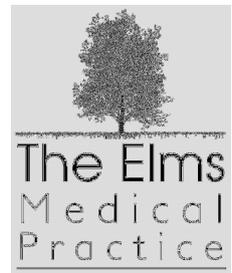


Patient Participation Report February 2015



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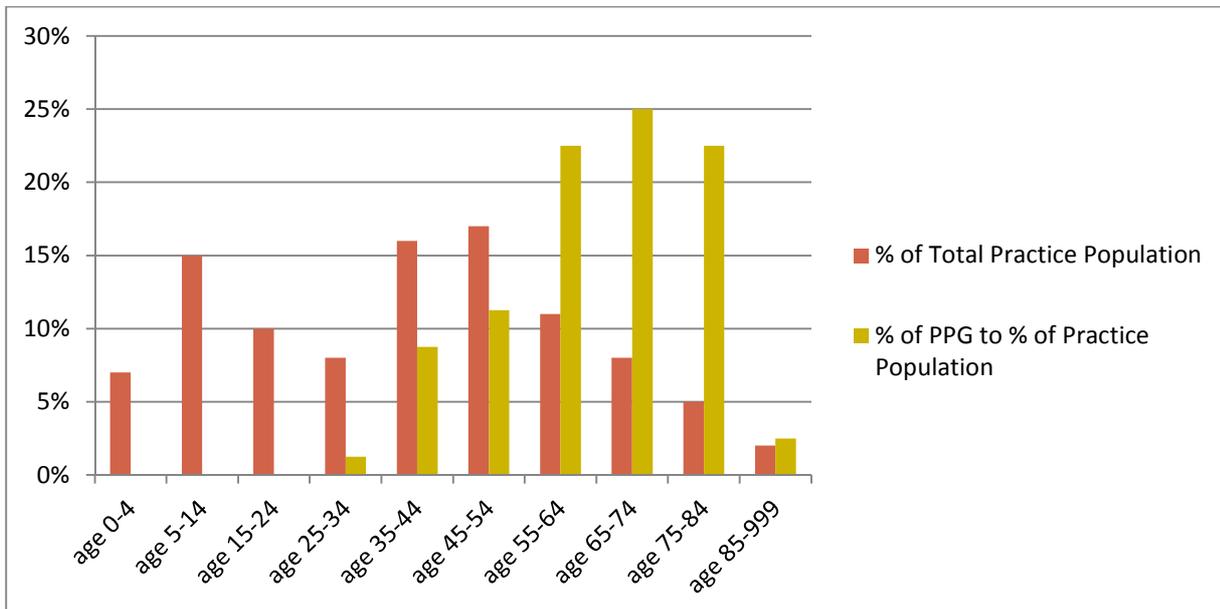
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The Elms Medical Practice set up a virtual Patient Participation Group (PPG) in order to listen to the views of our practice patient population. Within this group we set up a Patient Representative Group (PRG) which is a smaller group who've met in the initial stages of setting up the PPG with a future view of meeting more regularly to discuss issues and suggest improvements to the service we offer here at the Elms.

Overall, the current PPG members would appear to be a reasonable reflection of our Practice population profile however considerable efforts continue to gain more members. We do hope to develop the PRG further in particular involving the under 24 age group and to ensure we have a pro-active group committed to improving our patient's experience.

Below is a graph showing our patient demographic age groups:



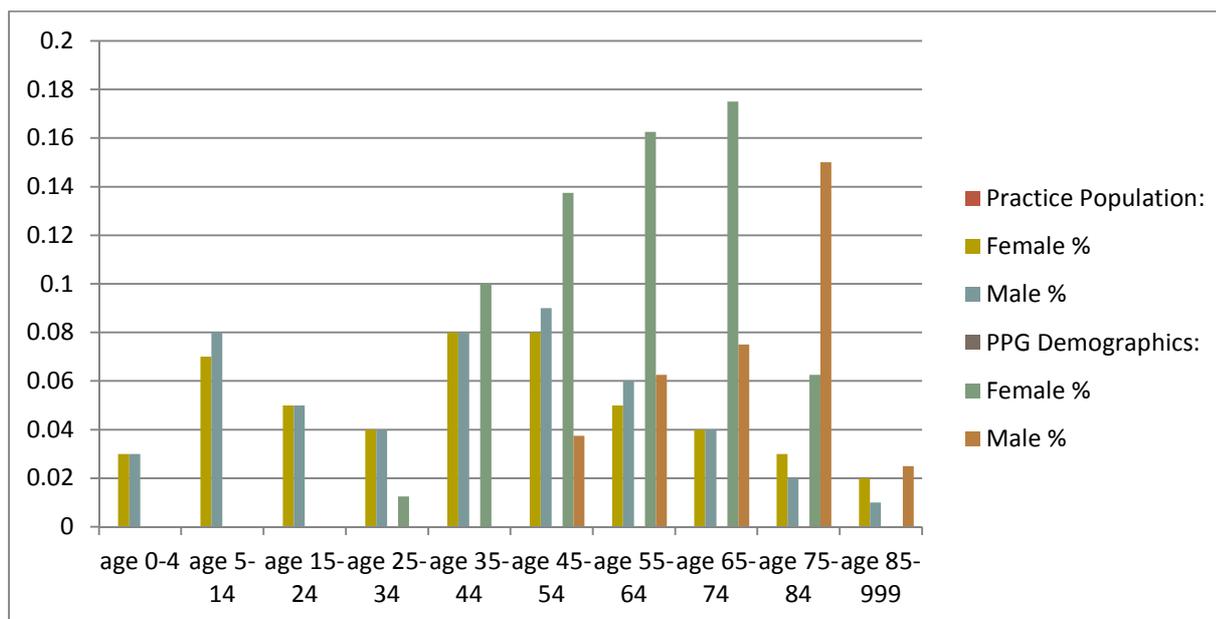
As you can see we have a lot of members over the age of 55 years, about 5% less than we should have in the 35 – 54 age range, way below in the 25 – 34 range and have no one on the patient participation register under 24 years of age. The under 40 years of age have often proved to be the hardest group to reach to encourage to join and partly this is due to the fact that these age groups are more infrequent attenders of the surgery.

Dr Dylan Phillips,

Dr Jackie Impey, Dr Cathy Argyle, Dr David Hemsli, Dr Julian Smith, Dr Bethan Rees, Dr Charlotte Allam, Dr Rebecca May

Practice Manager Sarah Brindley

Below is a graph showing our patient demographic age/sex groups:



As you can see we have a fairly even distribution of females and males registered at the practice however we have more female PPG members up to the age of 75 and then the males take over.

Many of our patients are carers. We currently have 107 patients registered as carers at the practice. We have been extremely proactive finding out who are our carers and have found 37 more carers in the last year but we know there are many more who have not come forward who do not consider themselves to be a carer. Four of those patients who are registered carers are members of our PPG.

We are constantly trying to encourage more patients to join the PPG and promote awareness. This includes:

- Regular Practice Newsletters encouraging patients to get involved
- Advertising the PPG on the dedicated pages of our Practice website
- Information about the PPG and how to join are handed to all new registering patients
- Advertising on the waiting room plasma screen
- Reception team actively encouraging patients to join

We now have a dedicated page on our website including regular newsletters, survey reports and a 'comments and questions' box so that communication channels are always open. The page is still a work in progress and we hope to develop this part of our website to make sure our patients are given a voice.

Last year we understood from our patient feedback and discussions that the phone system was still an issue and many changes were made to improve easy access to the surgery.

