

## LOUGHTON HEALTH CENTRE

### PATIENTS GROUP (PG)

#### Minutes of Meeting held at Loughton Health Centre

on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2013 at 7pm

**PRESENT:** Dr. H. U. Khan, Dr. P. Prashner, Karen Cassell, Gary Crawford, Ann Harrison (Minutes), Ken Hearn, John Lindsey, John Markham, Heather Murray, Elizabeth Prashner, Pat Prichard, Helen Reynolds, Shirley Stanley. There were several people who have not previously attended our meetings. If I have omitted anyone known to us, please accept my apologies.

**ABSENT:** No apologies were received.

**GUESTS:** Christine and Pat from Cross Roads Care

**Introduction by Chairman, Philip Prashner.** Philip welcomed everyone and commented that this was the best attended meeting ever. He welcomed the representatives of Cross Roads Care.

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#### CROSS ROADS CARE:

The local group covers Redbridge, Epping and Harlow and has operated for over 26 years in the Epping area.

Website [www.crossroads.org.uk/redbridgeeppingharlow](http://www.crossroads.org.uk/redbridgeeppingharlow).

Cross Roads Care is a professional organisation supported by Government grants and charitable gifts. They merged with Princess Royal Trust for Carers to form Carers' Trust. Their aim is to support unpaid carers at home and provide them with a break from their responsibilities.

The situation of carers varies widely. Nationally, there are 6 million of all ages, of whom half are also working people. 175,000 are under 18 years old. There are also parents, some elderly, looking after adult children. 60% have cared for 5 years or more without support, saving the country maybe £119 billion p.a.

Locally, in 2012, 86,000 hours of respite care was given to 475 carers. In Epping Forest now, there are 12,000 known carers.

Caring for another has an impact on mental and physical health of carers who, typically, neglect to take care of their own needs. The smallest amount of respite gives huge benefit. Cross Roads Care gives respite care for over 43,000 carers, giving them freedom to do whatever they want. Carers need to be made aware of the service so that they can ask for help before getting to the end of their tether. G.P.s have a role in this.

Cross Roads Care is available 7 days a week at flexible times. The office is always manned. Packages of care are planned to suit individual needs. These vary from overseeing the "caree" at home to taking them out to a café or library, keeping to the same support worker all the time, as far as possible.

Support workers are the most valuable resource of Cross Roads. They have to be drivers. They find the work very rewarding and there is a high retention rate, giving stability to the organisation. They receive vigorous training, both initial and ongoing. They are insured and they are qualified to administer medications. Carers habitually give them wonderful testimonials.

**Questions** There were a number of questions and comments.

**How is it decided that someone is entitled to receive help?** Anyone can ask. No-one turned away unless funding is not offered for their circumstances and they are not willing to pay.

**How is it funded?** Funded via local authority, mainly Epping Forest District Council. Essex County Council gives very little. There is some lottery funding. There are charitable donations. An individual applies for the service, their funding entitlement is assessed and a personalized budget established. They can set up their own private contract. The present average rate for care is around £14 per hour.

**Emergency Support.** Can Cross Roads help in a crisis? No, not unless the carer has previously made contact. They have to go through an assessment process. An assessment can be carried out before a carer actually needs to call on the service, so that a package of care has already been established. Then, ideally, they should give one week's notice of requiring help.

**Example:** A lady in the audience gave her experience of desperate need for help when she was unaware of the service available. She was in grave difficulties, caring for a husband with Parkinson's Disease and became seriously depressed.

**Carers Support Group.** It was suggested that carers would benefit from contact with others in a similar situation, forming a carers' support group.

**Loughton Voluntary Care** can help – e.g. getting people to appointments. It was pointed out that carers should not be too proud to accept offers of help – or to ask for help from others.

**Essex Social Services** can also help. A Representative was present. He pointed out that Essex County Council offers support for Essex Carers 24 hours per day. Carers carry emergency card so that ECC can cover the situation in the event of an accident for example.

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**Philip Prashner** thanked Christine and Pat for attending our meeting and they left. Several people remained. He repeated the Aims of the Patients' Group for the benefit of newcomers and said that every patient is automatically a member.

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#### **Dr Khan's Report.**

There were now 14 doctors at LHC, rising soon to 16. There were 8 student doctors from Barts, Kings and UCL. Every consultation with a student is overseen by a Practice doctor and patients are free to refuse to be seen by a student.

Dr Khan had taken note of the need for GPs to be alert to the needs of carers.

From 1<sup>st</sup> April the Care Commissioning Group takes over from the Primary care Trust in managing funding. Inevitably, the private sector will feature more prominently in providing services in future. This is not necessarily a bad thing. In theory, the tariff for private services should be the same as NHS. A large part of the CCG budget goes to ECC Social Services – previously called the "Health Care Budget" ..

**A Patient** gave a vivid account of difficulties and frustrations in dealing with Social Services, for example, delays and repeated failure to come back to caller as promised. Dr Khan said patients unable to get response from Social Services should come to GP who would, at least, attempt to help.

**Out of Hours Urgent Advice. Phone 111 .** This replaces NHS DIRECT. Caller tells problem and gets advice, including whether to call an ambulance or go to A&E. This service may be tendered out to private companies. Patients can continue to use **020 8502 5000** for an out of hours doctor.

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#### **Other Business**

**Dementia Awareness.** Karen will organise a presentation from Sue Lawler of Dementia Day Care, based at Ashlar House, St Margaret's Hospital. Proposed to take place around Dementia Awareness week: week commencing May 20<sup>th</sup>. Karen would contact relevant patients.

**Essex Coalition of Disabled People** involves peer group of volunteers who give each other non-medical support. P.Prashner to make contact with a view to a presentation at a future meeting.

**Telephones.** Call queuing facility is being investigated in order to help callers decide whether or not to hang up.

**Date of Next Meeting Wednesday May 15<sup>th</sup>**