

**Hilltop Medical Centre
PPG (Patient Participation Group)
Report 2016/17**

Date: March 2017

The PPG was set up in March 2009 with 10 members and, as at the beginning of this year, the board member group of Hilltop Medical Centre PPG comprises:

Shobhna Dave (Chair)	Beverley Tavares (Vice Chair)
Sandra Reed (Secretary)	Pauline Coulthard (Treasurer)

plus 11 additional PPG members and approximately 2,000+ in our virtual group.

The main focus of Hilltops PPG is communication – a bridge, linking practice staff and patients to enable better mutual understanding and the more efficient sharing of information. This is conveyed via such routes as:

- having a regular PPG presence in the surgery and talking with patients;
- our quarterly Newsletter;
- new social media sites which are about to be launched, and;
- the Hilltops website which shows our meeting Minutes, reports and Newsletters.

As a result of a regular PPG presence in Hilltops during surgery hours, member numbers are growing, with much needed new members bringing their respective skills and ideas to further enhance the group. Greater numbers will enable us to have a more regular presence in the surgery, when we can sit and talk with patients, hear any difficulties first hand that they may be experiencing in their understanding of appointment booking and other procedures, and explain these to them.

The PPG is satisfied that the on-line booking system is a simple, user friendly one and that, in time, fewer patients will have any difficulty in using it. In doing so, they will find how easy it is to book an appointment, either with a GP or a Nurse Practitioner and obtain test results. Whilst the website needs updating, the PPG is confident that this, too, will become a more familiar and useful tool for patients' use. The PPG now has a dedicated person who will monitor the website and liaise with Hilltops IT staff ongoing.

The PPG is pleased to continue to report that a growing majority of patients, once they have an appointment and can consult with a member of the practice, have stated that they are very happy with the level of care they receive and feel their concerns are treated with sympathy and given the attention they require.

As will be seen, following patients' comments, this report has moved its focus to the communication at the first point of contact within Hilltops: reception. Reception staff are friendly, courteous and welcoming but lack the support that would benefit them in terms of training in communicating information and delegating/asking for assistance during busy times.

Comments based on the 2016/17 survey results that were identified for discussion are listed over, together with the reasons for their inclusion in this report and steps to be taken in order to effect improvement:

PPG's questions following 2015/16 survey, for inclusion in annual PPG statement

1. Communication within Hilltops

Patients report conflicting information between that given on the website and by practitioners to that given by reception staff. Will Hilltops liaise with reception staff on a regular basis in order to ensure ongoing updates for reception staff on procedures / requirements? One example is the lack of awareness of conditions that can be assessed by Nurse Practitioners.

Hilltop's responses :

Hilltops will talk through procedures with reception staff, ensuring they are up to date. Problems can arise when patients fail to specify reasons for booking when making on-line appointments.

PPG comments:

The PPG is satisfied that Hilltops management has taken patients' reports seriously and will ensure that the issue is rectified.

2. Queues

Patients complain of long queues forming at busy times at reception. Will Hilltops management remind reception staff to request help in the event of more than three patients waiting to be seen in the queue? Some training may be helpful to raise awareness of a given situation whilst dealing with another, and reacting appropriately.

In overcoming this frequently occurring problem, patients will be less stressed and the likelihood of a diminished perception of Hilltops as an approachable, considerate healthcare provider will not be jeopardised.

Hilltop's responses :

From April, patients should be checking in by using the self check-in screens only. A campaign is to be launched to raise awareness of this method of reducing queues at reception. Receptionists will co-ordinate with a screen receptionist in the comms room, where there will be a monitor showing reception so that help can be given when queues are observed.

PPG comments:

The use of the check-in screens combined with the monitoring of queues in reception will prevent the regular formation of unnecessary queues and the stresses they cause.

3. Communication of information to patients

- a) *What can be done to assist patients in such procedures as on-line booking? Can a laptop be made available to offer demonstrations to patients by the PPG during PPG visits to the surgery? This will have the added bonus of helping patients become familiar with the website and having access to all the information within it.*
- b) *The PPG suggests the addition of a 'How To . . .' section on the website, with step by step guides to using the various services.*

Hilltop's responses :

Planned on-line booking tuition events are due to take place throughout April 2017. The IT team is to advertise specific hours during which they will be present in order to offer tuition to patients in on-line booking procedures.

PPG comments :

This is a welcome initiative which will give more patients control over their appointment booking, thereby demonstrating the availability of appointments at Hilltops as and when they are required, including on the day.