AUTOMATED PATIENT TRANSPORT BOOKING SYSTEM

Friends of Pennys Hill Practice have been running a Patient Transport service since 2005. We were seeing growing demand, year after year, for our service, to the point it was becoming too time consuming to manage with just phone calls and e-mails. When we got to just over 300 trips per year, our Transport Co-Ordinator was making around 900 phone calls a year and spending hours each week ensuring that all trip requests had a driver allocated to them and that patients knew what time they would be collected. We knew this could not continue and we needed to find a solution.

We approached Dave Hassall with a specification for a web-based system that would take a lot of the manual work away. The Co-Ordinator would no longer have to ring around trying to find drivers for every trip. Instead, all the Co-Ordinator now needs to do is to simply enter requested trips onto our website, which takes less than 1 minute per trip, and then just monitor the website to check that all trips have drivers allocated to them.

Each Driver has a log in and they sign onto the system regularly, see what trips are available and volunteer for any they are able to do. All the Drivers see when they log on is the Date, Time and Destination of the trip. The Patient's details are not shown until after a Driver has volunteered to do the trip, so that the Patient's data is protected. The system has purposely been designed to be very easy to use so that Drivers who are not very computer literate have no problems with it. Once they volunteer for a trip, the Driver then phones the Patient a day or two before their trip to confirm what time they are collecting them.

We also have automated e-mails that get sent out to all the Drivers when there are still trips available without allocated drivers. This just shows them the Date, Time and Destination of the trips and reminds them to log onto the system. In this way, Drivers do not feel pressured into taking trips – they can volunteer for as many or as few as they like!

The time the Co-Ordinator now spends organising all the trips is vastly reduced. They answer the mobile phone to take the bookings, enter the trip request onto the system, which takes less than 1 minute per trip, and then just monitor the system to ensure that all trips have been taken. The automated e-mails that are sent out nudge the drivers to log into the system and volunteer for any remaining trips.

In 2019, prior to Covid, we did 965 trips. Without our website, this would have been far too onerous to manage manually.

The added benefits of the system are that we can store Patient details, add notes about the Patient, the Destination or the Department, which help the Driver and which they can see as part of the trip details. Additionally, the system links to Google Maps, so the Drivers can bring up a map to see exactly where they need to go.

We also have a section on the website where we can add documents such as AGM Minutes, Financial Accounts, Hospital Maps etc, which the Drivers can access as they wish.

Also, our Treasurer uses the system to log the Patient donations and all mileage is automatically calculated so that he can simply run reports to know what to reimburse each of our Drivers for their expenses.

I became Transport Co-Ordinator in 2017 when we went over to the automated system and it has made it extremely easy to manage. In 2023, we did 644 trips, transporting 152 Patients to 28 Destinations, all with the minimum of effort on my part! I can thoroughly recommend the system!