

Tamar Valley Health Patient and Carer Satisfaction Survey 2014 Plan to Improve Services at Callington Health Centre (CHC) and Gunnislake Health Centre (GHC)

Following feedback from over 300 patients who responded to our annual survey, we are pleased to publish the following plan of service reviews and improvements, following consultation with Patient Participation Group which took place both at meetings and via email discussion.

Prior to the survey, feedback from patients and from the Patient Participation Group (PPG) was requested, and the survey questions used last year were changed extensively due to feedback, especially from the PPG. The PPG had itself done an earlier survey by asking patients of its expectations of its group.

The survey was distributed by being offered to patients at both health centres in paper format (and being promoted by posters drawing attention to) and by being available to complete on-line via the practice website. The results are available here for CHC and GHC, and detailed responses to Q14 *Are there any improvements or changes that you would like to suggest to the healthcare offered by the practice or any other comments?* are also available for CHC and GHC.

Our receptionists reported that patients were more reluctant than in previous years to accept offered survey forms, on the grounds that they felt they were being asked too frequently for feedback.

Key issues:

- You said that a shortage of GPs and GP appointments has been an issue. The national shortage of GPs has made it difficult for us to recruit replacements initially for those who have retired or moved away (9 doctors since September 2012). However, the practice is due to return to full strength in April 2014 for the first time since late 2012 and should have a full complement of GPs again soon (15 in total). There were some negative observations about GPs working part-time. However, this is now becoming the norm across the UK and almost all our GPs work part-time in the practice.
- The feedback about the receptionists indicated that 74% of GHC patients found them helpful compared with only 56% of CHC patients. As all our receptionists work at both health centres and are thus the same people working at both ends, we wondered whether the receptionists were sometimes being blamed for the shortage of GPs which has been more pronounced at CHC at times. It is to be hoped that our receptionists will seem more helpful when they have more appointments to offer. It may also be that those patients who do not like the new triage system may blame the receptionists for this. However, we will be investing in more training for our reception team.
- You said that, when problems arise with medication due to be dispensed, dispensers should advise patients that their supplies may be delayed, and we have directed the dispensers to make contact, where possible. However, this is only

applicable to those who collect them after 48 hours as those who return earlier may arrive before an awaited delivery.

- Of those patients surveyed who had had annual medication reviews, 67% (CHC) and 61% (GHC) found them helpful. Sometimes patients prefer to raise different issues during these special appointments and we will therefore conduct specific surveys of this group to establish why satisfaction is not higher for these comprehensive annual 'MOTs'. You suggested that some of these reviews could be done by phone and we will be looking into this in greater detail to establish whether this could be safely introduced. Patients who are offered review appointments with our pharmacists, who are qualified to prescribe medicines, have always been able to see a GP if they prefer but we need to highlight this option.
- The automatic check-in system continues to get mixed reviews but it is difficult to know whether this is because of our ongoing IT problems which are outside our control (see below).
- Opening times: 91% of CHC patients and 88% of GHC felt that the practice opening hours usually met their needs. However, weekday extended hours' appointments are more popular than Saturday morning ones and the PPG has backed our plans to change these accordingly.

Changes made:

- Appointments: 74% of patients at CHC and 81% of those at GHC were usually or always able to get an appointment when they needed one. To help improve satisfaction and manage rising demand, we introduced a GP triage system whereby patients requiring same-day treatment are phoned back by a GP who then assesses their condition and deals with it according to individual need. Taking a GP out of routine surgery every day to manage the triage system has resulted in pressure on their own routine appointments which has caused some dissatisfaction but we cannot run both systems concurrently. The majority of the patients surveyed found the waiting times for appointments acceptable.
- The car park at CHC has been resurfaced.
- Patient information display screens have been installed in all reception and waiting areas.

What we are unable to change:

- Virtually all referrals to NHS services outside the practice need to be done via a referral management service. Due to concerns about the service being offered to patients in the area, an alternative provider is being considered by NHS Kernow which commissions services for NHS patients locally.
- Out of hours services continue to be provided by Kernow Urgent Care Service (KUCS), an NHS arrangement over which the practice has no control.
- Additional parking: there is no available space at either health centre for extra parking although we have sought adjoining space for parking at both sites. We understand that some free parking is due to be reintroduced in the public car park across the road from GHC, and our thanks to Anita Hillier-Horne of the PPG who has championed this cause.

- More space: we are hoping that we may be able to move the health centre at Callington to a new location, although this has not yet been agreed, but there is inadequate space at present to provide interview rooms at either site or a play area at CHC. Signs have been provided asking patients to respect the privacy of those at the reception desks. Providing toys for children in the CHC waiting room has not been a success. There was a fixed toy but that was removed after frequent complaints about the noise it made, and loose toys were removed as they proved to be a trip hazard when left scattered on the floor.
- Technology: we have experienced severe problems this year due to deficiencies linked to the BT lines which provide our links to the wider NHS. This is finally being addressed by Cornwall IT Services and BT, and should improve from April 2014 onwards.

We hope that you will continue to provide feedback on what we do well and what we could improve, and also that you will find our services and facilities improved.

The Patient Participation Group

The PPG has a very active committee which arranges bi-monthly open meetings (alternating between the two health centres) and additional committee meetings. Sadly, the very popular chairman, Jim Willson, died suddenly in December, and our thoughts go out to his widow, Margaret, who has continued his work by remaining on the committee. The new chairman is Don King, ably supported by the secretary, Fred Shotter.

The practice has provided the PPG with a grant which has enabled it to join the NAPP (National Association for Patient Participation) and to attend quarterly PPG Umbrella meetings of patient groups from the 11 practices in the East Cornwall commissioning locality.

The practice has continued to advertise the PPG widely, with posters in each health centre; a front-page listing on the practice website; periodic reminders on Facebook; an advert in a local newsletter; and appeals to students at the Callington Community Clinic where the practice holds lunchtime drop-in clinics during term time.

The profile of the group is rather older than the practice profile – it has been difficult to attract younger members in spite of the above efforts. The practice population is predominantly White British/Cornish and the PPG reflects this.

PPG - Age range/ethnic group 2013

	Under 16	17- 24	25-34	35- 44	45-54	55- 64	65- 74	75- 84	Over 84
Males:		1	0	2	3	7	17	6	0
Females:		4	0	2	7	15	12	4	0
Total 89		4	0	4	10	22	39	10	0

	White/ British:	White/ 'Other'	Mixed British	N/S
Males:	23	1	1	9
Females:	27	1	1	26
	50	2	2	35
				Total 89

Practice opening hours

The practice continues to offer extended opening hours. The core opening hours are 8.30 am – 6.00 pm, with extended hours:

- One night each week (alternating Tues/Wed/Thurs), 6.00pm - 8.00pm, usually at both Health Centres.
- Every Saturday, except Bank Holiday weekends, 8.30am - 11.00am, at either Callington Health Centre or Gunnislake Health Centre.

Extended hours appointments are pre-bookable and preferably for patients that find it difficult to come to the surgery during normal working hours. Because of the numbers of GPs (15), individual GPs do not offer extended hours' sessions on set days but according to a rota. Patients wishing to see an individual GP during extended hours should consult the receptionists for the next available session for that GP.

All calls to the practice before 8.30am and after 6.00pm will be automatically directed to the Kernow Urgent Care Service (KUCS).