

REPORT ON 2013 PATIENT SURVEY AT WATLING MEDICAL CENTRE

A survey was carried out to get the views of patients on the service provided by receptionists. It was hoped that the information collected, would enable the Practice to consider whether they could reinforce processes which the patients found useful.. The information would also indicate areas in which patients were not satisfied or had concerns and this could form the basis for changes. The information could also be fed into training programmes for staff at the Practice.

52 patients responded to the survey. 32 responded online and 20 by post. This was a very small sample of the total number of patients registered at the two surgeries in the Practice and should therefore be taken as only providing some insights based on the views of a rather limited number of patients.

QUESTION 1

Over the past twelve months, about how many times have you contacted the receptionists at your surgery by phone or face-to-face?

RESPONSES

1-2 times	3-5 times	6-9 times	Over 10 times
12	12	10	18

COMMENT

Most of the respondents (40 out of 52) respondents, had visited the surgeries often enough i.e. 3 - 10 times and above, to have experience which was relevant to the survey questions.

QUESTION 2

How do you usually contact the Receptionists?

RESPONSES.

Mostly by telephone	39
Mostly by visiting the surgery	1
Using the telephone or visiting the surgery equally.	12

QUESTION 3

When you speak to Receptionists on the telephone/face-to-face, on the whole how politely do they respond to you?

Choose one option, with 1 meaning Very Polite and 5 meaning Not at all polite.

RESPONSES

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1	2	3	4	5
31	10	8	2	1

COMMENT

Most of the respondents (41 out of 52) gave the receptionists the two highest scores for politeness.

QUESTION 4

When you speak to receptionists on the telephone/face - to- face, on the whole how helpful are they when you need to book an appointment or access any service at the surgery?

Choose one option with 1 meaning very helpful and 5 meaning not at all helpful.

RESPONSES

1	2	3	4	5
30	12	6	1	3

COMMENT

Most of the respondents (42 out of 52) gave the receptionists the two highest scores for helpfulness.

QUESTION 5

When you try to book an appointment for a particular day, and no appointment is available at your preferred time, or your preferred doctor is not available, how often do you think that the receptionists make an effort to explain why they cannot respond positively to your request and offer you an alternative appointment which meets your needs?

RESPONSES

1	2	3	4	5
28	9	6	7	0

COMMENT

Most of the respondents (37 out of 50) gave the two highest scores , indicating that they felt that the receptionists were very helpful by making alternative appointments so that they could have a time which was convenient for them or see their preferred doctor.

QUESTION 6

If you think that any particular receptionist is generally polite, friendly or helpful, without giving her name, please tell us what she says or does that you like.

RESPONSES

The responses fell into four groups.

I .The receptionist was seen as being generally friendly and polite

- They have all been very friendly. Good consumer service.
- She is very friendly and helpful.
- She is always very polite.
- All helpful, polite and friendly.

- I find that one particular receptionist is always pleasant, polite, friendly and helpful.
- One is always smiling and friendly and approachable.
- Nothing is too much trouble.
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2. Receptionist greets people in a friendly manner and recognises them.

- Greets you with a smile.
- Says “Good Morning, Can I help you?”
- She knows my first name and that puts me at ease.
- Knows who you are when you come into the surgery.
- She says Hello , greets me by name or says something which makes me feel that she knows who I am.
- There are a couple of receptionists who always sound friendly, almost as if they are smiling down the phone.
- I like her smiles.

3. A few respondents indicated their appreciation of the effort made by receptionists to give them the appointment which they were requesting.

- The receptionist I like, always assures me that the appointment I want is sorted. She makes sure that I know the time

4. A couple of the respondents referred to the fact that receptionists provided what they considered to be special treatment

- She goes out of the way to be helpful. Nothing is too much trouble for her. She is one of the long-serving receptionists.

- She explains things thoroughly and apologises for little things that are not her fault.

COMMENT

Patients indicated that they value receptionists who are friendly and helpful, respond to their need for particular appointments and recognise them as individuals. The issue of greeting patients by name will need to be approached with some caution. Whilst the principle of showing that a receptionist recognises a patient is almost certainly appreciated by all patients, some patients may not like to be greeted by their first name as they prefer a more formal approach. If any policy decision is taken on this matter it would be advisable to ensure that the individual patient's preference is being respected.

QUESTION 7

If you feel that any particular receptionist is generally impolite, unfriendly or unhelpful, without giving her name, please tell us what she says or does , that you do not like.

RESPONSES

Responses fell into the following categories

- **Unfriendly attitude**
 - Looks miserable most of the time
 - Speaks brusquely . Does not smile
 - A couple of the receptionists could look happier
 - Some of the receptionists do not even make eye contact.

