

Patient Newsletter November 2018

Life in General Practice is never dull and we become adept at dealing with constant and never-ending change. This quarter has been no exception and some particular highlights are outlined below. We hope they're of interest.

National Patient Survey & CQC

The National Patient Survey results were published in August 2018 and we were gratified to see significant improvements in most metrics eg overall experience of the practice. The results from one survey to the next are more difficult to interpret this year as the questions were different and, as always, the tiny sample size means the results must be treated with care. For context, 99 surveys were returned out of our patient list of over 23,300. This represents 0.42% of our patients!

The National Survey fieldwork was done from January to March 2018 – three months after our appointment system change from a predominantly phone access system to predominantly face-to-face system. We conducted our own survey 280 patients in June 2018 and our results demonstrated a marked improvement in the patient experience. 82% of patients reported a Very Good or Good experience of the practice. This significant improvement – from a much larger patient sample - was noted in the subsequent CQC survey and we were gratified that overall we remained rated as Good.

We were obviously disappointed to receive a Requires Improvement for Responsive domain. This was owing to a failure to deal with complaints consistently. A new, robust and systematic process of complaints handling has been introduced.

Diabetes Pilot

An activity that the CQC highlighted as Outstanding was our Type 2 Diabetes pilot: in early 2017 we ran a small research pilot for some of our diabetic patients to test an alternative dietary approach to managing diabetes. The results were nothing short of sensational and our work has led to similar pilots being conducted in other Modality Partnership Divisions.

Our results have subsequently been presented at national and international conferences and, perhaps most importantly, have been worked up into a proposal for Berkshire West CCG in order that our approach can be offered to many more patients. We hope that the CCG will respond positively.

Group Consultations

We became interested in Group Consultations at Wokingham Medical Centre as a result of the diabetes pilot mentioned above which used group consultation methodology. Group consultations have been offered to patients in the USA for many years and in the UK are gaining in popularity. You may have read about them recently as they hit the national news headlines last week. The BBC ran a balanced piece, which can be viewed here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-45770998>

Group consultations can benefit patients for a number of reasons:

- Patients want to spend longer with doctors and nurses to have time to discuss the things that matter to them (rather than the things that matter to clinicians who may be focused just on bio-marker results)
- Patients say that meeting others with the same health issues boosts their confidence, makes them feel less isolated and helps them to understand their health issues better
- Patients want regular follow up and to understand their condition so they can take control and manage their health issues better and group consultations support this

Over the forthcoming weeks and months we will be working with our PPG to explore how to offer group consultations to our patients.

Clinical Re-design

Those of you who follow General Practice stories in the media will be aware of the existential crisis facing GP's. 1,000,000 appointments are conducted daily in the UK while the number of GP's shrinks as more and more young doctors reject General Practice as a career. Recruitment and retention of GP's is the single biggest threat to the health of the NHS itself as 90% of patient contacts are in General Practice – not hospitals – but General Practice only receives 8% of the NHS's funding.

So far, at Wokingham Medical Centre, we have managed to recruit new GP's and have been relatively protected from the workforce crisis. But as many of you will have experienced recently, even we are not wholly immune and as a result we are embarking on a significant clinical workforce re-design. The Government is encouraging a more diverse clinical skill mix with the addition of clinical pharmacists, paramedics, physician associates and others to the GP team. Most of our neighbouring practices have already undergone this process and we hope that our patients will benefit from the expertise that allied healthcare professionals will bring to our team.

Please understand that this approach will inevitably mean that patients do not see their GP for everything and anything. Receptionists will signpost patients appropriately in order that patients see the right person for the right condition at the right time.

We will be working with our Patient Participation Group as we embark on this process but we are delighted to report that Graham Edmunds has already joined us as a clinical

pharmacist. Graham brings a wealth of experience as a retail pharmacist and is an inspirational personality. We hope to put his pharmaceutical expertise to good use in order to ensure that patients receive the very best medicines management guidance.

Digital Consultations

One of the principal topics of debate at the recent Royal College of General Practitioners' Annual Conference in Glasgow was the rise of digital GP consultations. Some patients find this approach convenient but there is also disquiet that it is non-inclusive and that NHS IT infrastructure isn't up to the job.

Modality Partnership is collaborating with a provider of digital consultations, Push Doctor, in a pilot to evaluate this approach. The pilot is being conducted across all Modality Partnership Divisions and will provide valuable insight into this method of accessing healthcare.

From a practical perspective for our patients, this means that when you ring for an appointment the receptionist may offer you a digital (such as Skype) consultation.

Wokingham Medical Centre Trainee GP's

As many of you will know, Wokingham Medical Centre is a training practice – which means that we train future GP's, in addition to junior doctors more generally and medical students. We are delighted to announce that Dr Faye Hext and Dr Claire Murray successfully completed their GP training earlier this year and gained Membership of the Royal College of General Practitioners. Dr Murray has continued working with us as a locum GP - we're trying to persuade her to join us permanently so please be nice to her...

Modality Partnership CARE Award

Modality Partnership is growing steadily and now has in excess of 240 GP's, 1100 staff and looks after over 410,000 patients in 8 Divisions across England.

We are delighted to report that our Operations Manager, Kate Mansi, won an inaugural national CARE Award for her tireless work at Wokingham Medical Centre. Kate is passionate about patient care and we were thrilled that her award was presented by the Royal College of General Practitioners' Chair of Council, Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard.