



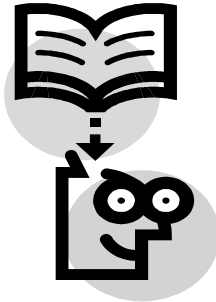
Our Newsletter

Issue 15

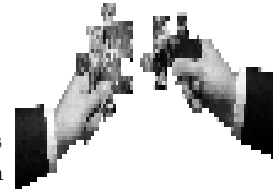
March 2008

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Consultation – and more consultation



You may be aware of the recent consultations on the future of health services across London and also closer to home in Battersea and North Wandsworth. If you'd like to know more, then read on ...

Consulting the Capital was the theme of the London-wide consultation over the past three months run by the strategic health authority NHS London on the "Healthcare for London" proposals published by Lord Ara Darzi in the summer of 2007. This consultation has just ended and you can read more about it at www.healthcareforlondon.nhs.uk. In order to have our say, on 13 February, as part of a presentation by the Primary Care Trust and a discussion led by Dr Bower, twenty-eight BPSPLG members considered the principles being recommended for London. A summary of our response will be on the Practice's website soon, but here are the highlights we are bringing to the attention of NHS London.

- We are concerned that so little media exposure has been given to such important matters, which means that most Londoners probably have little understanding of what is being proposed.
- We support partnerships between the NHS and Local Authorities as an obviously good way forward to improve health and well-being, but the Group wanted to know more specifically about how that would work. We felt that the necessary detail was lacking.
- We welcome more telephone access and advice, but the Internet should also be exploited, as many more people, including many older people, are using it.

(Continued on page 2)



LYNx bridging the gap

Linking up with LINKs



LYNx linking

Some NHS acronyms seem destined to drive proofreaders demented. "LINK" is one of them. For despite looking like a typo, it actually stands for Local Involvement Network, and the lower case "k" is deliberate. Take a moment

to look beyond the acronym, however, and you will realise how potentially important LINK could be and why you might want to "link up with it", so to speak. The Patients' Forums, which have only been around for about five years, are being replaced from 1 April this year by LINKs in every English Local Authority with social services responsibilities.

Wandsworth is one of them, so there will be a LINK covering the whole Borough, rather than relating to particular institutions like St George's Hospital, as the Forums did. But the most important thing is that, for the first time, LINK will unite health care and social care from the point of view of patients, the public and service users. That's a huge challenge, but also a tremendous opportunity to have a stronger voice in how things are planned and carried out in health and social care services. Watch out for local publicity about how to become a member of Wandsworth LINK later this spring – both individuals and organisations will be able to join (for free of course). To read more about what LINK will be doing, have a look at this leaflet produced by the Department of Health entitled "LINKs Explained" at www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_077483

Consultation (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

- We welcome ways of providing urgent care without having to go to A&E, but these must not reduce the availability of emergency services at any time for people who really need them.
- We strongly advocate greater access to GP services, and we commend the success of Balham Park Surgery in offering early and late appointments during the week and on Saturday morning as an example for others to follow.
- We would be happy to see an extension of the range of services provided at GP Surgeries, including more efficient referral to other specialist service providers through some sort of grouping of Practices – a “federation” perhaps. But continuity of care is important, and we would be very unhappy to lose the personal relationship with a particular doctor or nurse, which might happen in an expanded “polyclinic” or large health centre serving some 50,000 patients. It is also important that Surgeries should be near their patient population, especially young families and older people. The proposals also do not consider other problems associated with bigger groupings, such as the viability of pharmacies and availability of transport links.
- High quality healthcare delivered in the home is a good objective, but we wonder if providing this would really be as cost-efficient as the proposals claim.

Overall, BPSPLG members felt there were some good aspects to the “Healthcare for London” proposals, especially making better use of acute and specialist hospitals, more care at home and a wider range of services in improved GP premises. But there was a big drawback: we felt that Lord Darzi’s report and NHS London did not put forward a patient-designed model. Public involvement in formulating the proposals for London was minimal, and the proposals appeared to us to be driven from the top and mainly concerned with centralising secondary (hospital) services in larger centres around London.

For Wandsworth, and especially for our part of the Borough, what we wanted to see was a model flexible enough to care for the diverse local population. We wanted our local NHS – Wandsworth Primary Care Trust in particular – to be given sufficient autonomy to consult meaningfully and then decide what is best for Wandsworth people, without having solutions dictated from on high. That is just what we may be about to get, as another consultation, this time much closer to home, was launched by Wandsworth PCT at the end of January about *Improving health services in Battersea and North Wandsworth*. Here’s what the PCT says about it: “In our consultation we have been looking at health services in Queenstown, Latchmere, St Mary’s Park, Northcote, Fairfield and Shaftesbury wards, and the northern half of Wandsworth Common. We are asking you to tell us what you think of our plans to improve healthcare services over the next five to ten years, including where to build a new primary care centre in the area.”

