

**REPORT ON PATIENT'S VIEWS ON REGISTRATION PROCESS
AT WATLING MEDICAL CENTRE.**

PROFILE OF PRACTICE.

Watling Medical Centre is based at two locations – 42 London Road, Stanmore and 108 Watling Avenue, Burnt Oak. The staff is comprised of Doctors and Practice staff including a Practice Manager, Reception Team Manager and Reception Team, Practice Nurses and a Health Care Assistant. The Practice is supported by a team of District Nurses, Counsellors, Health Visitors and Phlebotomists.

BACKGROUND TO SURVEY ON PATIENT REGISTRATION PROCESS

Watling Medical Centre had a Patients forum which has been converted into a Patients Reference Group which is currently at an embryonic stage. It is currently composed of a few doctors and administrative staff and a few patients. A recruitment process has been undertaken to get more patients to join the Patient Reference Group to ensure that patient views are more adequately represented.

At a meeting of the Patient Reference Group, it was agreed that the views of Patients on the registration process at Watling Medical Centre would be an appropriate issue for conducting a survey. This decision was taken in the context that there had been some complaints about the Registration Process at the Practice. Further, as the Practice is in the process of restructuring its services, it was felt that this would be an opportune time to make any necessary changes to the registration process on the basis of responses to the survey questions. This initiative would also respond to the request by the North London Sector for increased patient participation to ensure that the services provided by the Practice meet the needs of patients.

METHODOLOGY

Identification of Group to be surveyed.

It was agreed that patients who had registered at Watling Medical Centre within the past year could be contacted to obtain their views on the process which they had gone through to register at the Practice. The expectation was that the experience would still be fresh in their minds. One limitation of the survey was that respondents only included patients who had registered at the Stanmore Surgery. This was due to the fact that the Burnt Oak Surgery had been closed to the registrations of new patients during this period because it had its full complement.

1157 patients had registered at the Stanmore surgery within the previous twelve months i.e. the period 1.2.2011 to 31.1.2012. It was decided that due to limitations of time and resources, the survey would be limited to patients who had registered during the last four months. The number of patients who were contacted to complete the survey questionnaire was therefore 400. This comprised 35% of the total number of patients registered during the previous twelve months.

Development and Distribution of Survey Questions

Questions were drawn up through a consultative process between medical and administrative staff and members of the Patients Reference Group.

The questionnaires were posted to patients in February 2012. In order to maintain confidentiality and to encourage candid responses, questionnaires were returned anonymously.

88 patients returned their completed questionnaires. This comprised 22% of those to whom questionnaires were sent.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

- Did you feel welcome when you applied to register at the Practice? YES --- NO ---
If NO, what did you not find satisfactory?
If YES, what did you find welcoming?
- Were you given the information required to enable you to complete the registration process? YES -- NO --.
If NO, what other information did you need?
- Were you satisfied with the help which the staff gave you in the process of registration?
YES -- NO –
If NO, What other type of assistance would you have liked to be given?
If YES, Can you mention any particular way in which they helped you?
- Were you given information about how to make an appointment to see a doctor/nurse/ any other health professional? YES -- No ---
If NO, What other type of information would have liked to be given?
- Were you given information about the services provided by the Practice Nurse? YES -- NO—
- (a) Were you given a copy of the Practice leaflet/

(b) were you given information about the practice website?
- Were you given information about the Surgery Opening hours? YES -- NO --.

- Were you given information about how to seek help out-of- office hours or in an emergency? YES -- NO --.
- Were you given information about a how to make a complaint if you are not satisfied with the service which you receive at the surgery? YES -- NO –
- (a) Were you offered a new patient health check? YES -- NO –
 (b) If you had a new patient health check, did you find it helpful YES -- NO –
 If NO, explain why you did not find it helpful
 If Yes, say why you found it helpful.
- Please make any other comments which you want to make about any aspect of the registration process.

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

Question 1

Did you feel welcome when you applied to register at the Practice? YES ---- NO-----

If NO, What did you not find satisfactory?

If YES, what did you find welcoming?

Responses

YES 76 NO 8

Respondents who indicated that they had felt welcome when they applied to register at the practice, made comments which fell into two main categories. Examples are given below:

Friendliness of the staff

- The lady who spoke to me was nice and polite
- The receptionist was very friendly
- The staff were friendly and accommodating
- Smiling and helpful staff
- Staff was polite, kind and welcoming
- Staff approachable
- Staff were smiling – made me feel welcome and at ease – gave me confidence.

