VETERANS PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

Review Meeting

Caen Medical Centre

on Tuesday 13th June 2023

**Veteran’s Patient Participation Group**

**Attendees:**

Dr Simon Mathieson – Principle and Veteran

Nurse Kate Price – Practice Nurse and Veteran

Karen Mottram – Social Prescriber based at Caen

Clare Maynard – Business Support Administrator / Minute taker

Peter Jokic – Patient Participant / Veteran

Paul Mitchell – Patient Participant / Veteran

Ben Grinyer – Patient Participant / Veteran

Robert Gubb – Patient Participant/ Veteran

Peter Lord - Patient Participant / Veteran

Christopher Robbins - Patient Participant / Veteran

**Welcome / Introduction**

Dr Simon Mathieson welcomed everyone and started the meeting by thanking everyone for taking the time to attend. He explained that this was our very first Veterans Patient Participation group review and that we had invited 13 patients from our list coded as being a Veteran to attend today’s meeting. 6 responded as attending, 1 declined, 8 did not respond. We also invited Gemma Derbyshire; Welfare Officer based at RMB Chivenor, unfortunately she was unable to join us. He then encouraged everyone from the group to introduce themselves.

**Background to the PPG**

Dr Mathieson explained to the group that we hold patient participation group meetings on a quarterly basis (recommenced in 2023 post Covid), so this is the second for this year. Inviting selected groups of patients with a particular need or condition, to discuss how we are doing at meeting their needs, the experiences they have encountered and how we might improve our services by asking them for feedback.

**What Caen has done so far / Veteran’s Friendly Practice**

Caen gained Veteran Friendly Practice status in July 19 and has a few veterans employed. Dr Mathieson is our lead GP for Veterans and is a veteran himself. Caen has strong links with Chivenor with many family members of service personnel registered with us. Simon Mathieson also informed us that he has recently held a number of training session on Veterans Health with GP Trainees across the region – His aim is to encourage General Practitioners to spread the word on how to support Veterans.

Simon opened this up to the group and asked for feedback? Is a fellow Veteran as your GP helpful or has the recent training helped the other GP’s? The feedback from the group was that they felt much more comfortable talking to a fellow veteran. Someone that understands the terminology and the processes etc. They also felt that knowing there were other staff members within the treatment room and within the practice was helpful.

**What could we do better? Interactions with the hospital?**

Simon Mathieson explained that if a veteran has been identified at the Practice, then they will be coded with this information on their Medical Records, this means they are flagged in primary care, and we also notify secondary care when we make any new referrals. We have recently amended our referral letters to show the Veterans information, so it now appears close to the header and Patient Information at the start of the Letter. (This was previously included, however was lower within the body of the letter) The group members asked why this information was important and were unaware that it could give them access to certain services with a higher priority due to them being a Veteran (in line with the Armed Forces Covenant).

**Increasing the visibility of veterans at Caen**

Simon Mathieson explained that on 5th June, Caen’s patient list was 12,628, with only 87 patients coded as being a Veteran (.69%). For several years we have asked all new patients registering via our New Patient Questionnaire, but we feel this number should be higher – how do we identify veterans.

Clare Maynard to liaise with Medical Administrators to ensure New Patient Questionnaires are being coded correctly. If a New Patient form has not been received but the patient is a Military Leaver – Then to ask Medical Administrator to contact / message the patient and confirm with them if they would like the Veteran code adding to their record (we understand that not all ex-military serviceman and woman like this added to their records and so will not add automatically and will always check first)

(5% of our practice population are coded with Diabetes) – Dr Mathieson said it showed how little veterans are correctly coded as the figure should be similar.

The Practice aim is to push the coding of Veterans. Starting at the front of house when a patient registers, to when a patient is in a consultation with a consulter and mentions being a Veteran. Dr Mathieson explained to the group that he will message the Clinicians at Caen and inform them how to code all ex-services personnel. He said he will encourage all the consulters to check records when the patient mentions that they are a Veteran and check that this is coded correctly.

**Access**

Dr Mathieson asked the group for any Feedback or suggestions that could help us improve our services –

The group spoke about how they found it difficult to access veterans’ information in general. Kate Price our Practice Nurse spoke about a charity that she has been signposted too herself in the past and found very helpful. The group thought this sounded quite positive. However, they did explain that as veterans, they prefer to look at something on a wall rather than searching for a link to something via another website (ie from our website if we created a page on our website). Clare Maynard suggested an area / noticeboard in the waiting room set aside for Veterans, the group liked this idea. Clare will start working on this with the Practice Manager (also a Veteran herself) and include posters, and information about the Veterans charities.

One of the group members today mentioned a monthly walk that they do that he has participated in which was a good space to meet other local veterans.

One member of the group discussed how difficult it can be in accessing a GP sometimes. Dr Mathieson explained the system we are currently running at Caen and about the same day team and triaging patients to ensure they are signposted to the correct clinician which may not be a GP. In the Practice we have – Nurses / HCAs / Paramedic / Pharmacists / Physiotherapist / Social Prescribers – Karen our Social Prescriber was present and explained exactly the sort of thing she can help people with and directing patients too. She took the Veterans Charity details as said this would be helpful for signposting patients she deals with. Dr Mathieson on the back of this discussion explained the number of DNA’s we are struggling with at the moment at Caen (he had 4 today for example) – the group were shocked by this. However, they did say they understood how difficult phone lines can be to get through and that patients may find it difficult to cancel at times. The group asked if there was anything Caen Medical Centre could do about this? Clare Maynard said she would start looking into this.

The group discussed Dr Mathieson’s Facebook page and liked the information that he shared on there.

**Summary**

Dr Simon Mathieson thanked the patients for attending today’s first Veterans Patient Participation Group Meeting and expressed the importance of these meetings in gaining input and feedback.

At Caen Medical Centre we are always working and looking at different ways to improve and expand our services. We like to hold these group sessions once a quarter, inviting a different cohort of patients, hopefully receiving different and varied feedback and suggestions based on needs and requirements etc.

The Group asked when they would be able to return and have another meeting – they asked if another one could be done again as they found this group session useful. Perhaps a Veteran PPG could be held yearly? This will be discussed and considered at Practice level.

The Facebook page is a continuing hit with patients who feel the information is relevant and informative.

**ACTION PLAN FOR PRACTICE**

* SM to follow up Coding of Veterans within Consultations with all Clinicians
* CM to follow up coding of New Patient Veterans with Medical Admin
* CM to Create Veterans Notice Board and promote the veteran’s charity – [www.veteranscharity.org.uk](http://www.veteranscharity.org.uk)
* CM to create link on Practice Website to Veterans charity - [www.veteranscharity.org.uk](http://www.veteranscharity.org.uk)
* SM to use Practice Facebook Page to try and identify Veterans and promote useful Veteran events and information
* CM to look into Text / Accurx reminders to enable all patients to cancel appts and reduce DNA’s