



VIRTUAL PATIENT GROUP – ANNUAL REPORT - MARCH 2015

Westcourt Medical Centre's Virtual Patient Group (VPG) was formed in 2013 after the previous 'Friends of Westcourt' PPG was disbanded. Our list size as at the start of the QOF year was 11,582.

Creating the VPG

The Practice advertised for members by various means; we advertise the group on our website on the waiting room displays, with application forms being available in the Practice and online, and we advertise the group on any practice questionnaires that are distributed. We also include the application form in our new patient registration documents. Two of our VPG members wrote a poem, which we turned into an engaging poster for display in the entrance hall.

Format of Participation Group

Based on previous experiences with the 'Friends of Westcourt' group, it was decided in 2013 that the Practice would change the format of the patient participation group to be a fully virtual group, utilising an online forum as the method of communication and hopefully making the group accessible to far more many patients, those who may have found attending the Practice for meetings quite difficult.

As patients join the VPG their details are added to the forum's contact list and our dedicated NHSmail account. This allows us to have full and regular contact with the members and advise when new topics/comments have been published.

Our forum allows members to log in as and when they are able, and to contribute by adding topics for comment or commenting on existing posts. Members are also able to embed links, pictures and videos into posts. All topics and comments are moderated by the VPG Administrator to ensure they are compliant with the group's ground rules. These rules are always available to members via the forum.

Our VPG Members

In our second year we had 17 patients as members of our VPG. The demographic is as follows:

	No.	%		No.	%
M	10	59%	Regularly	5	29%
F	7	41%	Occasionally	11	65%
			Rarely	1	6%
25-34	1	0%			
55-64	4	24%	Employed PT	2	12%
			Employed FT	2	12%
65-74	10	59%	Retired	4	24%
75-84	2	17%	Employed PT/Carer	1	6%
			No response	8	46%
White British	16	94%			
No response	1	6%			

We continue to advertise the group on our website and on the waiting room displays, with application forms being available in the Practice and online. We would still like to attract younger patients to our



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group and are considering other approaches that may encourage them to participate, such as Facebook, Twitter and other social media.

Action Plan 2014

The agreed action plan was as follows:

01. Appointments	Continuity of care with a regular GP
02. Appointments	Availability of appointments in general, and the ability to book in advance (greater than 72 hrs)
03. Appointments	Introduction of a telephone triage system
04. Prescriptions	General errors and timescales from request through to availability
05. Reception	More reception staff on the front desk during busy times
06. Reception	Helpdesk for queries
07. Communication	Use of the text alert system to remind of appointments
08. Communication	Facility to email the practice for medical queries
09. Transport	Parking at the practice

The 'Patient Questionnaire' comprised of a number of questions in seven parts, with a space for comments and a small advert for the VPG. The questions covered access, practice matters, GP and nurse experience, additional services and information about the responder.



Patient

Questionnaire Decem

The survey was distributed to our VPG members and patients to complete. We received 134 responses and the findings of the survey were presented to patients by way of a document which was distributed in the Practice and made available online via our practice website. The document can be viewed below:



Westcourt Patient
Questionnaire Respoi

Results were posted in the VPG forum for discussion and to create an action plan. VPG members agreed the following action plan, with some carry-overs from last year:



Patient Participation
Action Plans.pdf

Issues highlighted with a red cell were priority issues.



Action Plan

Overall the practice has drawn the following conclusions and proposed the following actions as a result of this year's surveys:

Actions In Progress:

- 1. Issues 1, 2 & 3 (P)** – This will be quite a big task and we want to analyse our current appointments structure as stage two of the automated booking system implementation. We agree that continuity of care is very important but our clinical system affords our medical staff the ability to be able to 'catch up' on a patients' care in a very short matter of time. However, all patients are advised to book follow-up appointments with the same GP if it is necessary to do so. This will be reviewed later in the year, once the practice has had the opportunity to review the appointments system as a whole, and analyse the demand for more online booking.
- 2. Issue 04** – We will be going live with Electronic Prescriptions in April so we are confident this should resolve most issues with prescriptions.
- 3. Issue 05** - We have a system in place to cope with busy periods but will monitor over the next few months. Unfortunately we are not in a position to employ additional staff to run a helpdesk but hope that the better management of the reception desk at peak times will afford our staff more time to spend with patients who have queries.
- 4. Issue 06 (P)** – As above regarding finance to resource more staff but we may be able to consider a helpline for general queries.
- 5. Issue 07 (P)** – We already do have a basic system of appointment confirmation by SMS upon booking but we are looking into setting up SMS texts to alert patients a day in advance of impending appointments. We hope to launch later in the year.
- 6. Issue 08 (P)** – The ability to email the surgery for medical queries is potentially an option but needs much further investigation due to confidentiality, etc. This will be investigated later in the year.
- 7. Issue 09** – We are acutely aware that parking is a problem but unfortunately have exhausted all avenues in trying to purchase additional land.

VPG Annual Report Publication

This annual report has been distributed to all VPG members, published online and made available to patients visiting the practice.

Clair Witcher
Practice Manager

March 2015