- Greeted me pleasantly and in an agreeable environment.

Helpfulness of the staff

- Helpful in giving instructions and in completing forms
- Instructed me clearly about the evidence to be submitted for registration
- The receptionist was very helpful and told me that I would receive a New Patient Health Check.
- Gave me assistance in filling in the form
- We were given all appropriate information without any fuss.

Respondents who said that they did not feel welcome when they applied to register made comments such as the following:

- They were talking about something while I was waiting to make eye contact.
- They needed too much information when they could just get it from my previous doctor.
- I was made to feel like it was an inconvenience.
- I was not welcome until I said that a family member was already registered.
- The individual who was registering me was very frosty and quite rude.
- The receptionist was not very friendly.

Comments on Responses.

It is reassuring to see that the majority of patients found the registration process satisfactory and were pleased with the friendliness and helpfulness of the staff.

The few negative comments highlight the importance of first impressions on people who apply to register. Although receptionists are undoubtedly busy, these comments indicate that it is imperative that they acknowledge each patient in a friendly manner and where applicable, explain why there is a delay in responding to them.

Question 2

Were you given the information required to enable you to complete the registration? YES --- NO----

If NO, What other information did you need?

Responses

YES 85 NO 3.

Question 3

Were you satisfied with the help which the staff gave you in the process of registration YES---- NO----

If NO , what other type of assistance would you have liked to be given?

If YES, can you mention any particular way in which they helped you?

Responses

YES - 86 NO - 4

Examples of comments are as follows:

- They explained everything clearly
- They looked at my son's red book and letter from Barnet hospital and helped me.
- I was given the right forms and explanation.
- Once I submitted the relevant documents the registration process went smoothly.
- They explained well how to fill the form.
- They gave me all the information I required – also gave me leaflets.
- They explained everything clearly.
- Fast and precise manner
- The forms and information were in a package.
- I required urgent GP check-up to get my medication and this was done= Great.
- They gave me information about cervical cancer
- They gave me an appointment for a blood test immediately – really helpful.
- She told me that the information I required was in the pack.

- Helpful overall- making things clear- pleasant experience.

Comments.

Clearly most of the patients found the staff helpful.

Question 4

Were you given information about how to make an appointment to see a Doctor/Nurse/any other health professional? YES----- NO-----

If NO, what other type of information would have liked to be given?

Responses

YES - 41 NO - 11

Response to this question was surprisingly low.

The majority of patients who responded to this question were satisfied with the information which they were given about making appointments. The few patients who indicated that they had some problem, mentioned the following:

- Difficulty in understanding how a big surgery like the Watling Medical Centre operates because I transferred from a single GP surgery .
- Needed more information about the surgery – used the website for getting this information- would have liked brochures and basic information.

COMMENTS

The registration process includes giving patients an information package which includes specific guidance about how to make appointments. Information in the pack includes the following:

What are the numbers I need to make an appointment? How do I go about getting a same day appointment? Making appointments under the additional hours service. Can I book an appointment in the evening and at weekends? What if I need an interpreter?

All of these are important as they will facilitate patients access to facilities offered by the Practice. As the response rate was rather low it raises the issue of whether patients received the leaflets and if they did whether they actually read through them.

Question 5

Were you given information about the services provided by the Practice nurse?

YES 43 NO 32.

COMMENTS

In the process I tend to know about the services about the practice nurse.

Question 6a

Were you given a copy of the Practice leaflet? YES----- NO-----

Responses YES - 46 NO - 36

Question 6b

Were you given information on the Practice website?

Responses YES 35 NO 42

COMMENTS

The package given to patient when they register should include a leaflet giving general information but is not entitled "Practice Leaflet". Many patients responded that they did not receive the information mentioned in question 6. It is possible that they were not given the leaflet. It could also be that they received it and simply did not read it. Whatever the cause for their responses it highlights a need to improve the method by which patients receive information about the surgery.

Question7

Were you given information about the Surgery Opening hours?

YES 56 NO 34

Comments.

The number of patients who responded that they did not receive information about the surgery opening hours further highlights the need for improvement in the provision of information to the patients.

Question 8

Were you given information about how to seek help out-of- hours or in an emergency ?.

