

Patient Forum Group Jorvik Medical Practice (January 2008).

How the group was developed.

The group was formed in late 2006 with the objective of providing a vehicle by which the Practice could test views both on the services that it provides and also potential developments in the future. The members of the group reflect various aspects of care and cover a fairly broad, although not fully comprehensive, cross section of the patients of the Practice. We meet approximately once per quarter.

The Practice have been very open and constructive in their dealings with the group and have been prepared to listen to suggestions on the way services are delivered and in particular how the communications between the Practice and patients are handled. At each meeting the patient forum get an update on current issues within Primary Care as it is felt to be very important that the group understand the restrictions in resources that the Practice have to work under in the current climate. This avoids debates developing within the group on the basis of unrealistic expectations.

What is discussed at the meetings.

Over the first year the discussions have focussed largely on communications, continuity and accessibility and we also looked at the results of the 2007 Patient survey in some depth. A flavour of the issues discussed is as follows:-

1. Accessibility

We discussed the appointments system and issues around the ease of telephone access to make appointments, the option of booking appointments online and surgery opening hours.

2. Continuity

The need for continuity for those patients with long-term health care issues.

3. Communications

This was probably the major area of discussion and we covered the use of the website, information in prescriptions, the use of the patient newsletter, notice boards, the possibility of public meetings. The ability to reach patients who do not normally attend the surgery was discussed along with ways of improving communications with the ethnic minorities.

How is it going?

All of the patients on the group feel that it is worthwhile to be involved and it has been very interesting to begin to understand the political aspects of the NHS and the impact of this on Primary Care in respect of financial issues and patient expectation.

The group is broadly representative but we need more patients to become involved in Patient Forum Group. One group which is difficult to engage with is the younger element and we would appreciate any involvement from members of this section of the practice population.

(This article was written by a member of the group).

The date of next meeting is Tuesday 22nd April 2008 from 6.30 – 7.45pm at Woolpack House, The Stonebow, York. For further information please contact the practice manager Mrs. Dana Homer on 01904 724343.