

WATERHOUSES MEDICAL PRACTICE

Review and Action Plan of 2012 Waterhouses PPG Questionnaire

Our newly formed Patient Participation Group is now up and running. A patient questionnaire was compiled and 150 questionnaires were issued with 111 responses. Overall the results were very favourable with the majority of our patients being very satisfied with the service we offer. Several points were raised and our responses are shown below.

Getting through on the Telephone – Even though 42% said that they felt it was ‘very easy’ to get through on the telephone we are conscious that early mornings are always a difficult time to get through. We continually strive to improve the situation and on busy days, such as a Monday morning, we double up the number of Receptionists available. Unfortunately, with only two lines coming into the practice, there is very little else we can do to alleviate the issue but work very hard to make sure that your calls are responded to as promptly as possible.

Saturday Morning Surgery – Unfortunately, we are unable to offer a Saturday morning surgery as requested by some patients but cater for those who work during the day by offering an evening surgery with Dr Angris on a Monday evening. Traditionally we close on a Thursday afternoon to allow for staff training etc. but we are looking into offering Thursday afternoon appointments in the future and patients will be informed when this change is in place.

Lunchtime opening? Opening at lunch times, as suggested, to allow patients to collect their prescriptions is under consideration. At the moment we close for one hour to allow staff to catch up on any administrative tasks that need to be done (such as sending referrals, dealing with the daily clinical post etc) following a busy morning and before the afternoon appointments begin. There is always a Receptionist ‘on duty’ at lunchtime in order to answer the telephone.

Enough time with the GP – Most patients (77%) stated that they had plenty of time to discuss their problem with the GP during the standard ten minute appointment. However, if you feel that you have more complex issues requiring more time then please ask for a double appointment when booking and we will try to accommodate this.

Time spent in Waiting Room – We asked how you felt about the length of time you spent in the Waiting Room. 35% said ‘not long’, 62% said ‘a little while’ and 3% said ‘far too long’. We try really hard to ensure that the appointments run to time but of course our clinicians have to deal with a variety of issues during the appointments which may take more than the standard ten minutes. We will, in future, ensure that we inform patients waiting if a GP or Nurse is running more than 20 minutes late.

Although only two patients complained about the time it takes to dispense medication after seeing a GP, I would just like to take this opportunity to inform you how busy our Dispensary is and what a mammoth task they have to ensure that medications are dispensed safely and in a timely manner. We have just fewer than 3,500 patients on our list and 99% of them are dispensing patients. The Dispensers action around 100 prescriptions per day – many of them with multiple items (we estimate that we dispense around 4,000 items per month). Approximately 30 of these prescriptions need to be dispensed immediately following the patient’s consultation with a Doctor – the remainder are repeat medications which will be collected two days after receipt. Our Dispensary Manager and Dispensers work non-stop to ensure that all the above requirements are met within our Clinical Governance guidelines. Rest assured that the clinical computer system does alert the Dispensers of a medication required immediately and these are given priority.

Urgent/Same Day Appointments – If a patient requires a ‘same day’ appointment due to the urgency of the matter then they will be seen that day. Half of you who responded to the questionnaire stated that this was the case and the other half said they were happy to be seen within 2 days. We are pleased that we meet Government guidelines with regard to appointment availability but appreciate it may take a little longer for an appointment with a Doctor or Nurse of your choice. We are especially pleased that we now have a female doctor, Dr Kate Chadwick, working with us and feel this has greatly enhanced our service to our patients.

Out of Hours Service/Basford – The majority of concerns related to our Out of Hours service at Basford. You found the distance, and in some cases the quality of service, to be problematic and you would like a much more local and convenient service. We have taken this back to the PCT to look into on behalf of our patients. Should you have any concerns with the care you receive then please feel free to write to North Staffs Urgent Care with your complaint (511 Etruria Road, Bastford, Stoke on Trent ST4 6HT.

Other comments which arose from the Questionnaire related to :

Radio – The music in the waiting room being too loud or a preference of radio station. We will ensure that keep an eye on the sound level in the waiting room and we choose Radio 2 which we feel is suitable listening for the majority. Unfortunately our radio will not tune in Classic FM very successfully. We have to play background music in the waiting room for confidentiality purposes as it does help to obscure the conversations between staff and patients that take place at the Reception desk and Dispensary hatch.

Return phone calls/Messages – one person commented that they never received a phone call as promised and wanted to know if we kept track of such requests. Should a telephone call back be requested then a message is sent to the Duty Doctor/Nurse via our computerised clinical system. Unless it is urgent the clinician will call between morning and afternoon surgery or, if received later in the day, after afternoon surgery. The response is always recorded so that we have a complete time line and conclusion of the request on record.

E-mail Test Results? – although an email service for results would be beneficial to patients unfortunately, due to stringent confidentiality rules, we are not able to offer this service. We have to abide strictly to the regulations laid down by the Department of Health and we are not yet able to ensure full confidentiality and data protection through our NHS email service. However, we do feel that this may well be something which will become available in the future.

Reception Staff – On a final note, I was extremely pleased and proud to see that 94% of patients found the Reception staff to be ‘very helpful’, ‘always friendly and courteous’ and ‘go out of their way to help with my concerns’. The administrators in this Practice work really hard to ensure that patients receive a service which is second to none and I think, in the majority of cases, we achieve that. Here are a few complimentary comments we received on the questionnaire and I thank everyone for their kind words.

‘Needs no improvement’ ‘Fantastic staff’ ‘Pharmacy are great’

‘Great respect for the whole Practice, we are fortunate to have you’.

‘Reception staff are always friendly and happy to help (excellent service)’

‘Always been thrilled with my care here’

‘Have been patients for 23 years and have always found the service is excellent, staff helpful and friendly and doctors caring and sympathetic’

‘It feels like the staff work with me and my family; the doctors and nurses give the impression that I’m their only patient during an appointment’

‘I wish someone had recommended the Surgery to me when I first moved to the area!’

‘We couldn’t get better looked after!’

Thank you for taking the time to complete our questionnaire. As ever, if you have any concerns, complaints or suggestions then please get in touch with me. *Kate Robotham, Practice Manager.*