

## St George's Medical Centre Patient Group – 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report – July 7<sup>th</sup> 2014

### **Presented by Kate Massey – Retiring Patient Group Chair**

Many GP Practices have Patient Groups but few have the same format and all have evolved in different ways over time. Once again I can't improve on the words of previous Chair, Jack Le Brecht, at our first AGM two years ago. Jack described Patient Groups as "working with their Practices to offer the patient perspective on services provided, to help to improve communication, to encourage patients to take more responsibility for their own health and to provide practical support ..... plus helping to obtain feedback from patients to implement change".

The Patient Group acts as a bridge between you, the patients, and the Practice on matters of general patient concern and we often use our Committee meetings to share those general issues with the Practice Managers and the GPs. However, it has to be remembered that the Patient Group is not able to deal with any individual personal problems or complaints. These should be taken directly to the Practice Managers. Please be assured that they adopt an "open door" policy and are very happy to discuss with you any concerns or suggestions you may have to offer.

### **What have we achieved over the past year ?**

We have continued to **increase our membership and raise our profile**, locally and in the Isle of Ely area, through new Patient Group leaflets, the Patient Group display board in the Waiting Room, and articles in external publications such as the "Littleport Life" magazine, the "Southery Voice" and the Little Downham website covering the outlying villages.

New initiatives in the past 12 months have been :

- the quarterly Practice Newsletter for patients with its Patient Group section,
- a dedicated Patient Group email address meaning that we can send out regular messages to members and receive feedback from patients on general issues.
- an improved website with dedicated Patient Group and Carers pages which contain news items, past Committee minutes and annual reports, plus forms to join the Patient Group and a "Contact Us" link.
- a programme of Open Evenings for all patients usually with a speaker and question and answer sessions. Our Spring highlight was the March Open Evening when Dr Mick Bolina shared with us the reality of a "A Day in the Life of a GP".

The Patient Group works on behalf of ALL registered patients regardless of whether they have signed up individually as a member of the Patient Group. We do have a **small Committee** of more active members who meet once a quarter but most of our work is done in **sub-group meetings**. In these small informal meetings, we can explore specific issues in more detail, plan activities such as displays and events or work with the Practice team on the latest draft Newsletter.

We have a named Chair who coordinates the Patient Group activities but we mainly adopt a team approach, spreading the load across more of us and using the skills of us all. We

always welcome new members to the Committee and the sub-groups so just leave your contact details with us tonight or on Reception.

I would like to take this opportunity to particularly thank two of our past Committee members, **Steve Orchard and Brian Welch**, both who resigned in-year from the Committee and were responsible for such sterling work for the Patient Group over the past 12 months.

One of our main sub-groups this year has been the Working Group leading the **Annual Patient Survey** which has met on numerous occasions from August 2013 through to March 2014. The Patient Group took most of the responsibility for organising the Survey, its distribution, analysis and reporting of results. Obviously we were working in close partnership with the Practice Managers and GPs throughout but we hope our organisation of this mammoth task did take a certain amount of pressure off the Practice staff.

A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed in October and November 2013. 243 completed questionnaires (more than double that of last year) were returned from a good cross-section of age groups. Approximately 70% to 80% of the responses to the questions fell into the very satisfied / satisfied categories. However it is the dissatisfied areas and the associated comments which has provided the important information to create a **Survey Action Plan for 2014/15**. This Action Plan will focus on improving appointment availability, support for carers, telephone access and facilities in general.

What was encouraging was how well the Survey was received by patients and how willing they were to complete the anonymous questionnaire. We had added comments boxes to the majority of the thirteen questions and this decision to incorporate comments into the Questionnaire was well justified. 85% of the respondents took the trouble to put something in the comments boxes providing valuable patient feedback on services.

I have already mentioned the excellent new St George's website and quarterly Practice Newsletter and **the Practice should be congratulated on other developments since our last Patient Group AGM**. The major external improvements to the car park and surrounding areas are now complete and the unique partnership with Queen Elizabeth Hospital continues to bring a wider range of specialist services locally. The GP and nurse telephone consultations are now well established and are increasing the availability of appointments. We too can play a part by spreading the word to fellow patients about the importance of cancelling unnecessary appointments which may reduce even further the number of "no shows" or "did not attend". We are delighted to have the new Cheffins Community Oncology Suite here onsite, opened by Steven Barclay, MP, in May 2014, which is already treating cancer patients nearer to home. We look forward with anticipation to the proposed plans for the new-build Pharmacy which at last, will also provide the opportunity to refurbish the existing Waiting Room area and adjacent facilities.

Beyond the Practice, there have been many external changes with the **restructuring of the NHS and the new commissioning arrangements from April 2013**. Dr John Jones, as tonight's speaker, has given us a valuable insight into this and has shown how GPs are now at the heart of planning, purchasing and organising our local health services. St George's Patient Group too has played its part in ensuring that there is a patient voice in this new NHS. We are members of the Isle of Ely Patients' Forum which is one of the vehicles for cascading information from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical

Commissioning Group (CCG) through to patient networks. More importantly the Isle of Ely Patients' Forum also acts as a communication channel directly into the CCG Patient Reference Group as a means of passing upwards any general patient concerns and views to the CCG Board.

Tonight I am standing down as Patient Group Chair and as I am planning to move from the Littleport area in the near future, I am also leaving the Patient Group Committee. I came to Littleport just over 3 years ago not knowing anyone, and through the Patient Group and St George's Medical Centre I have felt part of this community and have made many new friends. I want to express **my thanks to the Patient Group as a whole but particularly to all the Committee members**, especially to Elizabeth Wilkinson and Steve Orchard as joint Vice-Chairs, for their support and friendship over the past 3 years. Most of all, I want to end this Annual Report with sincere thanks **to the GPs and Practice staff**, and to Gary Shepherd and Sally Graham for their practical and financial support to make the Patient Group such a success.