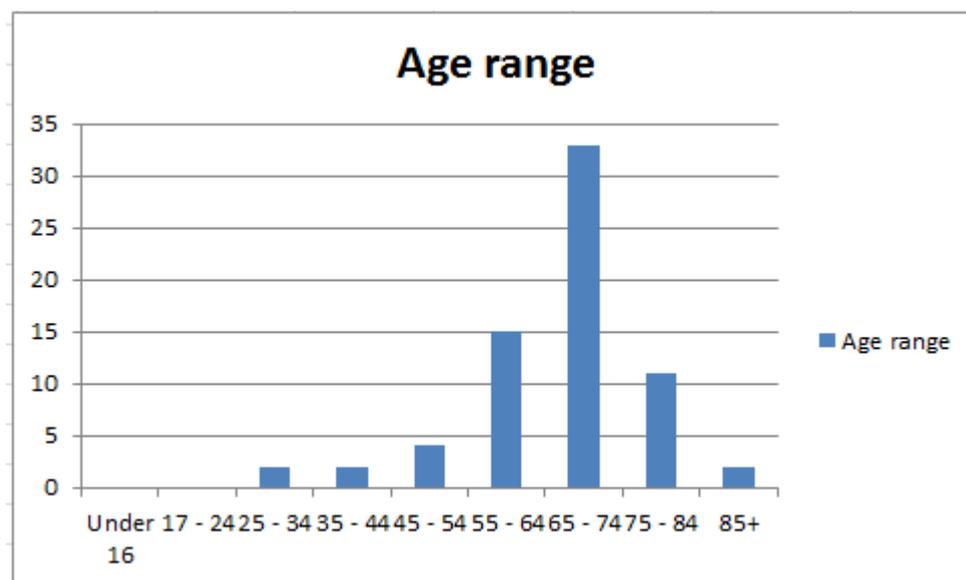
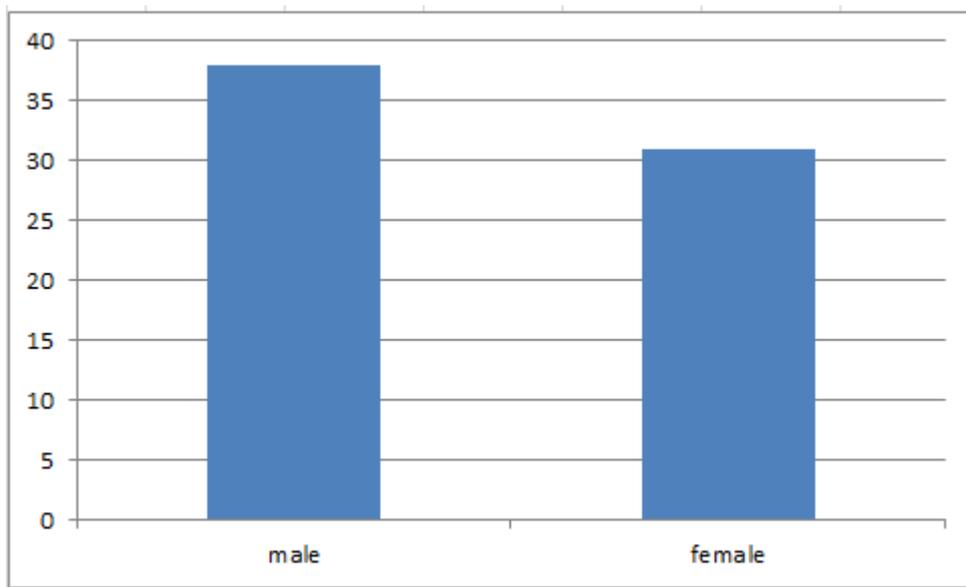
What the PPG and the Practice have achieved so far:

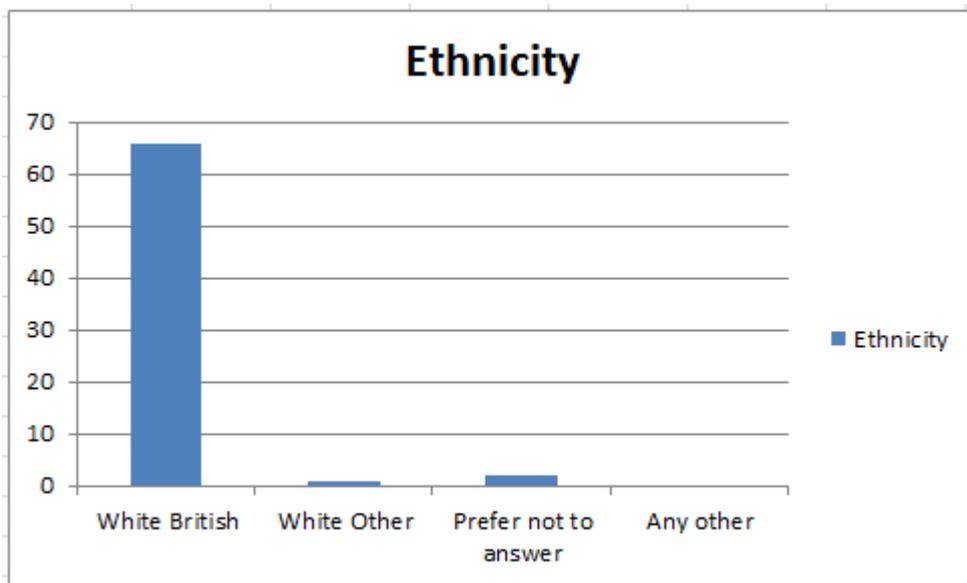
- The most recent improvement was installing a brand new phone system Oct 2014
- Increased the number of staff members who answer the phone during our busiest times.
- Incorporated an on-line repeat prescribing facility through our website.
- Improved our Health promotion messages on the waiting room information screen.
- Introduced the self check in
- Used publicity to reduce the number of DNA's (Did Not Attend)
- Trained all staff to say their name when answering telephone calls and to wear their name badges at all times to give patients an immediate reference and personal touch.
- On line appointments
- Minor Illness clinics on the day Physician Associate or nurse appointments