Although most of our Surgery’s patients don’t live in these wards, this consultation is of interest to us for two big reasons: first, it will determine what kind of health facilities could be put on the Bolingbroke Hospital site as part of its wider redevelopment; second, a large new walk-in primary care centre could be built in central Wandsworth, perhaps adjacent to Clapham Junction station. The PCT’s consultation runs until 12 May. You can read about it and respond through the PCT website at www.wandsworth-pct.nhs.uk/about/batterseanorthwandsworth/default.asp.

Printed copies are available (also in large print and audio formats and other languages). To receive a copy just ring 020 8812 7605 or email comms@wpct.nhs.uk.

Postscript

These snippets of information about “what next” for the Darzi London review were culled from the PCT Board’s papers and the NHS London website. **Did anyone actually see the 10-day ‘Chalk and cheese’ media campaign?**

The major events of the consultation began in the Borough on 17 January with a roadshow at Southside Shopping Centre in Wandsworth. The PCT also presented Healthcare for London at around 30 stakeholder groups across the Borough over the 14-week period. As a whole, over 3,500 individuals and organisations responded to the consultation.

*One of the highlights of the consultation was the ‘Chalk and cheese’ campaign, which provided an estimated 10 million ‘chances to see’ for those who live, study or work in London. The 10-day integrated media campaign aimed to maximise ‘reach’ across all target audiences in the last fortnight of the consultation. The theme of the campaign was ‘differences’, using the ‘chalk and cheese’ idiom to highlight health inequality in London. Activity included advertising in *The London Paper*, promotions at nine of London’s busiest underground and rail stations, digital advertising and the use of online social networking sites.*

The independent analysts Ipsos MORI will be presenting in public a summary of the responses on 6 May 2008. Please visit www.healthcareforlondon.nhs.uk for more details. Primary Care Trust Boards will consider the proposals during the week beginning 19 May; Wandsworth Teaching PCT’s Board will meet on Wednesday 21 May at 2 pm. On 12 June, the Joint Committee of PCTs will meet in public to agree a set of recommendations.

Patient Questionnaires Results and Priorities for Improvement



Thank you to everyone who completed the Improving Practice Questionnaires (IPQs) this year, and in previous years. Once again, positive feedback easily outnumbered negative comments, and overall the Practice's score was well above the national average. This is particularly encouraging as BPS has grown considerably, with several new GPs and other team members. The most improved area was "satisfaction with waiting time" (up by 4% — but see next paragraph).

The IPQ did identify areas of concern, particularly how services were perceived by patients. Some of these concerns were:

- Dissatisfaction with length of time on hold when phoning in – this usually happens when several calls coincide with a queue of patients at Reception, but the Practice is aware of this and looking to improve waiting times
- Waiting times to see particular clinicians – part-time GPs make a valuable contribution to the Practice's range of skills, but inevitably their available slots in a given week sometimes get filled rather quickly
- Need for extra early, late and Saturday appointments – we need more publicity about existing extended hours!
- Dislike of TV / too obtrusive / too loud or too quiet – see below: "The Waiting Room TV"
- Problems with using online appointment booking and the automatic check-in – there were recently some problems with getting onto the online service, but generally it works well

Following the results last year a number of BPSPLG members joined a sub-group with multi-disciplinary representation from the Practice to review outcomes and implement changes based on the feedback. As a result of their work, the agreed priorities for improvement in 2007/08 were:

1. *Telephone waiting times*: ensuring that patients are not put on hold for long periods.
2. *Seeing a practitioner of choice*: this is difficult because of the number of part-time doctors, but more work could be done to support continuity of care.
3. *Waiting times*: whilst this has been improved by monitoring and in some cases restructuring surgeries, patients remain frustrated when they are kept waiting beyond the scheduled time of their appointment.

To consider this year's IPQ survey results and priorities, a group of eight BPSPLG members met on 20 February and recommended continuing to work on these priorities in 2008/09. A smaller number agreed to become part of the Practice's multi-disciplinary sub-group, which will meet throughout the year to review progress and report in August.

The Practice intends to have a separate internal group looking at how to improve the telephone appointments system. The Group thought that it would be a good idea for patients to be represented on this, and that these should be people who would be unlikely to use our online system. Two BPSPLG members volunteered to do this.

The Practice has bought from the IPQ organisers a large poster summarising the results, for display in the waiting room.

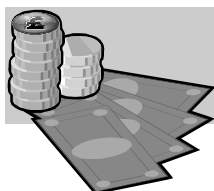
The Waiting Room TV

If you've been to the Surgery lately, you'll have noticed the large audio-visual display in the waiting room which provides information on surgery services and news.

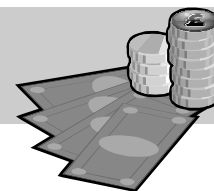
The original intention was to create material within the Practice, though this would have been time-consuming to organise and potentially very repetitive. However, in the meantime Wandsworth Primary Care Trust recommended that all Practices sign up to "The Life Channel", a satellite TV station which provides information relating to health and the community. The accompanying commentary is particularly helpful for people who are visually impaired. The channel has the facility to allow the Practice to add in its own material.

