Patient Participation Report 2014

Well, another year is now behind us and our Patient Participation Group goes from strength to strength.

If you have not joined but want to become involved, please e mail us directly at rise.group@nhs.net.

The group has been established now for almost three years and we have been very careful to ensure it is representative of the overall practice population.

It is currently made up of 29 patients, 11 male and 18 female.

We were also careful to ensure an ethnic mix which reflected the mix within the practice so we made sure appropriate translations appeared on the posters and flyers advertising the group.

Of the original membership,

44% were 34 years old or below
30% were between 35 and 54
26% were 55 and above

63% were white British
37% were from other ethnic backgrounds (including Irish, Caribbean, Indian and Other)

22% regularly visit the surgery
48% occasionally visit the surgery
30% very rarely visit the surgery

As well as contributing individually at various locality meetings over the past 12 months, this group were instrumental in agreeing the priority areas and thereby guiding the production of a full patient survey which was distributed widely, both online, by e mail and in the surgery itself.

We also took account of the compliments, complaints and comments we have received both direct to the practice and via our website. Not surprisingly, access continues to be the key area of focus – both access to appointments (pre-booked, walk in and telephone) and access via the telephone.

We were very pleased to receive 178 responses to this survey and the results are summarised in the table below:-
It is clear that our lowest score occurred when we asked if patients generally get an appointment when they need one. This was also borne out by many of the verbatim comments received. Meanwhile, interestingly, the survey also showed very clearly that that most patients would welcome the choice of having a quick telephone consultation with a doctor rather than waiting for a face to face appointment.

We therefore plan to trial a system whereby patients can opt for a telephone consultation instead of a traditional face to face appointment when they call to make the booking.

We also plan to open up more future dated appointments by allowing patients to book up to 6 weeks in advance. We will also restrict a small number of appointments for booking the next day to try to alleviate some of the pressure on the walk in clinic.

Finally, whilst we recognise the clear mandate in favour of keeping the walk in clinic and understand well that this service is particularly valued by patients, we do intend to coach our receptionists in better ensuring that the service is used appropriately – ie for pressing medical needs rather than routine administrative ones.

In summary, then, our action plan is:-

1) To trial a system whereby patients can book telephone appointments with their GP, rather than face to face ones
2) To open up appointments 6 weeks ahead, ensuring patients wishing to book ahead are able to do so
3) To restrict a small number of appointments each day for booking either that day or the afternoon before
4) To coach our receptionists to ensure the walk in service is used appropriately
Most other aspects of the survey were quite encouraging with the vast majority of patients happy with the quality of care they get from their GP, the service they receive from our receptionists and the facilities available at the practice. Indeed, most would recommend the practice to friends and family.

One slightly disappointing result was that satisfaction with the ability to get through to the practice by telephone has fallen slightly. It was part of last year’s action plan to improve the routing of calls so that back office staff can answer overflow calls at busy times but, unfortunately, these changes took much longer to come to fruition than we had anticipated due to IT constraints. However, they were finally implemented earlier this year and we are very hopeful that our performance in this area will improve in future surveys.

Just finishing off our update on last year’s action plan, we did publicise our extended hours (late appointments are available on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays - primarily for working people who cannot attend earlier) both on the website and in the surgery.

We also trialed a GP starting 30 minutes earlier in the morning but, in the event, this turned out not to be as popular as anticipated so we reverted to 9am starts for our GPs.

Finally, we decided to retain our "walk in" appointment strategy whereby every patient with an urgent need to see a GP who arrives at the surgery between 10.30am and 11.00am will be seen that morning. We had considered restricting this service in favour of creating more bookable appointment slots, but the results of our survey strongly supported the retention of this service service.

It is our intention that our Patient Participation Group will become one of the key drivers for change in the Practice and we would therefore repeat our invitation to all patients – if you want to get involved, please let us know at rise.group@nhs.net

And even if you don’t wish formally to join our Patient Participation Group, we are very open to receiving ideas and suggestions for improvement, again at rise.group@nhs.net

We are here from 8.30am to 7.30pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and from 8.30am to 7.00pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Please feel free to call in between these times, or telephone us on 020 3316 8710 or e-mail us at rise.group@nhs.net