- A feedback form linked through our website to allow for a continual open communication channel for all our patients.

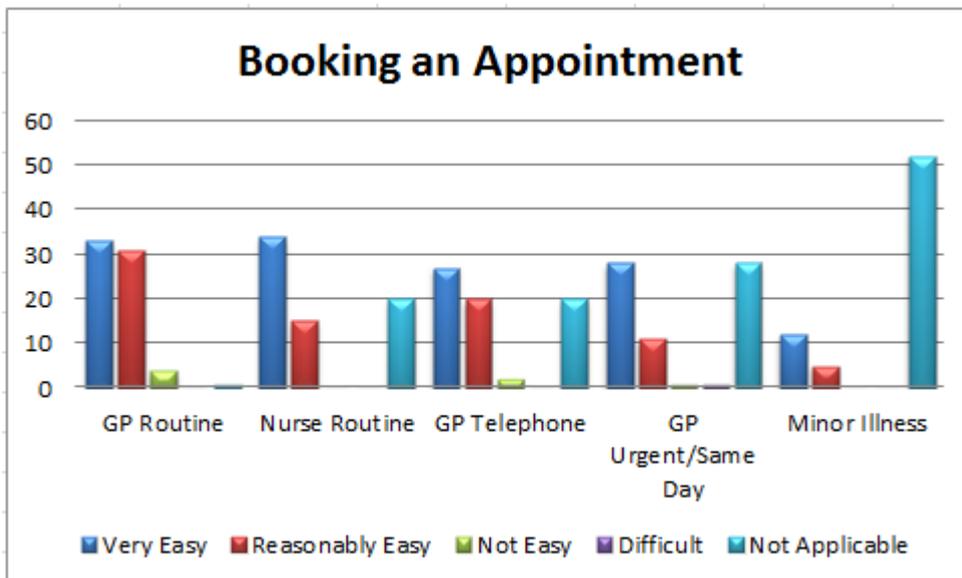
So many improvements have been made and we now needed feedback to see whether these changes had improved our service. We therefore asked our PPG (virtual group) to complete a survey to ask these very questions. Recognising that our next priority is to move from our virtual group to eventually a patient led PPG we also needed to ask what the PPG what would spur their interest and what they feel would be useful to feel involved with the surgery. This year we used a survey written by the practice and emailed & posted out to our patients. The completed forms were then collected and analysed. The survey was analysed 3 weeks from sending out the questionnaires to allow patients time to complete and return them. Patients were asked 12 questions which focused on the patient's experience and feedback. The practice wanted to know if any practice improvements had enhanced the patient's experience and how we could further improve our service and communication.

Who demographically completed the survey:





We are very pleased to see that the response was a positive one with extremely encouraging comments. On average 93% of patients find it either 'very easy' or 'reasonably easy' to book an appointment with a clinician. Access has significantly improved since the last survey which we believe reflects the introduction of the new telephone system and on line appointments.



75% of patients come to the practice occasionally, 15% come to the practice frequently and 7% come to the practice very rarely.

Half of the patients who completed the survey did not know we have minor illness clinics with either the Physician Associate or Minor Illness nurses. They work alongside the GP and have been trained and have a specific qualification to deal with all minor illness issues.

It was good to see that on average 90% of patients are fully aware of the various alternative services on offer such as a telephone consultation with a GP, common problems being dealt with by your local pharmacist and the medical advice line 111 when the surgery is closed.

