

Feedback and next steps

Tang Hall Church 29th January 2025

Minutes written by PPG

We've learnt a lot about the processes used by Priory, which has been very informative, and has helped us understand the challenges being faced by the practice.

Background

Dr Bennett explained that the Priory group looks after around 58,000 patients so there are a lot of requests to deal with on a daily basis. He explained how the practice aims to utilise other services such as local pharmacies, specialists within the practice like physiotherapists and pharmacists, and groups outside the practice like Nimbuscare (a local community care organisation which provides out of hours and urgent care clinics during winter to support local practices) to help. Patients' medicines are looked after by a dedicated prescription team based at Fulford who are specialist in this area and provide a high level of care, alongside the clinical pharmacist team.

In response to a question about how the Priory was structured and organised across 8 sites, Dr Bennett explained to everyone how patients are still registered at one site, but that they can be seen by any member of the whole Priory team through telephone consultation and in person on any site if there is an appointment available.

The Priory team also shared some of the pressures which are felt by GPs and other teams in trying to support patients. These included the not being able to give the continuity of care they would like because of the pressure to deliver the high volumes of urgent care requested by patients each day. There is also the need to provide more advice and support (known as 'preventative care') and the fact there the teams know there are patients who do not find it easy to access health care (known as 'equity' in their access). Because of these challenges there is health inequality experienced by some Priory patients which needs to be understood better to be addressed. Health inequality is when some patients experience poorer health and outcomes than other patients.





Suggestions for focusing on for improvements for patients

We suggested that members of the PPG continue to look at the pathways and identify problem areas to work with the practice team to see how things could be improved.

For example we could look at the doctor's appointment pathway from start to finish.

We discussed the three different ways you can request an appointment. This can be online through the online triage system as well as through the telephone call centre and in person via reception. The system, irrelevant of which way the appointment is requested, then separates for new problem requests into urgent and routine care appointments.

We now understand some of these processes because we came to the meetings but many patients don't. We suggested improved communication to explain the systems in place with patients via the website, email, and newsletter would help patients better understand. Some of the PPG have worked in communications before and would be happy to join a working group looking at sharing of information with patients.

Building Better Continuity of Care

The issue of continuity of care was brought up particularly for more elderly patients who tend to have multiple illnesses. Continuity of care means patients being able to speak to the same small number of the practice team who know the most about their care and situation. Dr Bennett expressed his frustration that exists within the GP and clinical teams in not being able provide better continuity of care, compared to what they would like to, and said the practice was actively seeking ways to try and improve the situation which would be beneficial to both doctors and patients alike.



We also discussed how patients' medicines are managed. There are currently at least four ways of ordering medication. The aim is to reduce this to one or two simple methods.

The NHS app is difficult to use when prescriptions require being reviewed. It often removes the medicines from the list without explaining reason why (when a review is due) whereas SystemOnline keeps the entire list.

We discussed some of the difficulties with communication and telephone calls to support patients with managing their medicines.

Where a medicine requires review the pharmacist often gives a set period (usually weeks) when they will call. During this period, the medicines may be approved without anyone calling. This means the call, if it comes, may come at an inappropriate time and, for example patients may be on holiday or in a public place.

It would help if a clear date was given for the call. It was appreciated that a specific time could not be given but morning or afternoon slots would be perfectly adequate. This would save time and frustration for both parties.

The same applies to doctors' communications. If the doctor decides to call straightaway for an urgent case and there is difficulty getting through, it would help if there was a way for the patient to call back and re-arrange the time (morning or afternoon).

In non-urgent cases, where time is not so critical, when offering a date for a callback it would be helpful if the patient had an opportunity to change this (for example if they are on holiday or have an important commitment).

It was noted that messages are not left for patient and this is due to confidentiality issues (some of us didn't get the recent communication about this via text which asked all patients to let the practice know if they were happy to use specified numbers to receive communications – this is known as 'opting in'). We suggested it would be useful to be able to give permission to leave such information on the answerphone, perhaps using a tick box in personal information files for different types of messages (e.g. test results).



Surgery reception



The discussion then moved on to receptionists at the surgery. It was felt everybody's experience of the reception at surgeries was good. The receptionists in general are very helpful and welcoming.

The issue of confidentiality was brought up. Some individuals felt that they did not want to disclose their address and/or date of birth other personal information in front of others in the reception area.

It was stated that it was very difficult in some surgeries to find a space to provide private consultation. It was explained that there are increasing problems with aggressive behaviour of patients who have been threatening the staff both verbally and physically. So, there are particular safeguarding issues associated with meeting in a separate room which need to be balanced against the privacy needs of patients.

The issue of old and tired of buildings was brought up. In some cases, people had seen new purpose-built facilities which are much better and those in the Priory group. While the Priory team said they would love to be able to improve facilities currently the funding was just not available to do this in any substantial scale. They continue to work with the local NHS commissioners and City of York Council to find the funding to invest in re-furbishing current buildings as well as brand new building developments at Burnholme and York Central (known as the 'Teardrop' development).

The council is committed to developing health and care campuses for NHS, social care and voluntary care services to be delivered from shared buildings. The challenge is finding both the up front investment to build the campuses and the money to pay for upkeep or repay any borrowed funding needed for the upfront investment.

In the meantime the Priory team continue with maintaining the existing buildings as best they can – most recently this has included work to roofs and also additional security measures to keep staff and patients safe.

Next meeting:
Wednesday 7th May 4-6pm
Venue TBC



Keeping in touch

www.priorymedical.com

New email for Friends of Priory:

ppg@priorymedical.com

Follow us on

www.facebook.com/priorymedical

Instagram: @priorymedicalgroup

X (twitter): @priorymedicalgp

Remember!

Patients can call and ask about anything at any time if they are worried or need to understand more. If things aren't right then say so and ask for feedback and time with someone to explain.

Come into our surgeries or call 01904 404100 and ask our Front of House team or use the feedback form on our website

<https://www.priorymedical.com/contact-us/>

