

Hurley Clinic Patient Participation Group Chairman's report 2018-19

1. The main event of the year was the merger between the Hurley and Riverside practices which happened in April 2019 after consultations with patients in the two practices. Both practices were already members of the Hurley Group: the Hurley Clinic was the founding practice in the group and has existed since 1979 on its present site in Kennington Lane while Riverside was founded in 2010 at St George Wharf in Vauxhall. Both practices were already large – around 26,500 patients each so the total number in the joint practice is about 27,000 – but with somewhat different populations.
2. The Hurley has a long-established Patient Participation Group (PPG) with a **Steering Group** that normally meets every two months. Riverside has not had such an active PPG although there is a handful of patients who have been involved in the work of the practice, especially its IT. Following the practice merger, it was decided to have a single PPG to cover both sites and since April there have been joint bi-monthly meetings held alternately at the two sites. The meetings have been attended by both patients and Hurley and Riverside staff led by Dr Kumar, a partner in the Hurley Group and one of the practice's lead GPs who attends on behalf of the practice, and the practice manager, initially Pam Elliott who has been replaced by Shaju Panickar. Claudette Wright has continued to help with events and keep records of our meetings and we are very grateful to her for all her help and encouragement throughout the year.
3. **PPG activities.** Apart from the AGM, the Hurley PPG held three patients' events during the year, the same as the previous year, including two healthy eating events in the waiting area and one with Dying Matters discussing how to provide end of life care. Most of the events that we organise are small-scale and we would still like to do more, particularly to promote the health and well-being of patients but need more people to be involved. The original Hurley Steering Group was quite small and so far we have not been able to do much to build up relations with Riverside patients but we very much hope that will develop. We have been restricted in what we can do by the need for suitable venues that are convenient for both sites. The Durning Library is better for Hurley than for Riverside patients but we hope to find someone else nearer to Vauxhall. We still depend on our core of members as well as hard-pressed practice staff to arrange events and notify patients and would welcome any ideas that patients may have for such events as well as more volunteers to help to organise them.
4. **Communicating with patients.** We have always used the practice website as one of our ways of communicating with patients but we know that not many patients use it for that purpose. That has not changed since the merger and we are aware that that part of the website needs to be better developed. The Hurley PPG had e-mail addresses for a very small number of patients at the Hurley site – around 100 out of 13,500 – and one reason for the small attendance at recent events was that, following the new data protection regulations introduced in May 2018, we were not allowed to use text messages to notify patients about PPG events. We do not have the resources to communicate with patients on paper, while maintaining an e-mail address list is very time-consuming and depends on patients being willing to provide their e-mail addresses. It has now been decided that the rules about texting can be relaxed a little and we hope that in future that will mean that we have better attendances.
5. **Patients' survey.** The joint practice and the PPG decided to repeat the Hurley's 2018 patients' survey, using a revised version of the previous questionnaire, as the results have always provided useful feedback from patients about the practice. Pam Elliott and the new practice manager, Shaju Panickar, set up the Survey Monkey on-line questionnaire which went live in mid-October and patients were notified by text message as well as on the website. There were also paper copies in the waiting areas although only Hurley patients completed any of those. The result was a much better response than in 2018 – 950 completed questionnaires compared with 305 for the Hurley alone in 2018 – which was very welcome. The feedback has been analysed and helps the practice to meet its contractual obligation to obtain patients' views about the services provided and

follow up any significant issues raised. We are very grateful to Pam Elliott and Shaju Panickar for all the background work involved in setting up the survey and the PPG Steering Group will be discussing the findings in detail with the practice.

6. **Appointments and access.** Both sites of the practice have always been very busy and, like most inner city practices, they face pressure on resources as well as problems with recruiting and retaining salaried doctors and other clinical staff. The Riverside site has tended to rely less heavily on locums than the Hurley and to have correspondingly fewer problems with the availability of appointments and providing continuity of care. In 2018-19, the Hurley site has had better doctor availability but that has not meant that the problem of long waits for appointments has gone away, while there have been times when that has also happened at Riverside, mainly when staff holidays and other absences have led to serious staffing difficulties. The 2019 patient survey shows that the situation has improved overall but there are still complaints about long waits and the difficulty of getting appointments at short notice.
7. **North Lambeth Primary Care Network (PCN).** The latest reorganisation of primary care in England has resulted in the creation since June 2019 of what are called primary care networks (PCNs). PCNs 'consist of groups of general practices working together with a range of local providers, including across primary care, community services, social care and the voluntary sector, to offer more personalised, coordinated health and social care to their local populations.' This now includes the provision of what is known as social prescribing and PCNs have funding for social prescribers – this is likely to be an important development for PPGs. The Hurley/Riverside is part of the North Lambeth PCN of which the clinical director is Dr George Verghese of the Waterloo Health Centre. So far, not a lot has happened but in the longer term the existence of PCNs should make a big difference to how general practices coordinate with other care providers in their areas, as well as offering opportunities for PPGs to work with them over social prescribing and health promotion.
8. **Lambeth PPG Network.** The Lambeth PPG Network is a federation of PPGs in the borough that first met informally in 2011. Since January 2015, the network has been funded by the Lambeth CCG and has 1.8 staff. It works with practices and PPGs in the borough to support PPGs. Priscilla Baines is one of four board members from practices in the north of the borough. The Network had become part of the Lambeth Together care alliance but with the latest reorganisation of primary care and the formation of PCNs, the future of the Network is in some doubt. However, the establishment of PPGs in Lambeth remains patchy and the role of PPGs needs to be more widely accepted by all involved. Individual PPGs still face considerable challenges in finding patients prepared to take on the work while some practices, particularly the smaller ones, have difficulty in finding the resources needed to support a PPG. We need an organisation that provides an opportunity for PPGs to work together and make the 'patient voice' properly heard and we hope that will continue to exist.
9. The Steering Committee would like to thank all the **Hurley and Riverside staff** who have been involved in its work during the year, particularly Dr Kumar, Pam Elliott, Shaju Panickar and Claudette Wright. We know that they are often under pressure but we have much enjoyed working with them and hope that we have made some useful contributions.

Priscilla Baines
Chairman
29 November 2019