

# Water Meadow Surgery

## Patient Survey Report 2016

### PATIENT SURVEY

Once again we run the annual patient survey covering a broad range of areas which include convenience of access (telephone answering, opening times, ability to be seen quickly), patients' experience of the treatment and service they receive (receptionists, doctors, nurses), and any other issues patients wished to comment on, good and bad. This would enable a direct comparison with last year to help gauge whether the practice was improving.

During March, 273 questionnaires were posted to patients. These were chosen from the patients who attended clinics that week to help ensure a broad range of random users of the service. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a pre-paid addressed envelope for patients to return; we received 102 replies i.e. 37% - down from 42% last year.

### WHAT DID THE RESULTS TELL US? *(figures in brackets denote rating for last year)*

#### Telephone Contact

|   |     |       |   |
|---|-----|-------|---|
|  | 78% | (78%) | Satisfaction with ability to get through on the phone |
|  | 93% | (98%) | Receptionists polite and friendly                     |
|  | 91% | (98%) | Receptionists being helpful                           |
|  | 85% | (96%) | Receptionists discrete                                |
|  | 89% | (90%) | The way you were treated by receptionists             |

#### Arriving at the surgery

|   |     |       |   |
|---|-----|-------|---|
|  | 81% | (91%) | Receptionists polite and friendly         |
|  | 82% | (91%) | Receptionists helpful                     |
|  | 79% | (91%) | Receptionists discreet                    |
|  | 89% | (83%) | The way you were treated by receptionists |

#### What does this tell us?

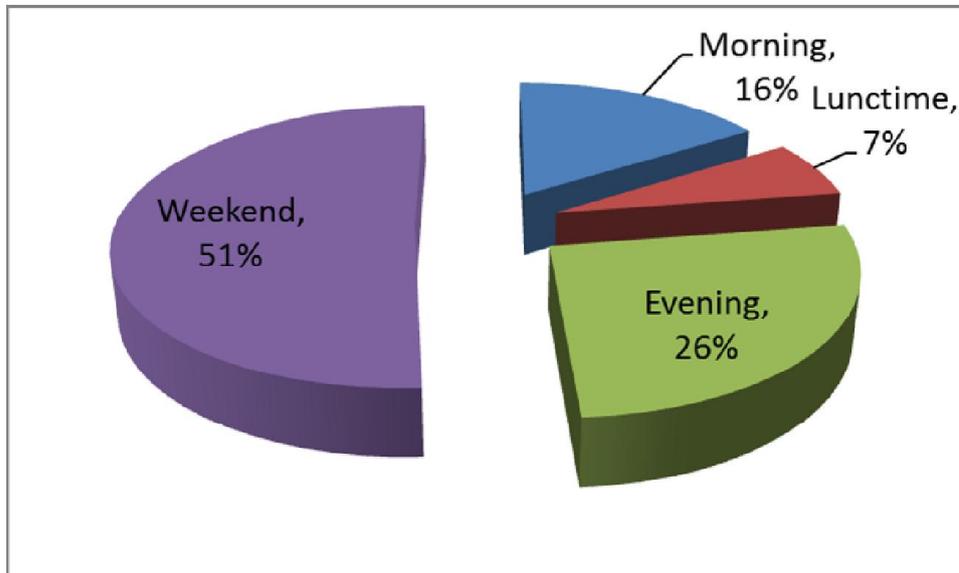
**We have always in the past scored very highly in this area, but clearly there has been a drop in standards as the overall level of satisfaction is at its lowest ever!**

## Opening Hours



80% (79%) Satisfied with opening hours

However, when patients were given an opportunity to say what additional hours the practice should consider opening the following suggestions were received;



### What does this tell us?

Most people are happy with our opening times, but as can be expected, if people are offered more choice they will welcome it. We already offer a pre-bookable Saturday clinic every other week. We also offer evening appointments one evening every other week and some early morning (7am-8am) slots.

