# Practice Meeting

**24/02/2014**
**12:30 to 13:50**
**Surgery**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Meeting called by:** | CB | **Type of meeting:**<br>**Patient Participation**<br>**Survey Findings** |

**Attendees:** Dr Diane Twena; Dr Sharon Lawrence; Dr Sanchita Sen; Catherine Bourel; Bernadette Farrell, Mulu Taye; Janice Marshall; Caroline Quinn; Rabab Bhukari;
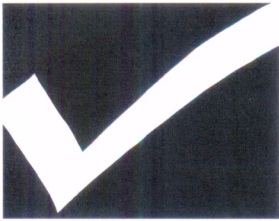
**Please read:**

## ----- Agenda Topics -----

**Patient Participation Survey Finding 2013-14:  IMPROVING ONLINE ACCESS**

**The survey was sent to 158 members of our Patient Reference Group during January/February 2014.  We received 52 responses and the results were discussed at a Practice Meeting on 24th February 2014.**

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|---|---|---|
| Q1. How important is it to you that you are able to book appointments online? | CB | 10 |
| Q2. How important is it to you that you are able to request your repeat prescription online? | CB | 10 |
| Q3. How important is it to you that you are able to get online access to your personal health records held by your GP? | CB | 10 |
| Q4. What other online service(s) do you think would be beneficial to you as a patient? | CB | 10 |
| Q5. If you are already using our Online Repeat Prescription Service, do you find it easy to use? | CB | 10 |
| Q6. If you are using our Online Prescription Service, how do you think we could improve it? | CB | 10 |
| Q6.bis. To what purpose would you envisage using the Online Access to your personal health records held by your GP? | CB | 10 |
| Q7. Are you worried about security issues with regards to using Patient Online Access. If yes, Why? | CB | 10 |

## Other Information

- Patient Reference Group Distribution Report 20/2/14
- Survey on Improving Patient Online Access – report
- Website hits report 25FEB14

# Practice Meeting

**24/02/2014**
**12:30 to 13:50**
**Surgery**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Meeting called by:** Catherine Bourel | **Type of meeting:** Practice Meeting |

**Attendees:**

**Please read:**

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## ---------- Agenda Topics ----------

**Q1. How important is it to you that you are able to book appointments online?**  CB  10

Discussion:  77% of patients who responded said it is very to fairly important that they are able to book appointments online, compared with 25% who did not think so.

Conclusions: Due to the overwhelming positive response from patients, the practice has activated the Online Appointments Booking service via Emis Access.  Patients already registered with Emis Access for Repeat Prescribing are now able to use the facility under a pilot scheme.

| Action items:   The practice will advertise the new service on the surgery website.  Patients will be reminded that they need to register on Emis Access first, in order to be able to use the new service. | Person responsible:  CB | Deadline: 28FEB14 |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

**Q2. How important is it to you that you are able     CB                                    10
to request your repeat prescription online?**

Discussion: An overwhelming 82% of patients who responded said it was very to fairly important that they were able

to request their repeat prescriptions online.

Conclusions:  The practice has been offering this Emis access service for 5 years now and this has proved to be very
popular with patients.  Patients need to register for the service by filling in an Emis Access registration form;  they are then
issued with a PIN, Practice ID, and Access ID which they need to use to register for an Emis Access account.  Once
registered, they are able to request their repeat prescriptions via the surgery website. The practice website is currently
experiencing an average of 3500 hits per month for Emis Access Repeat Prescription Service.

| Action items: The practice will continue to advertise the Online Prescription Request service in the waiting room, on the website and in the New Patient Registration Pack. | Person responsible:  CB | Deadline: ONGOING |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | | |

| Q3. How important is it to you that you are able to get online access to your personal health records held by your GP? | CB | 10 |
|---|---|---|

Discussion: The NHS Commissioning Board intends to develop and adapt the Improving Online Access EES to take into

Account the Government's commitment for implementing secure online communications and viewing medical records

(including test results and letters) and to further incentivize expansion of the services adopted in 2013/14.

