

## Patient Survey 2011/12

We have always valued the opinions of our patients & in 2011/12 we surveyed approximately 170 patients to ask them just 4 simple questions:

- What is the best thing about coming to our practice?
- What don't you like about coming to see us or what do you think would make our practice better?
- What has impressed you most about other local health services?
- Apart from our practice, what other local health services could be better?

We felt that these open-ended questions gave patients the opportunity to comment on any subject they wished, which was relevant to the practice or other local health services.

Approximately 100 surveys were given out at random to patients in the waiting room but we also wanted to give 'hard to reach' patients the opportunity to comment. To achieve this, we sent 70 surveys to teenagers, the housebound, patients with longstanding mental or physical health problems, those who frequently miss their appointments & patients in the past have voiced their dissatisfaction with any aspect of our services.

There was a tear-off slip at the bottom of the survey inviting patients to leave their name & contact number, if they wished to join our PPG. An invitation was also incorporated into patients' repeat medication slips & the clinicians also verbally invited patients.

104 completed surveys were returned. The number of patients now involved with the PPG is approximately 18 so the recruitment campaign was a great success & these members were happy to take on the role of our patient reference group (PRG).

At an extra-ordinary meeting on December 2nd the PRG met to collate the survey results & present them to the practice. 67 people surveyed were completely happy with the surgery & did not have any suggestions for improvement. Parking, privacy & confidentiality at reception, delays with appointments & the décor of the waiting room were the most common suggestions for improvement.

It was felt that little could be done to rectify the parking problem. In addition to the existing notices, members of staff have attached written 'do not park' requests to the windscreens of cars deemed to be inappropriately parked & the local school have also asked parents not to park here when picking children up from school but the problem persists. The practice agreed to write to regular offenders & members of the PRG offered to speak to inappropriate 'parkers'.

The top 3 areas for improvement were therefore:

- Privacy & confidentiality at reception.
- Delays with appointments.
- Waiting room décor.

The PRG & the practice after a lot of discussion at further meetings agreed the following action plan:

Privacy & confidentiality at reception. Many patients have in the past indicated that they would not like to see a glass partition separating the waiting area from the staff so it was agreed that this was not an option. There is already a notice on the wall informing patients that they can request to be taken to a private area if they wish to discuss something confidential. A larger brightly- coloured poster will be made. A notice on a stand will also be put in the waiting area close to reception asking patients to respect the privacy of others & stand back from reception until a member of staff is available. From a practice point of view, staff will be told not to make any outgoing calls from the front desk & not to mention patients' names when dealing with incoming calls.

Delays with appointments. These arose for several reasons. Clinics & surgeries did not always start on time, extra patients were added without informing clinicians & patients came with multiple problems or requested further tests so inadequate appointment time had been allocated. It was decided , if necessary ,to begin sessions later to give staff start-up time. Reception staff are to be more vigilant in informing clinicians of extra patients & to check that they have allocated patients sufficient appointment time. Clinicians should also be more assertive & ask patients to make further appointments for multiple problems, tests etc , in order to avoid delays.

Waiting room décor. It was agreed that this needs smartening up. There are too many notices on the boards & walls & repainting is necessary. PRG members offered to come in & strip the walls of all notices. The waiting room will then be repainted & more notice boards bought. The PRG suggested that notice boards should be themed & changed regularly & they would like a notice board of their own. Information on first aid, healthy eating, self-help groups & disease management could be kept in files & stored in a bookcase in the waiting room so that patients had easy access to information.

Locality- wise, better use of the new NHS building on George St; waiting times for clinic & hospital appointments, issues with Tameside hospital & hospital parking in general featured as problems & these will be brought to **Commissioning** meetings as appropriate.

Specialist services for the elderly, the care of cancer patients & the district nursing service were all mentioned in the survey results as excellent.

A further survey will be undertaken next year by the practice to check whether the practice has addressed its problem areas. Privacy & confidentiality at reception & delays in appointments have already been addressed. Notices have been removed from the surgery walls & we are awaiting repainting.