

Hurley Clinic Patient Participation Group Chairman's report 2017-18

1. The **Steering Committee** has followed its usual pattern of meetings every two months throughout the year and the minutes are placed on the practice website as well as in the waiting area. The meetings have been attended by both patients and Hurley Clinic staff who have included 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, Pam Elliott. Simone Williamson, who provided administrative support to the PPG, sadly left the practice in March 2018. She has been replaced by Claudette Wright who has been helping with events and keeping records of our meetings. We are very grateful to both Simone and Claudette for all they have done for us.
2. **PPG activities.** Apart from the AGM, the PPG held four patients' events during the year, fewer than in previous years. We received a welcome grant from Age UK for a Keeping Warm and Well in Winter event in January 2018 that was well-attended. Unfortunately, that particular source of funding has dried up but the events are always welcome. An open meeting on advance care planning was addressed by Verena Hewat of the organisation, Compassion in Dying, which has been funded for twelve months to work with voluntary organisations in Lambeth. The attendance there was small but everyone who came found the meeting helpful and we may try to repeat it. We arranged two Healthy Eating events, both in the waiting area, which as before have been well received and it is obvious that that is another topic on which many patients welcome informal help and advice.
3. Most of the events that we organise are relatively small-scale but we hope that those who attend find them helpful. As we have often said, we would like to do more particularly to promote the health and well-being of patients but need more people to be involved. The Steering Group is quite small and we depend on our core of members as well as hard-pressed practice staff to arrange them and notify patients. We would welcome any ideas that patients may have for such event 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. The PPG has e-mail addresses for a very small number of patients in the practice – around 100 out of 13,500 – and we have hitherto relied on the practice's texting system as our main means of communication with patients. That was usually very effective but since the change in the data protection regulations in May 2018 we have not been able to text patients on PPG matters as it does not count as direct patient care. The practice has therefore had to ask those patients whose mobile numbers it has if they are willing to receive texts about PPG matters; that was done in October 2018 in conjunction with the patient survey. So far about 175 patients have agreed to be texted, which is only a very small proportion of the total, but in future all new patients and any existing patients who change their mobile numbers will be asked if they can be texted about PPG matters. We hope that more patients will agree to be texted as it is by far the most effective way of contacting patients. If that does not work, we will have to re-think how we operate. 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.
5. **Patients' survey.** The practice and the PPG decided to repeat the 2017 patients' survey, using a revised version of the previous questionnaire, as the results provide useful feedback from patients about the practice. We had to delay sending out the questionnaire until October but that does not seem to have had a noticeable effect on the results. As before, the practice manager Pam Elliott set up the Survey Monkey on-line questionnaire and text notifications were sent to the patients for whom the practice has mobile numbers. There were paper copies of the questionnaire in the waiting area and members of the Steering Group spent time in the waiting area to help patients complete the forms. 305 questionnaires were completed, fewer than the 340 in 2017, but about the same as in 2016. The feedback is useful and helps the practice to meet its contractual

obligation to patients' views about the services provided and follow up any significant issues raised. We are very grateful to Pam Elliott for all the background work involved in setting up the survey and the PPG will be discussing the findings in detail with the practice.

6. **Appointments and access.** As any patient who comes into the waiting area knows, the practice is always very busy and, like most inner city practices, faces continuing pressure on resources. There continue to be real problems with recruiting salaried doctors and the practice has to rely heavily on locums which affects the availability of appointments as well as creating other problems for both patients and the practice, particularly over continuity of care. As in previous years, staff holidays and other absences have at times, particularly in the summer, led to major staffing difficulties so there have often been long waits (sometimes up to four weeks) for pre-booked appointments. The survey shows that 46% of respondents had to wait for over two weeks to see a particular doctor, while 29% said that they could not see a doctor on the same day if they needed an urgent appointment (not an encouraging figure but better than the 43% in 2017). There are fewer reported difficulties with appointments with nurses but nurse recruitment is currently a major problem for the practice, as for other practices in the area. There are also problems in recruiting a much-needed additional practice manager
7. **Lambeth PPG Network.** The Lambeth PPG Network is a federation of PPGs in the borough that first met informally in 2011. Since April 2015, GPs have been required under the terms of their contracts to seek the views of their patients, while Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) have to ensure that patients are involved in decisions about the provision of primary care services. 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.
8. The network arranges by-monthly meetings each year, including an AGM, while the board normally meets monthly, as do its three sub-groups. The network-wide meetings are generally well-attended and provide useful occasions for the exchange of information between PPGs as well as for keeping up to date with the many developments in primary care. The Network is gradually becoming well-established as part of the Lambeth Together care alliance but needs more volunteers if the 'patient voice' is to be properly heard. The CCG is, however, taking active steps to improve the development of PPGs in those practices that do not have a fully functioning patient-led PPG. That should encourage more patients to get involved but both the Network and individual PPGs 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.
9. The Steering Committee would like to thank all the **Hurley Clinic staff** who have been involved in its work during the year, particularly Pam Elliott and Claudette Wright, plus Dr Kumar. 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
3 December 2018