Over half of the patients knew about the useful text reminder/messaging system now in place. We do advertise it everywhere in surgery and on the website but the reception team are supposed to offer this service every time a patient books their appointment so a reminder to the team will be actioned. Sadly we have recently heard that this facility nationwide will no longer be supported by the NHS from October due to removal of funding. Our Local Commissioning Group are working with the GP surgeries to find an alternative to ensure this service continues.

It was excellent to see such positive feedback with regards to improving our communication. The number one top slot was 'Pictures of the Elms Team'. We have immediately got the ball rolling on this and the photos are already being taken.

Joint second was 'Education Events' and 'FAQ on our website'. Once again the first patient education session is now being organised for later this year. This first session will be on back and shoulder pain. We will be inviting 2 specialist consultants to speak on both areas and hopefully a physio to take patients through various self-help exercises.

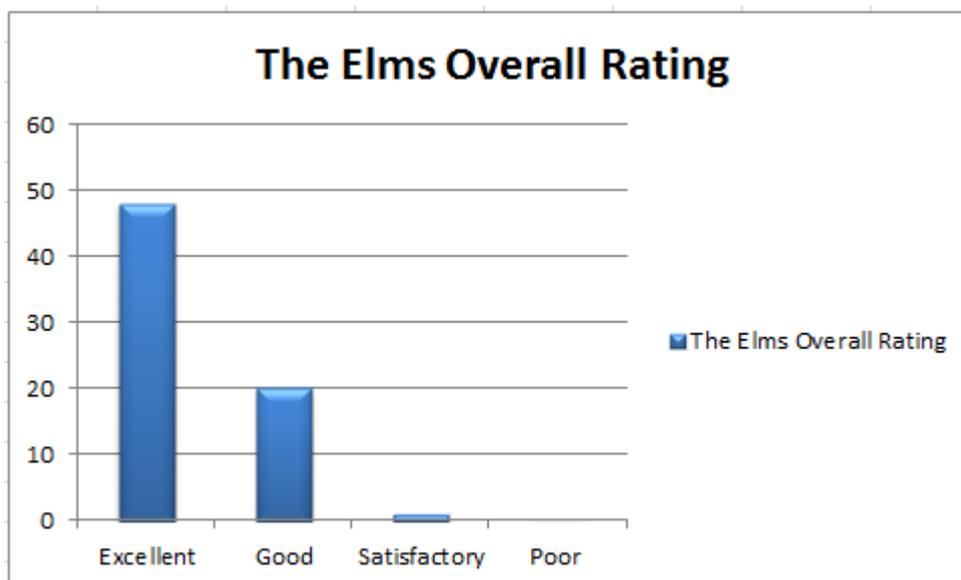
Presently we do a quarterly newsletter which are available on our website and can also be sent to all those with emails. A bi-monthly one could be possible if slightly shorter and this could then incorporate regular FAQs which has proved, from the survey, to be extremely useful.

We are very pleased that overall:

70% rated The Elms service as 'Excellent'

29% rated the Elms as 'Good'

1% rated the Elms as 'Satisfactory'



We will continue to strive towards 100% Excellence so please continue to feedback to us your thoughts and comments.

A small selection of the very positive comments made:

- I consider the practice to be more than excellent. Its efficiency, approachability, friendliness, helpfulness could not be improved. I cannot praise the team enough. I will not move from Harpenden simply because I would not wish to move my GP practice.
- I have been with the practice for 40 years. Have been perfectly satisfied with all the services provided and the manner for any problems I have had dealt with. I've found all the practice pleasant and helpful.
- Excellent, I cannot pick out one particular element or aspect of the care and service I have received over the years and I cannot praise everyone connected with the surgery too highly
- Range of diagnostic facilities e.g. Ultrasound, ENT etc.
- Ease of booking appointments. Easy renewal of prescriptions.
- Location and ease of parking, pleasant staff and atmosphere.

