**CHAIRMAN’S ANNUAL REPORT OCTOBER 2018**

The Patient Participation Group was initially formed in 2010 with Dr Mark Plenderleith as a driving force. I was one of the first patients to join the group and I have been actively involved ever since, taking over as Chair in 2017.

The aim of the group is for patients to be more responsible for and to take an active interest in their own health. The group also aims for patients to have a better understanding and knowledge of the practice and its staff and how it operates within the structure of the NHS. The group also acts as a forum for positive ideas and a table for voicing their concerns.

Hopefully, in the future patients will have more opportunities to become involved with the shaping of local services through the local PPG networks feeding into commissioning arrangements and become involved in other community activities and initiatives focused on local care provision e.g. Clinical Commissioning Group, Health watch and Cumbria Association of the National Association of Patient Participation Groups.

One of our first tasks was to compile a questionnaire for patients to discover the quality of care they received from their practice. Over 300 responses were received from the online survey together with the paper returns from the waiting room.

The paper survey highlighted that patients were not aware of the work of the PPG and therefore a notice board with this information was set up in the waiting room together with a post on the website and the practice newsletter. A suggestion box was situated on the reception desk so that would it would enable patients to give their feedback to the group.

The survey suggested that almost all the patients were more than satisfied with the care they received from the Practice.

The group was contacted by Dr Rachel Preston to give feedback on the changes related to the prescription of dangerous painkillers for long term patients. The group reworded a letter which would aim to reduce doses slowly and minimise side effects and this was subsequently sent out to patients.

Feedback on the iPlato myGP app was requested from the practice. We found the app easy to use and very straightforward and overall the results were very positive.

Recruitment as also discussed and correspondence was sent to local schools to try and recruit new members. This is still ongoing.

The Practice received its CQC visit in April and I was asked to attend an interview by the commissioners. They gave a glowing feedback of our achievements in such a short time and made only two suggestions. Firstly, members were to sign a confidentiality agreement and secondly, for members to oversee a complaints procedure which had been anonymised. They also suggested that a Rules and Conditions should be collated into a Constitution for the group. We have followed up on this and produced a confidentiality document and a new constitution.

In April, I called a meeting of ten local practices PPG’s to see how we could network and work together. Five people attended and I was surprised to discover that we were the only practice involved in supporting patient care. I offered help and advice and suggested we have regular meetings to help one another.

In June, we celebrated PPG Awareness week with an article in the local press and highlighted the notice board in the waiting room.

In our September meeting we received a presentation on the practices ground breaking approach to provide psychotherapy and counselling from Dr Rachel Preston and Ms Abigail Finnegan. The group found the presentation enlightening and gave its whole hearted support to the new initiative.

In June, I attended the National Conference of PPG’s in Nottingham and I was the only chair from Cumbria to attend. The title of the Conference was “40 years of Patient Engagement…What Next”. I attended workshops including one from Professor Mayur Lakhani, President of the Royal College of GP’s and looked at GMC reflections on partnership with NAPP. I was informed that primary care is in the midst of a long period of sustained pressure as it seeks to provide the best services it can to local people. It also gave me the opportunity to network with the GMC, NHS England, Patient Online, Labtests Online, Health watch and others. I would highly recommend that my successor attends the conference next year.

Hilary Snell and I attended a conference in Keswick organised by North Cumbria Health Care together with other representatives in North Cumbria. Again, it was extremely interesting and we discovered we were one of the most proactive groups in the area and the only one affiliated with NAPP.

Before ending this report, I must express my thanks to all members of the Practice for giving me such wonderful support. Dr Juliet Rhodes and Jenni Mitchell have attended all our meetings and have given us excellent guidance and support. Dr Rachel Preston has an open door policy and has actively encouraged dialogue with this group. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate her on her new appointment as chair with Cumbria Health on Call.

Finally, this group would not have functioned without all the members who have willingly given up their free time to support the Practice. This support has been gratefully received and I thank you all from the bottom of my heart!

Hopefully, I can help with the transition of the new chairman and assist for one year as Deputy Chair.

Thank you.

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