



# Spa Medical Centre Melksham

## Patient Reference Group

### Review of 2014

The Patient Reference Group remained very busy and very active in 2014, meeting on seven occasions during the year. Additionally, a sub group met to plan and prepare the two Patient Information Evenings scheduled during the year, then held a debrief to feedback their findings and suggests ways to improve the content, delivery and experience of the Information evenings.

The year started with Spa Medical Centre closing their lists to new patients, to enable the surgery to address the growing demand created from taking on a significant number of new registrations due to the housing expansion programme, also safely manage those patients currently registered with the Medical Centre.

Our year began with a Patient survey produced by the surgery. Members of the group assisted patients with the completion of this survey. 480 patients completed the survey; the results indicated that the majority of those surveyed were aware of the specialist services offered by the nursing team at the practice. Most were aware of the website and the facilities offered online. The majority were satisfied with the opening hours and would recommend the Spa Medical Centre to their family and friends. Unfortunately only about one third of those surveyed were male, this may have affected the outcome of this survey, but this is something the surgery has no control over.

One member of the PRG suggested using a questionnaire to establish how satisfied patients were with the current appointment system. 55 patients were surveyed at the Patient Information Evening, this survey revealed that the majority of those surveyed made their appointments by telephone and preferred to see their Doctor of choice. The majority reported they had to wait between 2 and 4 weeks for a routine appointment, expressing their wish to be seen by the GP of choice within one week.

The practice recognises the need to review the current appointment system to provide better access to its patient population, however there were mitigating circumstances during 2014 which challenged access times and on balance, the practice coped very well with this. The practice experienced significant internal challenges over the last twelve months with two GP Partners away from the practice on long term sickness absences. GP Locum cover was sought to backfill the routine appointments, however increased pressure was put on the existing GP Partners to cover the work of two absent Partners.

More work is required to consider alternative solutions to patient wait times for a GP appointment. Patient demand continues to increase locally, as is the national picture. Other models of care provided by other Healthcare providers are being considered across the country and may be one solution to the problem, such as a practice Pharmacist working alongside the GP to deliver a medication review service, along with a drive to improve patient information and education.

The acute, on the day emergency appointment service at the practice works well and is very well received by patients, with patients accessing the Duty Doctor or Nurse service for medical problems that have become worse and need assessing and treating.

The Patient Information Evening covered Dementia as its topic, the way in which the condition manifests itself and the services offered to support the diagnosis. Overall a very useful and well attended evening, patient feedback was very positive, many reported the content to be instructive, insightful and very interesting.

Concerns were expressed at many of our meetings about the number of houses being built around Melksham and the added pressure this would inevitably put on the services provided at Spa.

Following concerns raised from previous survey reports the practice installed a new telephone system. The new system provided a 100% increase in the number of telephone lines available at any one time, making it much more accessible to get through to the surgery. The new system has to date been met with positive comments. The practice has appointed more Doctors and Nurses and hopes to be in a position to accommodate more members of the Clinical team in the near future.

The practice discussed the high number of patients who do not turn up for their appointments; the group were asked to think about this and if we could think of ways to help reduce this. Unfortunately the PRG were unable to conduct an audit of missed appointments due to patient confidentiality.

Flu clinics commenced in September, PRG members assisted with this, validating patient information to ensure patient records were up to date. The group also helped guide the patients to the correct waiting areas to receive their vaccination. The group also surveyed patients to see if they thought the formation of a "Friends of the Spa Medical Centre" would

be a good idea, primarily to be a fund raising group to support the practice, the majority did. The practice is currently in the process of arranging a meeting to pursue this idea further.

A document entitled "Reducing Waiting Times" was produced by a member of the group; this was discussed at our last meeting and passed on to the GP Partners for comment.

The group welcomes new members to support the work carried out, it requires someone with a committed, flexible approach to enhancing the patient experience and services offered at the practice through discussion, suggestions and ideas.

If you have any comments or suggestions for the PRG or the practice please, if you have internet access, select "*Contact us*" from the home page and use the *Comments/Suggestions form*. Otherwise write to or telephone the Practice.