- Excellent website, informative and easy to use
- Being able to book urgent appointments same day. Very friendly practice.
- Quality of all staff – excellent
- The friendliness/helpfulness/professionalism of everyone concerned. Receptionist got the extra mile to help. Doctors explain what is happening and what will happen in the future. It is obvious that everyone works as a team.
- Approachability of doctors and thoroughness of getting to the bottom of your health issue.
- The quality of medical care

Further Feedback and Actions

- Presently the practice books up to two weeks in advance for GPs and four weeks in advance for nurses however patient comments show that lengthening advanced booking would be useful, particularly if needing to book consecutive appointments. Lengthening advanced booking has been done in the past and led to a huge rise in DNA (did not attend) rates. Now that the surgery has introduced text reminders we will look again as to whether further advanced booking is a more viable option. However many patients have yet to sign up for this service and this will have to be seriously considered.
- Other comments showed that many patients are still not aware of our extended opening hours which are particularly useful for commuter patients and full time workers. We have extended hours on Thursday evenings, early Friday mornings and every third Saturday. All of this is advertised on our website, in the practice booklet, outside the practice and in the waiting room, including the actual Saturday dates and flu clinic dates. All extended hours appointments and flu clinic appointments are available to book through our online appointment system. There are many systems in place to enable a patient to be seen out of surgery hours including weekends such as walk in clinics in Hemel and Luton. A few of our GP Partners work for the out of hours service Herts Urgent Care (HUC). Calling 111 has been set up to guide patients to the services appropriate and available. There is a real need for a local advertising campaign or leaflet drop of where to go in our area. The surgery has been in touch the chief locality officer and this will be added to their next Communication Working Group agenda as agree this needs addressing.
- It was encouraging to have so many positive comments about the duty doctor same day appointments working so well. From the slightly negative comments on the last survey about the duty doctor we introduced '2' duty doctors every Monday morning and before and after a Bank holiday. We believe this has had a significant impact on the improvement of urgent access to a GP.
- Parking was brought up as a need for improvement but sadly we are unable to attain further land to allow us to extend and therefore does restrict us. We have 29 parking slots, 2 disabled parking slots and further parking for the GPs. Many of our staff live very locally and walk or cycle to work or get a lift. There is free 1 hour parking on Stewart Road between the surgery and Carlton Road which always has available space particularly now that a local taxi rank no longer use it as a base.
- There were several comments about the 'Tannoy' system for calling in patients and how it was often hard to hear what was being called by the doctor. A way of displaying the called name was requested however this has as much opposition as it does for it as many patients do not want to see their name actually written for all to see. Perhaps a number system could be used although this does have an impersonal feel to it. This will be discussed further by the Partners. In the meantime all clinicians have been asked to speak clearly and loudly.

- A few patients were unhappy about having to go to St Albans to have blood tests. Many patients prefer to go to this clinic however we do have two other options. We hold phlebotomy clinics at the Harpenden Memorial Hospital and patients can also have their blood tests done here at the surgery by our Health Care Assistant. The reception team has been reminded to make sure that all services are offered.
- A patient asked about whether information could be collated about locality services and help groups. There is some news on this, we are fortunate to be involved with the local GP IT working group and the CCG are in the process of looking at two companies who have developed a piece of software which when installed will be able to signpost patients to all the appropriate local services and support groups. The Commissioning Group is currently deciding which is the better option with the view to purchasing one of them for our area. There is a lot of useful information on our website under 'Self Help' so please take a look and if there is anything else you would like to see on this site please feedback to us.
- Many patients were not aware of the practice nurses qualified in treating patients with minor illness and that we also have a physician associate who is also qualified to see patients with minor illness. This allows a further treatment path for our patients and another option for patients seeking advice. The reception team have been trained to find out a little more as to why the patient needs an appointment and to signpost the patient appropriately.
- There were a three adverse comments about the time waiting for a clinician. We do appreciate this can cause anxiety while waiting. Our reception team have been asked to always keep the patients informed about any delays. Unfortunately delays are inevitable as sometimes patients require much longer than the 10 minute appointment. However clinicians and reception will be reminded to make sure patients are kept informed at all times.

Overall the survey was very positive and many patients have been individually contacted already where direct questions were raised. We will of course be addressing all the issues, comments and suggestions and reporting on those in the next newsletter. We are delighted to read such wonderful comments about our practice and services. We know we must maintain the high standards we have established but at all costs avoid complacency and build continually to meet the ever changing needs of our patients and demands on the Practice and our NHS future. We will always listen to our patients and continue to work together to improve and develop our services to meet the needs of our patients.

The survey results were sent directly to our patients for further comments of these findings.

We hope you found this report of interest.

This report will also be on the practice website: elmsmedicalpractice.co.uk/PPG and hard copies will be available at reception and in the waiting room.

Once again thank you to all that took part in this survey. If you have any further comments or suggestions, please either fill in the comments box on our website or write directly to the Practice Manager Sarah Brindley.

Thank you.

