

# Tadley Medical Practice PPG Newsletter

## December 2015

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### Welcome to the Tadley PPG newsletter

As you will read, we have been very busy this year with various projects to improve patient, doctor's and staff experience on visiting or using practice facilities. Working in partnership has allowed us to put a patient perspective on the services offered and real improvement has been made in some areas, to the benefit of all. We hope to continue this progress in 2016.

We are always looking for new ideas, so if you have any suggestions you want to put forward please do so, but remember we cannot look at clinical matters or discuss any personal problems. Contact details are given below.

May I take the opportunity, on behalf of the PPG committee, to wish everyone a merry Christmas and a happy and healthy new year.

Paul Woodgate, Chair, Tadley Medical PPG.

### PPG: what, why & who?

It stands for **Patient Participation Group**, and it's made up of patients of Holmwood and Morland Surgeries who have volunteered to work with the practice to help them tailor the services to best meet the needs and preferences of patients in all their diversity.

The PPG is run by a committee, elected from by the full PPG, who meet regularly with representatives of the practice to discuss their ideas and suggestions and also to hear and understand some of the challenges and new initiatives coming from the practice.

I think most of us who have friends or family in other areas recognize how fortunate we are with our GP service but that's not to say that occasionally some aspects of the service don't work as well as they might. Our role is to help the practice identify these and support their efforts to provide an even better service to us all.

The PPG has been in existence in its current form for about 18 months, so it's time to share what we've been doing and also some news from the practice – hence this newsletter.

### PPG support for flu jab clinics

To help maintain a smooth flow of people through the flu clinics this season, the practice requested the PPG to provide volunteers to help guide patients along the process with information on preparation for the jab and the rooms to go to. As a secondary target, the PPG volunteers were discussing the online appointment booking system and online repeat prescription request system to encourage more patients to use this very convenient facility.

The participation of the PPG clearly helped the practice in maintaining the smooth running of the clinics. Assistance was given where necessary, and the feedback from the volunteers involved showed that whilst many patients had no issues with the process, some people welcomed the assistance from the PPG. The feedback from the work the volunteers did has been fed back to the practice and action will be taken to address some of the issues, including some reported difficulties with the touch screen check in system.

The volunteers also appreciated the opportunity to interact with patients and get input on some of the issues they faced in accessing the practice, all the feedback is useful in the work to continuously improve the operation of the practice.

Overall, the involvement of the PPG in the clinics benefitted both patients and the practice. We will be looking at the possibility of extending the concept to other clinics to further improve the services to patients.

## PPG Talk at the Tadley Community Lunch

Three members of the PPG - Claire Chambers, Hazel Metcalfe and Hayley Bone - attended the Tadley Community Liaison Lunch in October, following an invitation by the Tadley Citizens Advice Bureau.

The lunch was a useful networking experience and a good opportunity to spread the news about what has been going on within the PPG. Many groups in Tadley and the wider Basingstoke area presented their services and what they had been doing, and it was very interesting to see the diverse range of groups which exist within the local area.

We used the opportunity to explain what the PPG was here for, to work collaboratively with the practice team to improve health care provision locally, in the practice area itself but also within the wider secondary and tertiary environment. We also gave a quick recap of some of the work that we had been doing - many of the projects are being highlighted in this newsletter.

We hope to go back again next year because apparently our presentation was seen as helpful and interesting.

## PPG Patient Survey

In July 2014 a survey of patient views was conducted at Morland and Holmwood surgeries by members of the (then new) Committee with the results being used as a basis for the first meeting agenda. At that time the decision was made to revisit the three questions at a later stage as part of providing a patient voice through the PPG.

A small sample of 37 adults completed the survey again in October 2015, mostly at a Saturday flu clinic, and we would like to thank them for giving up their time so willingly. The top five responses by numbers were as follows:

### Question 1

*Thinking of how things are today, what are you most satisfied with concerning health provision at Tadley Medical Partnership?*

- Everything is good
- The doctors listen to patients
- Old fashioned values are demonstrated / there is a community feel
- Doctors are prepared to spend time with you
- The receptionists are helpful

### Question 2

*What are you most dissatisfied with concerning health care provision at Tadley Medical Partnership?*

- The appointment system
- It can feel as if you are dealing with a system not a medical centre when you phone
- There are insufficient medical staff / the turnover of doctors recently
- The 4 day wait for prescriptions through Holmwood Pharmacy
- Too long a wait to see the doctor with whom you are registered

### Question 3

*Can you suggest ways in which anything could be improved?*

- Longer surgery hours
- more 'on the day' appointments
- Saturday and evening surgeries
- Longer appointments so doctors keep to time
- Greater availability of on-line booking

These results have been discussed with the practice and, if you have read the recent practice newsletter or seen the 'You asked ...we did' speech bubbles on the reception desks, you will realise that some of these have been addressed already. However, we will continue to work on the remaining ideas.