## Seeing a doctor or nurse

**70%** Would like to see a doctor of their choice

We have a personal list system so that pre-bookable routine appointments are offered up to 4 weeks in advance with a preferred doctor



**43%** Managed to get an appointment with the doctor of their choice in less than 5 days – this is down from 62% last year

Demand is increasing demand. Patients are on average coming to see their doctor more often. As a consequence, it is more difficult to get an appointment with a preferred doctor – this is something we have been working on. We have employed more doctor sessions, but demand continues to outstrip supply



**78%** Were able to see any doctor in less than 5 days – down from 97%

See above



**87%** Said that if they needed to see a doctor the same day they could - up from 86%

If something is **clinically urgent** we do not turn patients away – Unfortunately more and more patients are using the urgent appointment slots for routine matters. This means that we have to put in place more so called ‘urgent’ appointment slots, which in turn means that it is harder for patients to get a routine appointment



**55%** Were seen within 10 minutes of their appointment time to see the doctor or nurse – up from 53% last year and surprising as waiting times seem to be increasing due to the fact that more patients are coming in with multiple or complex problems

### Consultation

- 90%** Satisfaction score with doctor/nurse questioning
- 92%** Satisfaction score with how well the doctor/nurse listened
- 93%** Satisfaction score with how well the doctor/nurse put them at ease
- 90%** Satisfaction score with the way the doctor/nurse involved them
- 91%** Satisfaction score with the doctor/nurse explanations
- 90%** Satisfaction score with the time the doctor/nurse spent with them
- 91%** Satisfaction score with the doctor/nurse showing caring concern
- 91%** Overall assessment of consultations with doctors/nurses

These figures are roughly the same as last year (<>1%)

### General

- 64 Average age of respondent
- 65% Female respondents
- 35% Male respondents
- 96% Respondents who were white British ethnicity
- 69% Respondents who had travelled to the practice by car
- 83% Satisfaction score with patient information screens

### Summary

We are not perfect and we know it – there is still a lot more to do and one of our priorities is improving our communication with patients. Demand for our service is increasing (as it is in all general practices) – people are attending the doctor more often than they used to; for some this is because they need to see a doctor or nurse; others perhaps could be educated about self-help options available to them to treat themselves, for example, visiting their pharmacy for simple coughs and colds. This will help free up more appointments for those who need them the most.

## WRITTEN COMMENTS

On the whole these have been very positive. It is difficult to summarise all the positive comments, so these are attached for you to read – these go to show that you think we are doing a reasonable job - we hope you will agree with most of them.

However, there are some, not so good, comments – these are also attached. These seem to fall into the following areas;

- Parking
- Waiting times
- Opening hours



**Parking:** We know this is a problem for some patients. We are surrounded by other properties on three sides and the River Chess to our rear, therefore expanding the car park is not an option. The problem is made worse by the fact that visitors to the Job Centre often use our car park as they do not have one of their own for public use. Also, some patients use the opportunity to ‘pop into town’ while visiting the surgery thereby blocking a space for longer than necessary. **What are we supposed to do?**

In addition to this, patients are taking longer when they see a GP. Each appointment slot is 10 minutes, but this is steadily increasing to nearer 15 minutes as patients are coming with more complex or multiple issues. This means that we sometimes get a bottleneck, where many patients are in the waiting room, but the doctor is running late; this in turn means that the car park is blocked for longer - what can we do?

You might say that we should increase the appointment slots to 15 minutes to avoid this problem, but this would in turn mean that we would have to reduce the number of appointments by a third – there is only so much time in a day.

**Waiting times:** The overall score in this area was not brilliant and there are some complaints about the waiting times to see some doctors and nurses. These complaints fall into two categories



- i. those where the patient has arrived for their appointment, but have to wait longer than expected and
- ii. Those where the complaint is in the delay in obtaining an appointment in the first place.

With regard to the first category, this is more often than not due to the fact that the doctors have 10 minute standard appointment slots, but some patients attend with complicated or multiple problems and therefore they run over their allotted time – hopefully this is because the doctor feels they need the time. The consequence of this of course is that the next appointment runs late. If this happens two or three times, it is easy to see how a clinic could be running quite late.

