

The Acorn Group Practice

Patient Participation Group

NEWSLETTER SRING 2024

Welcome to this Newsletter

This newsletter has been produced by the Acorn Group Practice Patient Participation Group (PPG). We aim to engage with patients, including those who don't need to attend the Practice often, keep you informed of changes in the services and operation of the Practice, and promote relevant public health matters. We also plan to tell you about work being done by the PPG to support the Practice in developing and improving its services. We hope you find it informative and helpful.

Practice update

Staff news

New Operations Manager – **Ann** has recently joined the Acorn team. She has many years of GP practice experience as a deputy manager and is used to working alongside the South West London Integrated Care Board.

Ann has already embedded well within the team and implemented strategies/solutions to help the Practice run more efficiently and in a structured way.

New Healthcare Assistant - **Bryony** previously worked for London Ambulance Service and was keen to join the General Practice environment.

New Reception/Admin – **Amy** has previous reception experience and hopes to expand her skills at Acorn Group Practice.

Promoted Care Co-ordinator – **Hannah** has been a reception/admin staff member for several years with Acorn. She was delighted to have the opportunity for development as Care Co-ordinator.

Promoted Triage Lead – **Amanda** is one of the longest serving staff members of Acorn, with a wealth of experience and knowledge. She was

pleased to be given the role of Triage Lead and be the central point of the process.

Acorn prides itself on being a Teaching Practice, led by Dr Christie. We have had several GP Registrars who completed their rotation with the Practice and have gone on to be successful General Practitioners – including **Dr Hannah Lawrence**, who has now joined the Practice as a Salaried GP following a spell as Registrar. Currently we have two GP Registrars working alongside Dr Christie - **Dr Unaiza Tughral** and **Dr Mariya Sarbicki**.

Meet the team:

We had a chat with **Alison Smith**, Practice Manager, who joined in April 2023

Q: What does your job involve?

A: Making sure that the Practice runs smoothly and efficiently, providing a safe environment for clinicians, admin staff and patients. I wear several different hats and communicate with people on different levels - the variety, with no two days the same, keeps me on my toes!

Q: What do you like most about working here?

A: The whole team are fantastic people! I was warmly welcomed and felt part of their 'work family' almost immediately! It's a lot easier and nicer to have such a fabulous hardworking team, always willing to go the extra mile, to support me! Of course, the PPG are a fantastic support too!

Q: What is your biggest challenge?

A: Not having enough time to complete everything is a challenge, probably shared by most staff within the NHS.

Q: How can the PPG help?

A: The PPG work so hard to support the Practice in a range of projects. It's a delight to be a part of these too! The PPG members' offer to help means a lot, and I am sure we will continue to work together discussing potential improvements to help the Practice. Keeping an eye on things like the website and new initiatives that may benefit patients is a great help and allows us to understand the patient perspective!

Appointment change process

The new triage process, to offer appointments or access to other suitable care, is working well, and we are adapting it with the help of patient and staff feedback. This is a work in progress; we aim to listen to what works well and not so well, and act appropriately. It seems to offer real value by opening up different ways of accessing care, and the staff are always on hand to help if needed!

Topical issues

We have listened to feedback regarding our telephone system and plan to establish a new phone system with new functions for the benefit of our patients. We will provide more information in due course.

Website information

The website is often updated with current news. We welcome patient feedback on the ease of use of the website and are happy to make any relevant changes. Please let us know how we could improve it by e-mail:

acorngrouppractice@nhs.net

Practice performance

Results from the 2023 NHS GP Patient Survey, sent out to over two million people across the UK, provide insights into Acorn's needs and opportunities to improve its performance.

During their last appointment, 80% of the Acorn patients who responded described their overall experience of the Practice as good.

Breaking this down:

- Over 90% felt their needs were met; had confidence in the health professional they saw or spoke to; and felt involved in decisions about their care and treatment. More than 80% reported that their health professional was good at listening to them; treated them with care and concern, including regard for any mental health needs; and allowed sufficient time.

- Less satisfaction was reported with the times and choice of appointment offered (53%); and their experience of making it (54%). That said, more than 90% accepted the appointment offered.

- 68% found it easy to contact the Practice by phone; and 77% found the receptionists helpful. Against this, fewer than 50% were able to speak to or see their preferred GP when they wanted to.

- This survey was carried out before the triage system for making appointments (where necessary) was introduced.

About the PPG

The PPG is formed of patients who aim to help the Practice in its work. It meets every two months with Practice staff. Current work includes these projects:

Landlines

Today, GP practices are making more and more use of text messages to contact patients. Many people like this – but people who only use a landline telephone may be losing out. This project aims to get a better picture of these patients' needs, and how they prefer to be contacted.

Working with the Practice, we found that just under 400 patients at Acorn do not have a mobile number on their records. Most are in older age-groups, but some may just not have updated their details with the practice lately. The Practice is now checking that they have the best contact details for all patients. If you think they may not have your up-to-date contact details, please do let them know.

As part of the same project, over the next few months we are also hoping to speak to some patients and carers who only use a landline to find out more about their experience of accessing services.

Inequalities

Last year we planned to conduct a survey gathering information on patient experience with the Practice early in 2024. With the introduction and bedding-in of the triage system for booking appointments, this survey is being rescheduled until later in the year. It will focus on a sample of patients aged 16 and over and with known medical conditions registered with the Practice in the ward of Fulwell & Hampton Hill.

It is an important project which we believe will help the Practice improve its services for patients, and help the Practice to identify inequalities in patient experience. The findings will be shared across the Borough and beyond.

Recruitment

We wanted to increase the number of patient members of our PPG, and broaden the range of people involved. We used the queue for flu vaccinations to talk to people and encourage them to take part, and added a poster to the waiting room noticeboard at the practice. There is also a section of the practice website about the PPG, with an application form for anyone who would like to volunteer. We have welcomed several new members into the group.

Would you like to join us?

We're always keen to involve patients and carers in the PPG. If you might be interested, please check out the Practice website: <https://theacorngrouppractice.co.uk/patient-participation-group-2/> or e-mail us at acorngrouppractice.ppg@nhs.net.

Activities at the Practice premises

A sub-group has started to consider how the premises might be used to help patients beyond clinical care. This might include sessions to advise on conditions such as diabetes, or how to use the Practice website.

If you have ideas to suggest, please let us know by e-mail to acorngrouppractice.ppg@nhs.net.

Get in touch

Do let us have your feedback on the newsletter, and suggestions of topics to cover in future, by e-mail to the address above. If you'd like to see future editions, please subscribe by giving us your e-mail address. If you don't have access to e-mail, there will be paper copies available at reception. It will also be displayed on the Practice website.