

Patient Representation at Holborn Medical Centre

Last year the Practice inaugurated a Patient Participation Group (*PPG*), which has been key to the formation of a Patient Representation Group (**PRG**).

The *Participation* group is a forum for patients to communicate with the practice, face to face, about general matters relating to the patient experience at the practice and in local secondary care.

The **Representation** group is larger, and it is hoped will become more and more representative of all the different groups who are registered at the Practice in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and ability. The aim is to refer to the **PRG** when conducting surveys into the Practice's performance, as experienced from the Patient perspective.

We have actively sought to recruit members of our patient cohort who have otherwise been underrepresented when calling for volunteers. We have done this in clinics conducted for specific groups.

Following on from the formation of these groups we have, following suggestions from them, tailored a recent survey document by the Universities of Cambridge and Manchester (*GPAQ v3*). Specific questions which were requested were about waiting times at the surgery, and ease of ordering repeat prescriptions.

This edited survey was then circulated via email to all members of the Patient Representation Group, by email and post, and was then further distributed at the Practice by both Receptionists and Clinicians.

The results were then distributed, and also made available via the website, thus enabling both the PRG and the wider patient group as a whole to feed back comments and discuss potential changes.

We have then made public these investigations and action plan (see below), again via our Practice website, and also at reception in hard copy.

Report on statistical analysis of recent Practice survey at Holborn Medical Centre

Having sought the views of the patients through the recent survey, and the report from it (you can see the report for yourself at http://dl.dropbox.com/u/64401354/Survey/HMC_survey_analysis_03-12.pdf or ask for a **copy at reception**) we have between us, the Practice and the Patient Reference Group, identified a number of areas for investigation.

Firstly though, we are pleased to say that 89% of the respondents felt their experience of the Practice was positive, whilst a similar number (87%) said it would be likely they would recommend us to a friend. However, there were issues highlighted around:

- **Getting an appointment on the same day**
- **Speaking to a clinician**
- **Booking an appointment in advance**
- **Contacting the practice by phone**

1. Getting an appointment on the same day

The issue: 24% of respondents reported they could not get an appointment on the same day if they needed to see a GP urgently.

Patients telephoning with urgent problems are put on to the Triage list, and are called back a short while later by the duty doctor to assess and/or advise them. The reception team log calls and may ask for some idea of the problem to assist doctors in prioritising any emergencies.

Proposed solution: Improvement to be made in the way in which we communicate how Phone Triage works; we undertake to address this both in our revised staff training programme; our patient communications could be improved too, we will work with the Patient Participation Group to see how best we might improve.

2. Speaking to a clinician

The issue: 19% of respondents reported they felt some degree of difficulty in speaking to a clinician.

Our clinicians all take turns in the phone triage system, as mentioned above. This offers direct communications with our GPs (and Nurse); however, while we undertake to speak with ALL urgent calls on the same day, we cannot promise for this to be with a particular doctor.

Proposed solution: As in point one.

3. Booking an appointment in advance

The issue: 18% of respondents report they experience difficulty in booking an appointment in advance, while 21% reported having to wait 5 days or more to see ANY doctor.

Patients are able to book up to one month in advance most of the time. We hope enabling patients to book well in advance will increase their options for seeing a particular doctor.

Proposed solution: Once again, we feel working to improve the communication of our appointment system will enable patients to consider who they see, and when.

4. Contacting the Practice by Phone

Although the figure is lower than the other points, 9% of respondents reported some difficulty getting through to the Practice by telephone, we feel it is still worth looking at.

Last year we changed our telephone number to a geographical number. This was done in response to patients concerns over the cost of contacting the practice via mobile phones. This means the cost of contacting the surgery is now cheaper, but it also means we have lost the call queuing. Unfortunately patients calling at peak hours are more likely to hear an engaged tone; this is the downside of the change back to a BT number. While we are considering an alternative phone system, patients should bear in mind they will always get through to the surgery more quickly if they avoid calling first thing in the morning where possible.

In conclusion

We believe these issues all highlight aspects of two underlying causes, first and foremost a staff training issue, and in turn, a patient education issue. We will seek to address both these matters in all aspects we can.

We will be conducting further investigation later this year to see whether our proposed solutions have gone as far as we hope in easing the issues identified in this recent survey, and would like to thank all participants in helping us evaluate and ultimately improve the service we offer to all. We hope we can count on your continued input in this exercise.