

Public Health Forum and Dart Patients Annual Meeting 2015 Minutes

The annual open Public Health Forum and Dart Patients Annual Meeting was held on 2nd July 2015 at Townstal Community Centre attended by about 100 patients. The meeting started with welcome introductions from Dr Andrew Eynon-Lewis (Partner at the Dartmouth Medical Practice--DMP) and Pierre Landell-Mills (Chair of the Patient Participation Group--PPG).

In the first part of the evening the Dart Patients Annual Members Meeting was held. Pierre Landell-Mills started by reporting the activities of the PPG for the year. He emphasised the usefulness of the DMP-PPG Action plan 2014-15, through which a number of concerns identified in the PPG's 2014 Survey of Patients' Opinions had been addressed. Achievements included a successful skin cancer campaign to support early diagnosis, the creation of a mental health leaflet to guide users of these services, improved communication by the Practice with patients and open access for children under 5 years to the duty doctor on the day.

This coming year's DMP-PPG Action Plan (2015-16) included a campaign to support the early diagnosis of urological (kidney and bladder) cancer through highlighting to patients the importance of contacting the doctor if blood is seen in the urine, further improvements in communication, joint working on improving services to include exploring the value of relocating the surgery and working with the Dartmouth Academy to better address the priority health needs of young people at the school. The PPG had continued to underline patients' wish to have as much continuity of care as possible within the resource constraints of the Practice. Pierre emphasised that the strong support given by DMP to the work of the PPG was critical to its effectiveness, enabling the PPG to act as a 'critical friend' to the Practice. The PPG was in need of new members particularly those who are working and have young families. There is also a need for teenager representation.

The meeting re-elected Pierre Landell-Mills as PPG Chair, and Dee Nutt as the Vice-Chair and Kathy Congdon agreed to continue to act as the PPG's Secretary. The meeting endorsed the current membership of the PPG.

The meeting then moved to the presentations. Dr John Ur Delia presented the results of the skin campaign which he lead and which showed that the initiative had resulted in 67% more referrals (up from 40 to 67) from the DMP to the hospital resulting in an additional 13 potentially life threatening cancers being excised and a further 24 other cancers being excised. Reviewing how the DMP performs, the figures indicate that our 'pick up rate' for urgent 2 week wait referrals at 19.4% is better than the national average 12-14% and higher than the average locally 15%.

Dr Tony Anderson presented an illustrated talk on hearing loss and encouraged patients with hearing loss to come forward and be assessed. Viviana Ludwig provided a review of the mental health leaflet she had created in collaboration with PPG member Diana Knight and illustrated this with art works created by her father. The leaflet may be found on the website and in the Surgery. Other items included the idea that patients being treated for high blood pressure might self – manage their blood pressure with remote, electronic guidance from the doctor.

Time was given over towards the end of the meeting to discuss the Minor Injury Unit with representatives from the Care Trust. The MIUs temporary closure being forced on the Trust because of a failure to recruit sufficiently trained staff. Recruitment activities however are continuing. The DMP reported that it was coping so far with the extra workload but that the school holidays would be a more testing.

The possible relocation of the hospital, clinic and surgery was noted and the opportunities this would open for delivering an impressive new model of health and social care to Dartmouth. Representatives from the Clinical Commissioning Group and Torbay Care Trust contributed to this discussion. There were however few details available to discuss, but the opportunity for the patients of the Practice to inform and influence any proposed developments was highlighted.