Conclusions: 72% of patients who responded said it was very to fairly important that they were able to get online access to their personal health records held by their GP.

But with the benefits come a number of risks involving both data security and patient confidentiality, as well as the nature and quality of patient contact and the potential for practice system failures, as follows:

On an individual basis email test results to patients could eliminate the need for direct face-to-face or telephone consultations in routine enquiries such as test results. Patients could send a message to the practice at any time of the day or night and staff can respond at their convenience. In this area of increasing reliance on primary care services, email could offer an additional way of managing patient demand.

But with the benefits come a number of risks involving both data security and patient confidentiality, as well as the nature and quality of patient contact and the potential for practice system failures, as follows:

Healthcare professionals have a duty to ensure that any patient records they hold remain secure. With doctors increasingly using email to communicate with patients and colleagues, the risks of confidentiality breaches increase. The Data Protection Act 1998 requires information to be fairly and lawfully processed and a serious breach of the Act can result in a complaint to the ICO (Information Commissioner's Office) who have a wide-ranging powers, including the ability to impose large fines.

Any practice using email or text to communicate with patients should have their expressed and explicit consent. It may also be a matter of agreeing levels of disclosure.

It is important to consider just who has access to an email account – it could be more than just the patient. Personal circumstances and relationships within families are all different and we must not presume to know what people might want to keep private, even from parents or spouses. Patients should be made aware that encrypted messages could potentially be read by someone else and only pre-agreed matters should be dealt with via email exchanges.

We now allow for patient contact through secure password-protected online systems such as Emis Access in EMIS (for repeat prescription requests) but this is not currently working for test results. This can reduce some of the risks but no system can be completely secure so it is important to consider confidentiality risks in all information exchanges with patients.

**Other things to consider:**
- We will need to consider whether the content of the email can be encrypted or password protected. This is something I will need to enquire with North Central London IT Team.
- We will need to make clear to all patients that the email facility is only for requesting test results, or we will end up having patients requesting appointments, chasing their hospital appointments, or even expecting doctors to answer any medical enquiries. We simply would not have the man-power to answer all email enquiries (not all clinicians have an adequate typing speed!). We will need to develop protocols for dealing with unsolicited email enquiries, which may be from patients or purport to be so. Unless a process has been used to confirm the ownership of an email address to a specific patient, it is impossible to guarantee that the inquiry is indeed coming from the stated person. A judgement will need to be made depending on the specific circumstances as to how such inquiries may be dealt with, but where doubt exists or the information requested is potentially sensitive, CAUTION will have to be used.
- Making time available for staff to respond to email enquiries.
- When we start to type in the name of the recipient, some email software will suggest similar addresses we have used before. Staff will need to be extra careful to choose the right address before they click – I am worried that errors will be made when staff are particularly busy and overworked.
- If we send a sensitive email from a secure server to an insecure recipient, security will be threatened. We may need to check that the recipient's arrangements are secure enough before sending our message – this presents additional responsibilities to the already stretched members of staff.
- Breaches in patient confidentiality or data security may no only lead to difficulties with the ICO but could also result in an investigation and sanctions by the health onbudsman or the GMC.

Finally, there are different formats in which we save patients data. This is to do with the clinical software we use. There are also different formats in which we can email test results to patients. Test results coming from Whittington Hospital and Finchley Memorial, are transmitted directly onto our Emis clinical system. These can be emailed directly from the clinical system via Word attachment (which means that anyone could potentially alter the results ?!)). Any other results coming from other NHS hospitals or private consultants are scanned into patients records using Docman software; these can then be email but the format if a TIFF attachment which perhaps cannot be opened by everyone? Perhaps this is something you could advise me if you were to agree that I email a few of your past test results which have been scanned via Docman, so that you can let me know whether you can open the attachment or not.

| Action items: The practice will want to ensure that there are robust security measures in place before activating this service. | Person responsible: | Deadline: |
|---|---|---|
| | CB | 31MAR15 |
| | | |

## Q4. What other online service(s) do you think would be beneficial to you as a patient?     CB          10

Discussion: We received 20 responses to this question. The majority of responses was to have the ability to communicate

with the practice via email; to obtain a copy of test results in electronic form; to ask a doctor to alter prescriptions; to email

The doctor with queries; to allow patients to send quick updates on their health to GPs.

