

Patient Newsletter and Action Plan

For the past few years I have prepared a report for patients based on the outcome of our own patient survey. (The NHS however continues to operate its own survey by post direct to selected patients.) The results of our own surveys have followed a consistent pattern so with the introduction of the Friends & Family Test for GPs in December 2014 it was decided not to conduct a survey in 2014-15.

The Friends & Family Test, for which cards are available for completion at reception, asks "How likely are you to recommend our GP practice to friends and family if they needed similar care or treatment?" The choice of answers ranges from "extremely likely" to "extremely unlikely". It also provides the opportunity to explain the reason for the answer. We have only received a small number of responses to date all of which were answered "extremely likely" or "likely".

At the most recent patient meeting there were 4 subjects that I wish to highlight:

(The full minutes can be read here http://harveygrouppractice.co.uk/files/2014/12/Master-final-PPG-Nov-20-2014PE_PJF-approved-no-PP.pdf)

Nursing

We are currently unable to offer a full complement of nurse clinics due to a vacant post. It is proving difficult to recruit a suitable nurse due to the limited hours available. However it may be possible for a nurse to share time across other surgeries in the locality. I have spoken with other local practice managers who are happy with the idea should it be possible to agree a 'match' of working hours.

Just as I am about to issue this email I have learnt that a nurse has agreed to join the practice so it is probable that we will be able to restart the missing clinics.

Opening Hours

It was generally agreed that the current opening hours are good. However the Practice received an adverse rating for surgery opening times in the recent national patient survey, completed by 119 of our patients. This is in spite of the fact that the opening times are currently much better than in the past.

On investigation only 1 other St Albans practice received an adverse score for this question. The current weekday opening hours are:

- Harvey House 8am – 6.30pm
- Jersey Farm 8am-12pm; 3.30pm-6pm (except Wed 2.15-4.45pm)

Telephone access is available from 8am-6.30pm

I have therefore produced some notices to promote our opening times. The opening times are on the home page of the website.

Did Not Attend" ("DNA")

Non attending patients and late arrivals for appointments are a concern.

The numbers are now being highlighted in the waiting rooms and website. A new computer report showed that in the past month 6% of GP appointments were 'DNA'. A closer inspection however showed that some doctors do not categorically record non-

attendance so the numbers are understated. Doctors have been asked to record all in future. Non-attendance continues despite mobile phone text reminders being issued.

Patient Participation

We should aim to involve more patients; attendance at patient group meetings is on the decline. If anyone wishes to join the patient group please let us know. Those aged under 25 would be particularly welcome. You may wish to attend meetings or correspond by email. One further patient meeting will be held but it may be that in the future virtual meetings by exchange of emails be used as an alternative. This is already in place at some local practices. The next meeting will be arranged with prior notice by flyers and posters in waiting rooms, a notice on the Practice website and an email to those so registered.

In summary the following action plan has been put in place:

- Publicise opening hours
- Publicise DNA rates & write to frequent offenders
- Recruitment of a nurse (on a shared basis with another practice if possible).
- Publicise the next patient meeting with the aim of increasing patient involvement

Philip Eaton
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