

## Results of 2013 Patient Survey

The aim of the survey was to find out what areas patients feel could be improved and to enable us to focus our services to best meet the needs of the patients

The survey was sent to all members of the Patient Participation Group (PPG) and available to all patients who visited the surgery over a period of one month

I have summarised the results, together with agreed improvements, below

The survey focussed on 4 key areas, timing of appointments, GP choice, areas for improvement and impact the new computer system has had on patient experience

### 1. We asked what time of day patients preferred to have an appointment

Before 10	30%
10am – 12	25%
2pm – 4pm	13%
After 4pm	11%
No preference	29%

Our current appointment pattern has approximately 70% of appointments before 12noon and 30% from 2pm –The current patterns would seem to suit patient preferences so no changes will be made

### 2. We asked what was most important when booking an appointment to see a GP

Getting an appointment for the same day	43%
Getting an appointment with the GP of choice (but not same day)	34%
Getting an appointment for a specific day/time to suit	20%

Currently 50% of our appointments are pre-bookable, 30% are held back as same day appointments and 20% are “duty” appointments for urgent must be seen on the day cases, we discussed whether some appointments could be made available for “book in a couple of days” but felt that this was probably unworkable – we will hold more appointments back for times when we are short of GPs and will monitor this over the coming months

### 3. We asked patients to identify what they felt were their 3 top priorities for improvement, results are listed in order of priority:

Being able to get through on the phone quickly	55%
Getting an appointment at a time to suit the patient	54%

Improved service at reception	41%
Not being asked to call back	18%
Improved service in dispensary	11%
Being able to speak to reception/dispensary in confidence	9%
Being able to book an appointment on line	7%
Being able to order a repeat prescription on line	5%
Being able to use Email/Fax	5%
Look and feel of waiting area	4%

*In addition we had several comments in the "other" field:*

More courtesy from receptionists

Receptionists not to keep patients waiting when they are obviously standing there

Receptionists are OK face to face but not good on the phone

Immediate response from Receptionists, not leave people waiting

Phones not switched through by 8am

GPs working hours should reflect patients needs

Availability of GP of choice at short notice (3-4 days)

Being able to press 5 for reception instead of listening to other services

Would be helpful to be able to book same day appointments on line

Being able to access record on line

Better lighting of the path to the car park

Automatic doors from waiting room to Doctors corridor

Waiting times are too long

Seen roughly on time

The key message seems to be getting through on the phone, getting an appointment to suit and dissatisfaction with the service provided by Reception

### Getting through to the surgery

Getting through to the surgery is always most difficult between 8am and 9am, when patients are ringing to get a same day appointment – we have 4 telephone lines, once 4 people have called in any other person trying to get through gets an engaged tone and needs to re-dial

It is possible to get systems that allow any number of calls to get through which are then held in a queuing system with the patient being told that they are number x in the queue – this does not increase the speed in which the person gets to speak to a member of staff but does avoid the need to re-dial

Getting through at peak times is always an issue for GP surgeries regardless of which method is used.

To improve this issue we considered the following:

- Make more appointments available to book on the internet
- Look at phone technology to see if this can help
- Limit calls to the surgery between 8am and 9am for “urgent appointments only”
- Consider ways of revising our staffing so that we have more staff available to answer the phones between 8am and 9am

*Agreed improvements:*

We will make more appointments available for internet booking

We are looking at telephone technology to see if this can improve the situation

It was felt that limiting calls between 8am and 9am would only add to the frustration if someone did get through and then be told that they couldn't make an appointment and would need to call back

I will look at freeing up more staff to answer incoming calls during the busiest slots but will need the technology solution first as the majority of phones in the practice are extensions and cannot pick up incoming calls directly

### Getting an appointment to suit

This is another issue that affects all surgeries, if we reduce the number of appointments we hold back then people happy to wait a day or two will have a better chance of getting an appointment to suit but this is at the cost of patients with an urgent issue who feel they must be seen on the day

We have tried altering the ratio of pre-bookable/book on the day appointments but there doesn't appear to be a magic solution – we will continue to monitor this

### Service provided by Reception

The receptionists have a difficult job, particularly if a patient wants something that we cannot do (e.g. “but I must see Dr Lort on Wednesday”) however I accept that patients can stand at the window in the waiting room and feel that they are being ignored, sometimes the receptionist is on the phone to another patient but we could improve our service by acknowledging the patient waiting and let them know that we have seen them and will be with them in a minute

I will organise specific customer service training to include the points raised here.

We agreed that it would be helpful if staff wore name badges so that patients are aware of who they are speaking to

The comment about the phones not being switched through is probably a perception problem, the receptionists do not take the phone off answer phone, it is done automatically at 8am via BT so if someone feels that it was late it is probable that their clock is fast – sometimes people try to “jump the queue” by trying a little earlier on the off chance that the receptionist has taken the phones off answer phone a little early – they will then get the out of hours message and this can lead to frustration

#### **4. We asked if the new computer system had made a difference to patients experience**

Yes – worse	16%
Yes – better	18%
No difference	63%

The new system did cause some teething problems when we first went live, we didn't encounter any major issues and I feel it is now running smoothly. The main changes for patients are in dispensing with scripts now being sent electronically to the dispensary and on many occasions the dispensers can have the items ready for the patient by the time they get to the dispensary.

Our old automatic booking in machine broke and we have replaced it. This caused many early problems, mainly due to people entering their date of birth incorrectly but on some occasions it seemed to have booked people in and the patient sat waiting but they were not booked in. We contacted the suppliers who ran diagnostic checks and updated the software and although running slowly sometimes we don't seem to have any other issues with it at the moment - I will monitor this