## Steady and Strong classes

One of the PPG committee members, Peter Parsons, decided to bring to Tadley the Steady and Strong classes that were successfully running elsewhere in Hampshire. These classes, supported by Hampshire County Council in conjunction with Basingstoke Sports Trust, are designed to reduce falls and keep older people independent for as long as possible. Peter obtained agreement from the Council and the instructor, identified a suitable venue and organised publicity, etc. to ensure a successful launch this year.

The Tadley classes run every Thursday at the Salvation Army hall and are already attracting as many as 18 people some weeks, several of whom are showing noticeable improvements in their steadiness and confidence. The group has a friendly atmosphere and members are particularly caring and welcoming to new members.

Leaflets and more information about the classes are available from Holmwood and Morland surgeries, or by contacting the instructor, Julie Hewson, on 01256 302249.

## Young people's health survey

The PPG has very little input from young people on their health needs and hardly any feedback from this age group on the Tadley Surgeries' services.

To address this, we have worked in partnership with the practice and the Hurst Community College to develop a health survey to get the views of their students.

The college agreed to carry out the survey as part of their personal health and social education sessions with year 9 students, the middle school age group.

They were asked:

- What health problems are important to you?
- What health problems and concerns do you think younger (Yr 7/8/9) students have?
- What health problems and concerns do you think older (Yr 10/11) students have?
- Who do you talk to about health problems and concerns?

- Do you know what services are offered by your local doctor's surgery. If yes, what are they?
- When you visit the doctor's surgery, do you feel they understand and welcome young people?
- What could be done to improve the way doctor's services are provided to young people?
- What would you like your local doctor/surgery to do for you?

175 forms were returned with 116 students registered at Tadley Surgeries and there were 78 male and 97 female respondents.

The PPG, the practice and the college have been impressed by the considered replies and helpful suggestions and are shortly to meet to discuss the way forward to address the opportunities and issues raised.

We hope in the next newsletter to share a summary from the survey and the steps that the practice and PPG have taken in response.

## Online Services - saving your time and NHS resources

Did you know you can access your medical record online for the following purposes?

- Make and cancel appointments with your usual doctor
- Order repeat prescriptions
- View your current repeat medication, allergies and list of immunisations

It really is very quick easy to use so it will save you time - for example to order a repeat prescription only takes a minute or so, and you can do it anytime 24x7.

Apparently it takes a day and a half each week for someone to listen to the answering machine messages for repeat prescriptions - I'm sure we'd all agree that their time could be better spent helping patients in more useful ways.

To use this service, ask your surgery for a Patient Access registration letter. You'll need to take proof of identity (e.g. your driving licence or passport) when you collect the letter. It gives you full instructions on how to set up your Patient Access account - it's very simple to set up and use, as the 8,500 patients already using the service have found.

## Making the best use of urgent appointments

You're probably aware that these days, if you feel you need an urgent appointment, you can be sure of speaking to a doctor on the same day.

When you phone the practice for an urgent appointment, they take your phone number and then a Duty Doctor will call you back later the same day. In some cases the phone call may be all that's needed but in others the doctor will want you see you in person and so will make an urgent appointment for you.

This system seems to be working well but there are a couple of points we should remember when using this service, which help it to work smoothly for all of us:

First, whichever number you give when you phone in (landline or mobile – whichever is best for you), it's important to try and keep it free until the doctor calls, and that you're able to answer it when it rings. Obviously it adds delay and wastes valuable time if the doctor has to make several attempts to reach you and after a few failed attempts they may just leave you a message and stop trying.

Also, note that phone calls from the practice will show up on your phone as *Private number* or *Number withheld*. A lot of us normally ignore such calls, as they're so often nuisance marketing calls, but of course if you are expecting a call from the doctor you'll have to take that risk and answer anyway.

## Contact us?

Our role is to do our best to represent all patients of the practice but of course we can't talk to everyone personally. So, we'd like to hear from you on any general matters about the way the practice operates. Obviously we can't get involved in specific complaints or individual patient issues, which should be taken up with the practice directly.

Any patient of the practice can join the PPG. If you're interested, just contact us or the practice to ask about it.

The best way to contact us is by e-mail to [ppg4tadley@gmail.com](mailto:ppg4tadley@gmail.com). A committee member can call you back if you'd prefer to talk on the phone.