Lister Medical Centre.

Following publication of the results of our local survey we called a meeting held on 21st March 2012 with our PPG to discuss the findings and to propose and agree an action plan for the future.

Summary of areas of concern highlighted by our local survey and proposals for change

1. Long queues at reception and the general physical environment of the waiting area leading to patients being exposed to the cold.

Proposed changes:

Rearranging the seating area to avoid the automated doors opening as often.

Refurbishment of the existing chairs.

Encouraging use of our automated check in system to reduce queues at reception.

Our receptionists will be attending a course entitled 'Front of House Skills' on 2nd May 2012 to improve the patient experience.

2. Getting through on the telephone to make or cancel an appointment.

Proposed changes:

Introduction of an online appointment booking system integrated with our proposed new computer system.

Separate appointment cancellation line to be introduced.

3. Perceived high phone costs.

Proposed changes:

Clarify the rationale behind using Enhanced Telephony services and the charges from a landline. A leaflet explaining all the facts will be available at reception and a summary posted onto our website.

Investigate the possibility of reducing the length of our initial message before connecting to the relevant department to reduce delays and accumulated costs.

4. Being able to see a Doctor sooner.

Proposed changes:

Raise awareness that routine appointments with a Doctor of your choice can be made up to 6 weeks in advance.

Appointments for genuinely urgent matters are always accommodated for on the day.

Reduce DNA's and increase appointments by sending reminders via text messaging. This will also enable patients to cancel appointments via text.

Plans for 2012-2013

We aim to further engage those patients who were not particularly well represented in our PRG.

This will include certain ethnic minorities as well as age groups.

We hope to do this by encouraging membership of our established vPRG database.

Ideas proposed thus far include having details enclosed with New patient registration forms, translating posters regarding our vPRG and displaying them at ISS HQ in Wych Elm, Harlow Town Hall and Surestart as well as at Lister Medical Centre.

We aim to translate the Patient survey into the 3 most popular languages on our database.

We aim to text the younger age groups with information regarding joining our vPRG and voicing their valuable opinions, in order to shape services at Lister.

To increase the numbers of respondents to the survey we aim to run the next Patient Survey for the whole month of October 2012. This is when most surgeries have maximal foot-fall due to the Flu immunisation campaign.

We look forward to significantly growing our vPRG alongside our well established PPG in order to continue to offer the best possible services to our patients at Lister Medical Centre.