

ACTION PLAN 2012/13: AN UPDATE

Time has flown and it is already more than six months since we carried out our first online practice survey. We thought it would be right to opportune you all on where we have come with our 'Action Plan', and what the future holds for our Patient Representative Group (PRG). The following is an update on the points raised in our 'Action Plan':

TV / Music in Reception Area: The possibility of installing LCD panels in the waiting room to display practice information was explored but the overall cost (quoted at over £7000) was considered poor value for valuable NHS resources. This did not therefore take place but more cost-effective options may be considered in the future. At present we continue to play low level music to lessen the risk of consultations being overheard and to soften the waiting room atmosphere.

Telephone Consultations: We have tried to highlight that we are available for telephone consultations after morning surgery and believe that there has been a slight increase in the contacts being made by patients in this manner.

Extended Hours: Again the Extended Hours being offered by the Practice (with appointments from 7.00am on some days) continues to be utilised well and we believe that awareness of this is slowly spreading.

E-mail: Our desire for greater communication via the internet, including booking appointments on-line, has received a major setback. Our GP software provider (Isoft) has announced a withdrawal from this specialised market meaning we will have to switch to an alternative provider. For the time being, our focus will be on switching to this new GP software provider (Emis), and ensuring that the transfer goes as smoothly as possible. The intended date for this switch is July 2013. Once we have become accustomed to the new software, we hope to be able to more fully utilise what additional options it may offer us.

Entrance Area Touchscreen: In the interests of hygiene, the receptionists have been asked to ensure that the touchscreens are being sanitised at least twice daily.

THE FUTURE OF THE PRG

We are still very much in the fledgling stages of establishing an active Patient Representative Group and, to be frank, there has been little activity over the last few months. We feel that there needs to be more patient-led input to help guide us. To this end, we are delighted to announce that a local resident and patient, Mr Mike McDonald, has agreed to be chairperson / spokesperson for the group. Mike comes with lengthy experience at senior level with British Airways, as well as taking on projects with the BBC and at the Palace of Westminster post-retirement. He is currently chairman of the local OPAG (Older Person's Action Group) and is the patient representative with the Chiltern PCT. It is still intended that the PRG is run as a 'virtual' group, with most ideas / contacts flowing via e-mail. We will shortly be contacting existing members of our PRG to ensure that they are happy to continue in this role and also happy for us to pass their details on to Mike. We would then anticipate that Mike would take the lead in readiness for our next practice survey. We remain keen to build up our database of patient e-mail contacts so that we can involve as many of our patients as possible in decisions about their practice. Please do take the opportunity to complete a 'Contact Details' slip at reception if you have not already done so.