

Patient Participation Group

FEEDBACK ACTION PLAN

- PPG Survey #1
- PPG Meeting: Wednesday, 14th March 2012

Foreword

Following on from our recent Survey and Subsequent PPG meeting I am pleased to be able to share with you the Practice Action Plan. We spent time recruiting and consulting with the PPG and have identified the priorities for improving the service that we offer and as a result have produced the following action plan.

Information Technology

There were no issues identified as problematic with IT as a barrier to access. Those present used the online prescription and appointment service and had found it an easy process. We are keen for more patients to use this method for ordering their repeat prescriptions and would value feedback from more patients on how this works for them.

Dental issues: Patients were concerned about how dental pain was managed in general practice. We highlighted the importance of patients contacting their dentist for dental pain. We advised that if they experienced difficulties in accessing an NHS dentist, that they should contact PALS.

Nurse/Doctor Appointments: This issue had been highlighted as a priority prior to the questionnaire and became the main topic of the questionnaire. It was raised again during the meeting by those present. The group was informed of the outcome of the questionnaire and assisted with development of and agreed to the action plan to, increase resources where possible – this was now a priority. An advert was to be placed for a Nurse Practitioner who would deal with, on the day demand and free up doctors appointments so that they would have more time for long term conditions. Further to this we would employ an additional practice nurse to open up more nurse appointments and if the opportunity arose we would employ another doctor.

It was agreed during the meeting that the PPG would be kept up to date on the progress of these initiatives either through email, direct mail, posters and newsletters. The outcomes would also be fed back at the next PPG meeting.

Clinical

Ear Irrigation: You told us during our informal chats in October that you were not happy with the difficulty you were experiencing in accessing nurse appointments; this issue was again specifically highlighted during the PPG meeting. The manager reported back to those present that Access had become difficult, especially Access to the nurses, essentially due to the fact that we were short of nursing time overall having had a nurse leave and another off on long term sick. It was also suggested that accessing ear Irrigation in particular is confusing from a patient perspective as our approach did not appear consistent.

It was agreed that a poster would be displayed in the waiting room detailing the practice policy on ear-irrigation. The aim in doing this is to provide patients with a clear understanding of the process and to inform them with guidance on how to apply oil correctly. Information on how inserting oil into the ear helps to remove the build-up of wax, and what results they should expect to achieve. In the event that this method does not remedy the build-up, and removal of the wax, the patient is then advised to book an appointment with the treatment room practice nurse. The receptionists have also received updated information on the correct pathway prior to booking the patient an appointment. It was agreed that by educating the patients and updating the receptionists that the occurrence of wasted patient and clinical time was likely to be significantly reduced. It is anticipated that in educating the patients on how to manage the problem of the build-up of wax the numbers of patients having to attend for ear-irrigation should also be reduced, freeing up appointments for essential disease management.

The Survey

- Feedback on the demographic of respondents
- Priorities for the Questionnaire
- Accessing appointments
- Nurse Appointment Availability
- Telephone Access
- On line Appointments
- Text Messaging

We shared the result of the survey with those present; the return rate was low and therefore the sample small so it was difficult to give an accurate picture of experience. However if we used this as a method of focussing our priorities it would seem that satisfaction with our appointment system is going down and as such further supports the discussions with patients who identified appointments as a priority during our initial consultations before Christmas. 28 patients signed up to the PPG, the demographic breakdown can be seen in the survey results below.

Those present at the PPG meeting, commented that they personally had not had a negative experience in getting an appointment other than those difficulties previously mentioned when accessing practice nurses.

Discussions took place regarding Access by Phone and it seems that on occasion the phones are very busy and this can cause frustration for patients. We do have almost 13,000 patients and at peak times the phones can get very busy. During these peak periods we do make every effort to increase resources on the reception desk. We will continue to look at ways to improve this and will consider increasing the availability of on-line bookable appointments which will reduce pressure on the telephone system.

We will actively promote the different ways for you to access the practice with posters, website information and in particular leaflets to new patients.

Those present had no particular issues with the text messaging service and on occasion had found it helpful.

Future Priorities

The next meeting will be on the 19th June. We will be communicating to you before the next meeting and are keen to learn what priorities you think we need to look at in future. We value your feedback whether you choose to be a member of the PPG or not. You can do this by completing a suggestion form which is available in reception or by speaking to any of our reception staff who will make sure that your suggestions have been noted.

We will be re running our survey and would appreciate you taking the time to complete when it is available so that we can see if our actions have made an impact on your experience.

Survey Results

The survey focused primarily on our appointments.

Questions 4a and 4b have been used previously in the surgery and so show us directly how patient attitudes may have changed. Unfortunately we had a low rate of responses to this most-recent survey so our sample size may not suitably represent the practice as a whole.

From this limited sample, it would appear patient satisfaction with access to GP appointments has decreased, however responses do remain weighted to the positive 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree'. We presented this concern during the PPG meeting, but these patients felt they were able to get GP appointments without issue.

