

Access to GP Appointments Task and Finish Review Group.

Thursday 22nd August 2013 at 10.00am in Committee Room 3.

Present: - Councillor Newall (in the Chair); Councillors Donoghue, Macnab, T. Richmond, S. Richmond and H. Scott.

Abbie Metcalfe, Democratic Officer.

Apologies: - Councillor Francis, Nutt, Regan and J. Taylor.

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations reported to the meeting.

2. Term of Reference

Members discussed the Terms of Reference that was tabled at the meeting and discussed whether inviting the Practice Managers to a meeting to highlight any issues would be productive. Particular reference was also made to including Pharmacies within the remit of this work. Do Not Attends (appointments) was also highlighted as an issue that GP Practices were trying to address and Members discussed how this could be incorporated into this piece of work.

Agreed –

- a) That the Terms of Reference be agreed.
- b) That this piece of work solely focuses on access to GP appointments and work may be undertaken on Pharmacies at a later date.

3. Members feedback from GP Surgeries

Members discussed and shared the information that they had gathered from their respective GP Practices. All Members found the experience interesting and worthwhile. It was becoming apparent that there were differences between urban and rural GP Practices and Members thought this needed to be mentioned in their conclusions. The role of the Nurse Practitioner was also highlighted and discussion ensued about the use of Urgent Care and Dr Piper House.

Agreed –

- a) That Councillor Macnab would contact Carmel Medical Practice.
- b) That Council H. Scott would contact Clifton Court Medical Centre.
- c) That the Blue River Report be re-circulated to all Members of the Committee.
- d) That further clarification be sought from Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group about an audit of GP appointments recently carried out.

4. Feedback from GOLD Tea Dance

The Democratic Officer reported that 63 questionnaires were completed during the Tea Dance and that overall the majority of people surveyed were happy with their GP Practices and thought it was fairly easy to make an appointments when required. Over 50% of people said that if they telephoned their GP Practice on a morning they would be able to make an appointment for that day.

If the telephone line was engaged most people kept on trying until they could get through and at that point the majority of people were still be able to make an appointment. People who were unable to make an appointment on the day were frustrated at being told to ring back at 8am the next morning. Interestingly 30% of people surveyed believe there were enough appointments and 38% did not think there are enough appointments to meet the demand.

In respect of routine appointment most people surveyed were happy that they could book appointments in advance and found it easy to do so and preferred to see their own GP. It was pleasing to note that the majority of people have not complained to their GP Practice and have not considered moving Practices.

Agreed – That the feedback be noted.

5. Project Plan and way forward

Agreed:- That further meetings of the Task and Finish Group be arranged as follows:-

1. September – Meeting with representatives Health watch
2. October – Meeting with representatives from Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group
3. November – Meeting with GP Practice Managers (if convenient date can be secured).
4. November/December – Draft recommendations.
5. December – Final report to be considered at the Scrutiny Committee meeting 10th December 2013.

6. Any Other Business

Councillor Newall drew Members attention to the NHS England consultation Improving General Practice: a call to action and sought Members view on whether they should respond as a Scrutiny Committee.

Agreed: - That Members of the Scrutiny Committee respond to the consultation in due course, ahead of the closing date in November 2013.