

Chew Medical Practice Patient Reference Group

Rules of engagement

The purpose of the group can be found in the paper "Patient Participation: summary of Dept of Health requirements". It is a positive initiative which will increase the ability of patients to influence the development of services at the surgery – especially important in the run-up to the opening of the new surgery building next Spring.

The group is deliberately representative of many different patient viewpoints and needs. To make the group as productive as possible, all participants are asked to respect the following approaches to the work of the group. These points apply as much to the doctors and other surgery staff engaged with the work of the group as they do to the patients.

1. The group has been established to look at areas of general interest, not as a forum for complaints or issues relating to individual patients. The surgery is very happy to deal with those issues outside the meetings.
2. There may be disagreement about priorities, both within the group and between the group and the surgery. This is healthy and should lead to improved results. All members of the group are asked to be respectful of the views of others, and to recognise that all members of the group have an equal right to express their views.
3. The group is here to influence the partners in their decision-making, and the partners will consider the views of the group seriously. However, Chew Medical Practice is a business with commercial drivers as well as the constraints of largely NHS funding. There may therefore be times when the surgery is not able to respond as members of the group would like. If this is the case, the surgery will provide clear explanations.
4. Patient confidentiality is of utmost importance, and individual patients should not be named at any point during meetings, although anonymous case studies may be very useful.
5. Members of the group may discuss the business of the group with other patients – this will help to ensure that as many voices as possible are heard, and members of the group are encouraged to feed other people's views back to the surgery. However, there may be times when members of the group are asked to keep particular information confidential, and the surgery expects members to honour this.

If we all stick to these basic ground rules, then the Patient Reference Group will be both productive and enjoyable.

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