

# QuayPoints

## Special Edition

December 2012

The Patient Newsletter for East Quay Medical Centre

East Quay Medical Centre has a long standing patient group. Formed in 2003 before the move to the new premises, the group provides a critical voice and acts as a sounding board for developments in or involving the practice. It meets regularly with key people in the practice to hear about developments in the Practice and the wider NHS, as well as providing feedback on patients' experience of the Health Service, the results of surveys, and bringing forward complaints and compliments. The group has also been involved in events such as the diabetes awareness days; the carers support days and the 'flu clinics.

Last year the government asked practices to involve their patient group to seek their fellow patients' views on an issue that was important to them. We regularly ask our patients their views on different issues but we welcome the opportunity to do a specific focussed project. Having already undertaken a survey last year looking at the services patients would like to see locally rather than travelling to Taunton for, this year our group believed that a major issue for patients is their understanding of the medications they are prescribed by the doctor or nurse and the potential medication waste that occurs if a patient doesn't understand or doesn't feel able to discuss their concerns. This very much aligned to the NHS and the Bridgwater Federation campaign on Medicines Waste. Two other areas were specifically discussed but not selected at this time: the processes for booking hospital appointments (choose and book) and obstacles to leading healthy lifestyles. So, at East Quay our discussions culminated in the group undertaking a patient survey in June 2012 on patients and their medications. It specifically focussed on whether patients understood why and how they were taking the medication, whether they felt involved in the decision to prescribe and what happened if they decided not to take a medication.

East Quay Practice Manager, Rachel Stark, said "As a member of the prescribing group for the local federation of practices I was really pleased when the patients had the idea to focus on medicines. The insight it can provide to help clinicians in their consultations as well as avoiding medicines waste is really welcome."



### The profile of the members of the PPG

Many members have been with the group since its inception but in recent years the group has grown and now includes a number of newer members. We are currently looking for younger members to join the group and propose to text message certain age bands asking if they would be interested in joining the group.

The group meet regularly – approximately every 6-8 weeks, alternating evening and lunchtimes. The Deputy Practice Manager, Customer Service Manager, Practice Manager and Lead GP attend. The lead GP rotates in the GP cabinet posts annually.

#### We have a **Patient Group**

If you would like to join or if you'd like to raise an issue about the practice with them please write to 'Patient Group' at East Quay Medical Centre or pick up a form from reception.

### How did the group determine the issues to be included in the survey?

The group met in May 2012 to consider the patient and practice priorities, the public health profile, recent patient survey results, practice planned changes and any known issues the practice had from complaints or previous surveys. This included areas such as deprivation, disease prevalence, rates for breast screening, cervical screening and diabetic retinopathy screening. They also considered childhood and flu vaccinations, obesity levels in Bridgwater and smoking levels. To review the practices commissioning and 'gatekeeper' role the group also considered hospital admissions (emergency and planned) as well as outpatient numbers for the practice population and the wider town. With regards to practice services they considered our own services: reception, the building as a whole, clinical care, appointment availability and the information available to patients.

After in-depth discussions and debate the group decided to look and explore in more detail three options for a survey, these were:

- The patients understanding of the medications they were prescribed.
- Choose and book
- Obstacles to leading healthy lifestyles.

After in depth discussions and debate the group decided the survey would be asking patients about their understanding of their medications. This very much aligned to NHS and Bridgwater Bay Health Federation campaign on Medicines Waste.

## How did the Group obtain the views of the patients?

For logistical reasons and to support a high response rate, the group opted to use a one-to-one survey and that it would be conducted by the group in the waiting room. The group then outlined ideas for the survey design. With the direction from the group, the Practice Manager designed the survey paper. This was fully circulated to the group and all feedback incorporated into the final document.

We anticipated a survey response rate of 30% (We actually far exceeded this target in our responses.) This meant that we needed to run the survey for the amount of days it takes to see approximately 563 patients in the surgery itself.

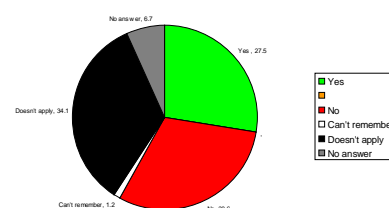
Having agreed the format and target numbers, the patient group decided to run the survey themselves to all patients in the main waiting room during the week commencing 25<sup>TH</sup> June 2012, before the main holidays started and when the majority of the patient group were available to assist. A timetable of which members would cover the sessions was put together and for safety and support, at least two group members were in the waiting room at one time.

We allocated a separate room for those patients who wanted privacy. We also provided an information leaflet for patients. All group members had a photo badge and their photos and an explanation of the survey was displayed in reception the week leading up to the survey and the survey week. All patients booked that week were advised at the time of booking that the survey was taking place. Press releases were also sent to local printed press.

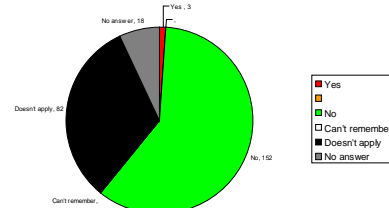
## What were the results?

We completed 255 surveys, well exceeding our target of 169. The survey was reasonably representative of practice list. There was strong response to say the doctor or nurse adequately explained why medication had been prescribed-88% fully and 6% partly understood, encouraged patients to ask questions about their condition -68%fully and 14% partly and offered clear information about the medications-80% fully and 13% partly. Over three-quarters of patients understood the information on the medicines and on how to take it and the majority of patients either fully or partly agreed that the doctor or nurse asked if they had any worries about taking the medicines prescribed. The patient group were rather alarmed by the fact that those who decided not to take prescribed medicines, a third decided not to tell their doctor of this and a small percentage continued to order these medications.

If you have EVER decided NOT to take a medicine, did you tell your Doctor/Nurse?



If you have EVER decided NOT to take a medicine, did you continue to order it?



## The Patient Group Analysis

The Patient Group met in mid - October to discuss the results and decide on what, if any, steps need to be taken following the survey.

### The survey itself:

The group felt that the survey was too long and could be reduced by a third of the questions as there were a lot of questions overlapping.

It was also felt that the survey should look more appealing and thus easier to complete.

The order of questions may be better if changed

It was felt that the survey should be more explicit to the patients that we were not asking who their doctor was as it could be that patients were worried about giving feedback to their own GP.

### The action points:

Patient awareness campaign on preparing for consultation/prescribing as well as medication waste

GP education session on the results

The group will consider a re-run of the survey in six months.

## What Happens next?

The patient group decided that there were three main areas of action from the results:

1. To educate patients on preparing for their consultations and what questions they may have about any medications that may be prescribed. This should give more confidence and the tools to really understand their medications. It should also reassure patients that their GP will not be angry or upset if they decide not to take a medication. This will be via a patient information campaign on the plasma screen and in the monthly newsletter.- and re the Medication Waste Campaign materials too.
2. The group felt that the results will be of interest to practice prescribers and an education session has taken place to review these results and discuss the tools the clinicians may like to use to ensure the patients do understand their treatment.
3. The group felt that other patient groups and practices may be interested in the design of the survey and therefore the results are to be sent to local federation patient groups and the PCT **facilitators of groups**.