Responses

YES 45 No 41

Comments

Responses to this question should be seen in the context of responses to earlier questions which indicate the need for better ways of providing patients with information.

Question 9

Were you given information about how to make a complaint if you are not satisfied with the service which you receive at the surgery/

YES 26 No 44

Comments

Most of the patients did not think that they had been given information about making a complaint. There is a reference to the making of complaints in the Practice Leaflet but it is very brief and does not actually tell patients how a complaint can be lodged. It would be helpful if this information was given under a specific heading "Complaints".

Question 10 a

Were you offered a new Patient Health Check?

YES 72 NO 14

Question 10b

If you had a New Patient Health check did you find it helpful?

If NO, explain why you did not find it helpful

If YES, say why you found it helpful.

YES 55 NO 14

Patients who responded that they found the New Patient Health Check helpful, made comments including the following:

Excellent patient care

- The doctor was very kind, understanding and helpful
- The doctor checked me from top to toe.
- The nurse explained what they do at the Practice.
- The nurse gave quite a lot of information

- The support has been good compared to other places

Feedback given after the New Patient Health Check

- I was therefore kept up-to-date about my health
- I was assured that I was in good health
- It helps you to know that you are healthy
- It gave me confidence about my health

Check-Up useful

- Useful to have tests done e.g. blood pressure and urine tests.
- Tests enable you to know if you have any problem
- A helpful opportunity to get your history on record.

The responses which were critical of the New Patient Health Check were very limited. They highlighted the following:

- Prolonged waiting time for the patient
- Lack of feedback to the patient.
“They didn’t give me information about my health; they did not really explain in depth; I was not informed about my results.
- Feeling that the New patient Health Check delayed access to a doctor
- It was more beneficial to the surgery than to the patient because the patient did not learn anything about him/her self.

Question 11

Please make any other comments which you want to make about any aspect of the registration process.

Complimentary comments were as follows:

- Helpfulness and friendliness of the staff
- 90% of the staff are great, friendly, efficient and helpful
- Welcoming – made me feel accepted.
- Helpful. In the process I got to know the Practice Nurse.
- Not much to say, except that I am so happy to have been accepted.

A few critical comments were made:

- The people at the reception are mechanical and doing a sort of routine job. They are impersonal. Could be more friendly and smiling.
- Having to do it at a severely restricted time is not helpful for those who are working, doing school runs or can't for any number of reasons. (This is probably a reference to the note which requires completed registration forms to be returned on Thursdays between 9a.m. and 12 noon or 1.30 p.m. and 5.30 p.m.)
- I didn't have a Doctor and I really needed to see a Doctor. (It probably refers to a patient who wanted to see a doctor even before the registration process was complete.)

PLAN OF ACTION

- Although most patients responded that they felt welcome when they went through the registration process, and received help when they needed it, it is also clear that for some patients the process was not welcoming or helpful. (the negative responses expressed by some patients in this survey, should be viewed against the background of critical views expressed on NHS Choices. Taken together, they provide an indication of areas of dissatisfaction among patients}.

The Practice will therefore institute a Training Programme so that Receptionists understand that the provision of an excellent service to patients is a matter of priority. The initial training will be provided in house taking into account all the points raised. After 6 months review the Panel will consider the appointment of an external consultant who will strengthen a customer-service approach to patients, assist in the setting up of a more efficient delivery of service and the development of a monitoring system. The Practice Manager will supervise and monitor the implementation of the new system to ensure that high standards which meet the needs of patients, are sustained.

The impact of the new approach will be evaluated within a year.

- Since there are indications that patients are not absorbing all the information provided in the leaflets currently distributed by the Practice, The Patient Leaflet and other information leaflets will be reviewed so that information is better understood by patients. Information about the Practice website will be included in the information given to patients. Consideration will be given to the inclusion of all the information which patients require on one leaflet or booklet which will be revised periodically.

- In order to provide a more effective channel for patients to inform the surgery when they are dissatisfied with the service which they are receiving, the process for making a complaint will be explained more clearly in the information booklet. However the focus will be on pre-empting the making of formal complaints. Suggestion boxes will therefore be placed strategically in the surgeries so that patients can indicate their concerns anonymously. Patients will also be urged to discuss administrative problems with the Practice Manager and will get clear information about the process for meeting the Practice Manager. It is hoped that this may reduce the critical comments made about the surgery in this survey and on NHS Choices.