

Patient Survey March 2014 – Appointments

1. Introduction

The Doctors and staff at the surgery value the opinion of patients on our services and strive to ensure that those services are of an excellent standard. One of the ways we can monitor this is to ask our patients directly by means of these surveys.

On this occasion it was agreed, following discussion with our Patient Participation Group, that we would survey how easily (or otherwise) our patients find getting to see the Doctor. The survey consisted of 10 questions and was distributed to some 250 patients with 150 of these being asked to complete the survey on-line. We received 148 completed surveys with 55 of these completed on-line.

Note: The paper based survey originally consisted of 12 questions but for technical reasons only 10 were included on-line. For consistency, two of the paper based questions have been omitted from the results.

2. Findings

2.1 When did you last see a Doctor at the surgery?

Of the 148 respondents 74.32% had been seen in the last 3 months and 20.95% had been seen between 3 and 6 months. These figures are relevant only in as much as they may be used for comparison after any further similar surveys.

2.2 How do you normally book your appointments to see a Doctor at the surgery?

The majority of patients book their appointments by phone (86.49%) or in person (18.92%) and, although online booking of appointments has been available for some time now, only 3.38% normally book this way. Of those patients who participated in the survey on-line surprisingly few were aware that they could in fact book their appointments on-line.

2.3 Which of the following methods would you prefer to use to book an appointment?

Whilst again the majority would prefer to book their appointments either by phone (75.68%) or in person (20.27%). Interestingly 33.11% would prefer to book online. When we asked this question in the 2013 survey only 15% said they would like to be able to book on-line.

2.4 In the past 6 months have you tried to see a Doctor fairly quickly? (on the same day or in the next 2 weekdays that the surgery was open).

Almost 71% of patients admitted to have tried to see a Doctor quickly. There is, however, no evidence as to whether or not these would have been emergency situations.

2.5 Think about the last time you tried to see a Doctor fairly quickly. Were you able to see a Doctor on the same day or in the next 2 weekdays that the surgery was open?

62.84% responded positively to this question but 27.03% were unable to see a Doctor within this timescale (the remainder could not remember or didn't answer the question). When compared with a similar question asked in the 2013 survey it can be seen that we have improved in this respect with the number of patients answering that they were able to see a Doctor within two days increasing from 57.4% in 2013 to the 2014 figure of 62.84%. In 2013 42.6% of patients answered they had been unable to see a Doctor within two days but this figure reduced to 27.03% in 2014. The main reason given for this inability to see the Doctor quickly was, in both years, that there were no appointments available.

2.6 If you weren't able to be seen during the next two weekdays that the surgery was open, why was that?

In the majority of cases (34.46%) patients responded that there weren't any appointments available with the next highest response being "Can't remember" at 8.11%. Clearly the issue for most patients here is lack of appointment availability and this is reinforced I feel in the responses to question 7 below.

2.7 How many days do you usually have to wait to get an appointment with the Doctor of your choice?

27.70% of patients responded that they are seen within 2 days with a total of 42.56% being seen within 3 days. However, 32.43% wait between 4 and 7 days to be seen and a further 10.14% wait 8 days or longer.

When considering the responses to this question we should keep in mind that patients are not registered to a specific Doctor and whilst we undertake to try and accommodate requests to see a specific Doctor we cannot guarantee to do this and indeed advise patients of this in our Practice leaflet etc. We further advise that should they insist on seeing a specific Dr then their wait for an appointment could be longer.

2.8 In the past 6 months, have you tried to book ahead for an appointment with a Doctor? (more than 2 weekdays in advance).

This question achieved a fairly even split of responses with 44.59% answering Yes and 46.62% No

2.9 Last time you tried, were you able to get an appointment with a Doctor more than 2 weekdays in advance?

52.7% were able to book an appointment more than 2 weekdays in advance.

2.10 How long after your appointment time do you normally wait to be seen?

As many as 75% of patients responded that they were seen within 15 minutes of their appointment time with a further 18.24% seen between 15 and 30 minutes. A small number of patients, however, reported a wait of longer than 30 minutes.

3 Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 On-line booking of appointments

We currently have 5% of our patients who have signed up for Patient Access which will allow them to book appointments on-line and, whilst this is within target, the survey would suggest that there are a good number of our patients who are unaware that this service exists. Although measures are in place to let patients know about Patient Access there is clearly a need to do more. New posters will be produced and displayed prominently in surgery. We will also refer to the survey in our first PPG Newsletter and an e-mail message will be sent to a selection of patients who have e-mail addresses recorded on our system. Additionally Reception staff will be more proactive in asking patients if they are interested in using the service and we will continue to offer new patients the service at their New Patient Check.

3.2 Getting to see a Dr quickly and seeing the Dr of your choice

We have clearly improved in our efforts to ensure patients are seen within two weekdays. This will be as a result of the recruitment of an additional GP to the Practice and it is felt that this improvement will continue. At this time there are no plans for any further recruitment but there are other initiatives we can utilise to maintain that improvement. For example, we still have a situation where some patients fail to advise us that they will not be attending an appointment in time for us to be able to allocate that appointment to another patient. There has been an improvement now that patients can cancel by text but we will remind patients of the need to let us know as soon as

possible. This will be achieved with suitable notices in surgery and an article on our website.

With regards to patients seeing the Dr of their choice, as mentioned in 2.7 above, patients are registered with the Practice and whilst we cannot guarantee that patients will be able to get an appointment within 2 weekdays with the GP of their choice we will do our best in this respect. The Practice, however, is happy with the survey results for this question and we believe that as patients get to know and become more comfortable with Dr Kassha this will be less of an issue for patients.

3.3 How long after your appointment time do you normally wait to be seen

Historically we have been targeted for patients to be seen by the Dr within 15 minutes of their arrival and the majority of patients are seen within this time. There will inevitably be occasions when appointments will over-run leading to delays for other patients. This can occur when for example a patient would have been better booking a double appointment or as has happened in the past a person accompanying the patient asks for a consultation whilst they are with the Doctor. Efforts have already been made in the past to encourage patients to book a double appointment when necessary with the posting of appropriate notices in surgery. Similarly we have reminded patients that when accompanied by another person we will not consult that person during the original appointment. This has had an impact, with the number of patients reporting they were seen within 15 minutes increasing from 65% in the 2013 survey to 75% this time. Suitable posters are still in place and it is proposed that no further action be taken at this time other than to monitor the times being achieved.

Report produced by

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