

Dolphins Practice has a Patient Participation Group - Friends of Dolphins Practice - which has been working with the Practice for over 10 years in order to engage and obtain feedback from our 12,000 Patients, to help deliver and design services around their needs. Meetings are held on a monthly basis, with Dr Dawson and the Practice Manager in attendance; the agenda is constructed to reflect the current patient concerns as identified by the Patient Participation Group.

Members of the Patient Participation Group are also involved with Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) and other voluntary organisations such as the Alzheimers Support Group and Local Care Groups and support the Practice in engaging with vulnerable groups, such as the carers of the elderly or patients with learning disabilities

The Patient Reference Group is a virtual group of registered patients, whose views and opinions, together with those of the Dolphins Patient Participation Group, can deliver a more Patient-centred service, with a purpose to:

- ✚ Be a Patient Voice
- ✚ Provide a linked service for Patients with the Dolphins Practice
- ✚ Support the Practice with new developments
- ✚ Provide feedback to the Dolphins Practice
- ✚ Provide suggestions on how Patient Services can be improved.

It is not always possible to predict who will be happy to be a member of a Patient Participation or Patient Reference Group. Patients with the greatest interest, who actively access the Practice, may feel more involved and have a feeling of ownership, whereas those who have not attended the Practice for some time may not have the same level of interest and therefore may be less inclined to get involved. However, an annual survey has been carried out by the Patient Participation Group for the duration of our Flu Clinics to determine if other Patients would have an interest in joining this very valuable group.

The Patient Participation and Reference Groups have been asked to complete a questionnaire which had been designed to seek views from Patients to encourage further proactive engagement and involve them in decisions about the range and quality of services provided.

Objective

To obtain feedback from a representative group of the Practice population, whilst being aware that Dolphins Patient Reference Group and Patient Participation Group may not be representative, and therefore to endeavour to take steps towards encouraging participation from a diverse range of Patients.

Patient Participation

The Practice already has a very active and supportive Patient Participation Group with 14 members; further participation, however, is required.

Target Group for questionnaire = 853 Patients (one in fourteen)
Required Sample Size = 250 Patients

The Practice used “surveymonkey” to compile a questionnaire which was disseminated through various methods. Patients were contacted requesting that they participate and provide email addresses for any future questionnaires etc. For those who did not have on line access, the opportunity was given to complete the survey at the Practice. The principal methods used were:

Practice Website

Information and a Hyperlink were shown on the Practice website – www.dolphinspractice.co.uk

Plasma Screen

A notice was placed on the Plasma screen in the waiting area at the Practice

Prescriptions

A paper request was attached to prescriptions, and was also handed to Patients attending the Practice for an appointment.

Dolphins Practice and Patient Participation Group

Actively encourage Patients to complete the on line questionnaire providing help and support to those Patients who needed assistance.

Letter

An informative letter was produced to inform Patients what a Patient Reference Group was and what was required of them.

Questionnaire

The Patient Questionnaire was designed to measure Patient satisfaction/experience and to highlight areas where Dolphins Practice can improve.

Questions asked were specifically on areas which were felt to be most important for our Patients and the Practice. The questionnaire contained 33 questions and the results of these questions have been combined to cover the following areas:

Practice Administration – Contact with the Practice and Appointments

Clinical Care – GPs and Nurses

Staff Attitudes – Reception and Administration

Questionnaire Results

In this report you will find the score rated as a percentage of the responses, which enables identification of the perceived strong and weak areas of Practice performance.

The Practice received 128 completed questionnaires and felt that this response, whilst not ideal, was enough to proceed with collating the results.

The results were presented to the Friends of Dolphins Practice for discussion at its meeting on 13th March 2012, and it was felt that overall the responses showed the Practice in a very positive light:

Positive:

- ✚ Staff were welcoming and accommodating
- ✚ Patient experience with GPs and Nurses was excellent
- ✚ Patients were satisfied with service although it was recognised that there were problems with Practice telephone system

Negative:

- ✚ Overwhelming comments regarding the difficulties in getting through to the Practice in order to make an appointment and suggestions that there is need for more lines
- ✚ Patients reported they could not find a parking space and saw the need for more parking spaces

Action Plan

To continue to raise awareness through the Practice Website and through “Healthwise” (the Patient Participation Group Newsletter) of the Dolphins Practice opening times - Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.30pm, the extended hours for pre-bookable appointments provided on a Monday, Tuesday and Friday morning starting at 7.30am which enable Patients, particularly those in Education/Working, to access appointments at an earlier time, and the Saturday surgeries that are available on a fortnightly basis between 9.00am and 10.30am.

The Practice and the Patient Participation Group agree that there is a real issue for Patients when trying to contact the Practice by phone and they will both continue to work together to try to find a better solution. It is felt that some of the problems are due to the growing patient population, with increased demand on the telephone. However, the Practice does offer online booking appointments via its secure website and this should also be promoted. The Patient Participation Group, which is a member of the National Association of Patient Participation Groups, is in dialogue with them to elicit information on United Kingdom best practice for the management of appointments, as this is a problem for Practices nationally.

The Practice will be working with its telephone supplier to endeavour to ensure that it gets the best out of its telephone system, which will hopefully be able to monitor usage and provide information about how quickly the phone is answered, how long patients have to wait before they reach the person they wish to speak to, and how many Patients give up waiting altogether. This information will identify areas where demand is high, causing long waits, and will enable the Practice to try different solutions to see if it can provide a marked improvement for Patients.

The Practice would like to promise Patients that appointments and telephones will always be part of its agenda for improvement as it grows, and any update on improvements that are made will be reported back to Patients via the website and publicised on the Plasma Screen in the reception area for all to view.