Advertising is interspersed with short films and news bulletins. The PCT felt that this medium would increase patients' awareness of topical health issues and provide them with an additional means of communication. But not all patients have been convinced of its worth. Some find it intrusive, others have objected to some of the advertising and the volume (which should by now be sorted out). But the majority of patients have welcomed its installation.

Footage or advertising that we feel is inappropriate or may involve a conflict of interest can be blocked if people bring it to the Practice's attention. So if you see anything that you think should not be shown, please tell Reception, or e-mail the Practice's managing partner Natalie Goldsmid-Whyte at natalie.goldsmid-whyte@nhs.net.



Savings from Practice-based Commissioning



Practices in the “Wandle Cluster”, to which our Practice belongs, have access to savings they have made through changes to prescribing and services. As a result, Balham Park Surgery can apply to use some of these funds for the benefit of patients. We discussed ideas at the December meeting of Balham Park Surgery Patients Liaison Group. The Group has so far approved applications for the following:



- a new defibrillator
- checkers for blood pressure (BP), weight, height and body mass index (BMI)
- a BP monitor for home use
- electronic scales
- higher chairs for the waiting and education rooms, for people with bad backs
- air-conditioning for rooms where the temperature cannot be regulated in summer
- improvements to the lighting in the alleyway

We now need to get quotes and apply to the PCT for funding.

We have also had approval to fund BPSPLG’s activities for the coming year and this money is now in our bank account. (See below ‘We’re in the money’)

We would love to have even more patients involved in helping make decisions about the things we do. If you would like to take part, please drop in to one of the monthly meetings (see p 5) or contact the Practice for more information.

We’re in the Money!

Certainly for this year anyway. The good news is that BPSPLG came up with a creative suggestion which the Practice supported, and as a result £2,265 of so-called “freed-up resources” from practice-based commissioning has been approved to support BPSPLG’s activities for 12 months. This reflects BPSPLG’s budget proposals for meetings, newsletters and educational events. Thank you to all concerned for getting this financial support other patient participation groups in Wandsworth could be agreed, and we hope it sets a good example of how funded from savings through practice-based commissioning.



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Staffing changes at the Surgery

THERE WERE LOTS OF CHANGES IN OCTOBER 2007!



Dr Jenni Ellingham, previously a partner for six years at the Battersea Fields Practice and before that a partner at the Rowans Surgery in Streatham, started with us in October 2007. She works three sessions a week during term time and two in school holidays.

Dr Lowri Bailey, our permanent replacement for Dr Jo Smail, also started last October. She works four days a week and takes over as our paediatric lead. She completed her GP registrar training and MRCP in August 2006 and has worked in various Practices as a locum. This is her first permanent position as a GP.

Dr Shilts Shah, who worked with us previously as a salaried GP covering Dr Kathryn Mounde’s maternity leave, became a partner in October.

At the beginning of March Dr Prevena Chana returned from her maternity leave to work four sessions a week. We said “Goodbye and thank you for all your help” to Dr Denis Jackson, who had been covering her sessions.

New reception staff: a warm welcome to Hayley Finch and Diana O’Bryen, who joined us in October.

Edmund Jonas-Nartey, our finance manager, has retired. Many thanks, Edmund, for all your hard work, and have a long and happy retirement! Karlie Woods, previously deputy reception manager, has taken over as finance manager.



NEWSBOARD

Anxiety Management Groups and "Managing Moods" Groups

Due to their ongoing success, we continue to have these groups run in our education room by clinical psychologists. Patients can self-refer during a consultation with a clinician. More details are available at Reception.

Equinox Drug and Alcohol Counselling

We now have a replacement counsellor for Wednesday evenings, with appointments through to 8.00 pm. Patients can self-refer by contacting Patrick Brophy, Service Development Manager at Equinox, on 020 8640 5587, or enquire during their consultation with a clinician.

Have Opinions but can't Get to Meetings?

If so, why not join Natalie's 'Virtual Consultation Group', so that she can consult you online? If that appeals to you, just email her at natalie.goldsmid-whyte@nhs.net.

A Reminder about BPS's Online Services

To register for these, just ask at Reception. Once on, you can make normal appointments when it's convenient for you, request repeat prescriptions and send non-urgent messages.

It really is much easier than doing it by phone!

Dates of 2008 Meetings: 7-9 pm, Education Room, Balham Park Surgery

Unless otherwise stated, these are all BPSPLG committee meetings, held on Wednesdays.

All patients of the Surgery are welcome to attend any meeting.

9 April	14 May Annual Open Meeting	11 June
10 September	8 October	12 November
		10 December

Balham Park Surgery – 236 Balham High Road – LONDON SW17 7AW
Tel. 020 8772 8772

www.balhamparksurgery.co.uk