Conclusions: The GPs feel that they would not have the man-power to answer all email enquiries (not all clinicians have an adequate typing speed!). The practice would need to develop protocols for dealing with unsolicited email enquiries, which may be from patients or purport to be so. Unless a process has been used to confirm the ownership of an email address to a specific patient, it is impossible to guarantee that the inquiry is indeed coming from the stated person. A judgement will need to be made depending on the specific circumstances as to how such inquiries may be dealt with, but where doubt exists or the information requested is potentially sensitive, CAUTION will have to be used.

| Action items: | Person responsible: | Deadline: |
|---|---|---|
| The practice will want to ensure that there are robust security measures in place before activating this service. If we send a sensitive email from a secure server to an insecure recipient, security will be threatened. We may need to check that the recipient's arrangements are secure enough before sending our message – this presents additional responsibilities to the already stretched members of staff. | CB | Ongoing |
| | | |

## Q5. If you are already using our Online Repeat Prescription Service, do you find it easy to use?     CB          10

Discussion: 41% of patients who responded said they find it easy to use. 53% did not use the service and were therefore

unable to comment. They are probably patients who are not on repeat prescription.

Conclusions: n/a

| Action items: n/a | Person responsible: CB | Deadline: |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

| Q6. If you are using our Online Prescription Service, how do you think we could improve it? | CB | 10 |
|---|---|---|

Discussion: We received 18 responses to this question. The majority of patients who responded said they were happy

with the current service and required to improvement. Some patients would like to receive an explanation as to why their

Repeat Prescription is rejected. Others would like to see a date when their prescription was approved and collected by pharmacy.

Conclusions: All in all, patients are very happy with the current service.

| Action items: We will put the other requests forward to the Emis Access Developers to see whether they is way to implements all/some of the requests. | Person responsible: CB | Deadline: 30AUG14 |
|---|---|---|

| Q6.bis. To what purpose would you envisage using the Online Access to your personal health records held by your GP? | CB | 10 |
|---|---|---|

Discussion: 43 patients responded to this question. The majority of patients who responded said that they would use the

Service to check the accuracy of their medical records; to access the test results conducted by the GP to give out to other

Health Professionals such as Private Consultants or for private insurance; to enable them to complete health questionnaires for job applications; to take their medical records with them when travelling abroad for an extended period; to check their immunization status; to improve their knowledge on their own medical history and enable them to understand how their treatment is progressing now and in the future.

Conclusions: All above are very good points and the practice will consider them carefully.

| Action items: The practice will want to ensure that there are robust security measures in place before activating this service in March 2015. Meanwhile patients who wish to access their medical records will need to complete a Access to Medical Records request form. | Person responsible: CB | Deadline: 31MAR15 |
|---|---|---|

| Q7. Are you worried about security issues with regards to using Patient Online Access. Q8. If yes, Why? | CB | 10 |
|---|---|---|
| Discussion:  48% of patients who responded said they were worried about security issues;  50% however were not worried; 2% did not respond. | | |
| | | |
| Conclusions:   Some of the patients who responded were concerned about security issues but would still use the service as they felt it would be an excellent move to improve patient knowledge and co-operation.  Some were worried that their confidential information could be viewed by unauthorized users.  A few patients who responded were IT/Security professionals who said that a breach of security would be likely. | | |
| | | |
| Action items:  It is useful to see that patients share the same fears as the practice with regards to security.  We are in favour of implementing Online Access to Medical Records for our patients by 31$^{st}$ March 2015 once we are satisfied that access is completely secure. | Person responsible: CB | Deadline: 31MAR15 |
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# Other Information