- I don't like one receptionist in particular. I don't like her tone of voice. Her attitude is unfriendly. I wonder why she would work in a clinic.
- **Poor customer service.**
 - Sometimes chatting to each other and seem unaware that I am there.
 - The receptionist says no appointment is available. She asks you to try again later or tomorrow. She makes you feel that she has better things to do.
 - Working people are not given appointments that can be fitted around their work schedule e.g. early morning or late evening appointments,
 - Does not volunteer information that might help the patient unless specifically asked
 - She gives the impression she is not concerned to help.
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- **Lack of confidentiality**
 - Some receptionists push you for the reason why you want to see the doctor. Sometimes it is embarrassing , especially so when you are calling from a public place or you are at work or children are around. This is not professional.

QUESTION 8

This question is about confidentiality. Do you think that receptionists treat your information and conversations confidentially? Has any receptionist asked you a question which you found embarrassing e.g. you felt that someone else in the waiting room could overhear/it was a intrusive/ a breach of your privacy because it is something that you only want to discuss with your doctor.

Please choose one option with 1 meaning never and 5 meaning Very often.

RESPONSES

1	2	3	4	5
30	14	2	1	2

COMMENT

44 out of the 49 people who responded to this question felt that their confidentiality had not been breached.

QUESTION 9

Has any receptionist given you information which you considered to be incorrect/inappropriate/ e.g. made an appointment for you to or advised you to see a nurse when you felt that you really needed to be seen by a doctor.

1	2	3	4	5
38	7	2	1	1

COMMENT

45 out of 49 respondents to this question said that they had Never/ hardly ever asked them a question which they considered to be incorrect or inappropriate.

QUESTION 10

Write down anything which you think that receptionists can do or stop doing to help you get a better service from your surgery. This is only about receptionists. Please do not include comments on what doctors, nurses, other professionals or administrators do.

RESPONSES

- Some of the responses re-affirmed what had been said in Question 6 . These included positive and critical comments:
 - I don't know that they can do anything to improve
 - I think the whole team at Burnt Oak do an excellent job
 - Most receptionists at my surgery do a great job
 - Nothing. They are excellent.
 - Try to help patients as much as possible. To be ready to say they cannot help.
 - Receptionists should be more understanding about the patients' feelings and make them feel more welcome. In fact that makes them feel better already.
2. Booking appointments.

- I think they can limit the wasting of time when booking appointments. Get more phone lines in. It is always busy at 8.30 a.m.

- Have more people to answer the phone between 8.30 and 9.00 a.m.

3 Acknowledging that a patient is waiting..

- When they are on the telephone to someone else, they could interrupt to acknowledge that there is someone in the surgery waiting to speak to them.

- If they are on the phone and you are queuing at the reception desk, it would be nice if they just acknowledged you with a smile or just a nod of the head. There are times that I feel that I am a nuisance just by being there..

4. Respecting Confidentiality.

Patients expressed some concern about the lack of confidentiality. It is interesting to note that they did not mention these concerns when asked directly in question 8.

- I do not appreciate it when receptionists give you your investigation results e.g. blood test results. There is very little privacy when speaking to the receptionists. There are usually 2-3 people standing close behind you or directly behind you.
- I feel that receptionists should not give out blood test results. You should be able to discuss them with a doctor so you can understand them fully. Being told everything is ok does not always answer your questions.
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- One of the receptionists always asks me the reason why I want to see the doctor. Is this necessary? Do I have a choice?
- They will loudly ask you your date of birth . Patient confidentiality is minimal.
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- Giving an indication of when the patient will be seen by the doctor.

It would be helpful to know how long it will be before you are called to see the doctor because you may like to use the toilet or arrange to be picked up.

- Parking
 - As the parking is restricted outside/near the surgery, I think it is important that the receptionists have up-to-date information to give to patients when required.

CONCLUSION

Responses given by patients who participated in this survey give some insight into what patients value and where they would like changes to be made. On the whole they appreciated the service provided by the receptionists and the receptionists should be commended for this. In reviewing the responses, it should be noted that some of the matters mentioned are not under the control of the receptionists e.g. indicating how long patients will have to wait before seeing the doctor; the availability of parking; getting through to the surgery by telephone during peak times.

The issues raised by the patients, would be a valuable resource for re-examining policies and procedures to see whether they should be continued, reinforced or changed. However, in carrying out this review, one must not lose sight of the fact that only a few of the patients registered at the Practice participated in the survey. Whilst their views are useful for indicating how some patients feel about services provided, they may not be adequately representative of patients registered at the Practice