Delays in obtaining appointments to see a preferred doctor or nurse are due to the fact that we have an increasing demand from patients and we are trying to 'fit a quart into a pint pot'. Our doctors and nurses can be booked up to five weeks in advance, however, these appointment slots are very quickly taken so that with some of our doctors you cannot book a routine appointment for perhaps three weeks and sometimes a little longer if that coincides with the doctor being on leave.

We have reduced the delays lately by ensuring that all our doctors have appointments which are released 48 hours in advance. This ensures that the doctors are not totally booked up for weeks in advance. It does mean that patients may be told that pre-bookable appointments are not available for some weeks, but if patients call early they should hopefully be given an appointment within two days, albeit that (like all appointments) these are on a first come first served basis.



**Opening Hours:** For the past six years we have been offering extra hours. Every other Saturday we have a morning clinic – this is not a drop in service, the phones are not switched on and appointments have to be booked in advance. On the weeks when we are not providing a Saturday service we are instead providing two early morning surgeries between 7.00am and 8.00am and an evening surgery between 6.30pm and 8.00pm – once again this is not a drop in service, the phones are not switched on and appointments have to be booked in advance. Details of the dates and times of these clinics can be found on the website.

#### WHAT DO WE CONCLUDE FROM THIS?

We don't always get it right. We do our best and sometimes it seems that this is not good enough. We know this and we want to improve, but we have to accept that we cannot please everyone. Where it is reasonable to do so in terms of availability of staff, premises and cost, we will try and fix things.

However, year on year we are being expected to do more for less and things are getting worse. The NHS has to find £20 billion of savings and we are expected to bear some of that cost; patient demands are increasing and we have to balance the two. The spend on primary care (medical practice) as part of the overall NHS spend has fallen from 11% to less than 8%, which means an increasing amount is being spent on hospital services. This means that the money is not there to do what needs doing i.e. employ more doctors – we have less and less money to work with each year

We have to concentrate on doing what is right – providing patients with what they need not necessarily with what they want. Sometimes these are one and the same, but sometimes, expectations are unreasonable. At the end of the day, patient care is what is most important.

## SUMMARY

Overall the results of the patient survey are a great endorsement. It is good to know that so many of our patients appreciate what we are trying to do for them. However, we do not intend to rest on our laurels and we will keep looking for ways to improve. Sometimes we will not reach the expectations of some of our patients and we hope that this will not be because we have not tried or because our standards are lowered. We want to be the best practice we can, one that we and our patients can be proud of.

### Things people liked

- Doctors
- Staff
- Opening hours
- Friendliness
- Well run
- Waiting room
- Urgent appointment system
- Pharmacy



### Things people did not like

- Getting through on the phone
- Receptionists
- Lack of appointments
- Waiting times
- Opening hours
- Car parking
- Pharmacy opening hours



**93%** would recommend the practice

## PATIENT GROUP

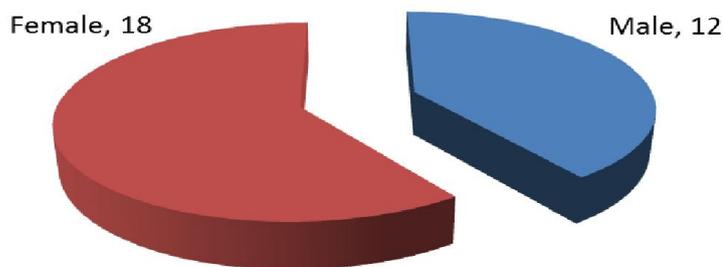
Four years ago we established a Patient Participation Group (PPG). Our purpose in doing so was to ensure that patients have the opportunity to be informed and involved in decisions about the range and quality of services we provide.

We have tried to ensure that the PPG is representative of the practice population, but we are aware that participation in the group is voluntary and therefore we have been reliant on people coming forward to join. In order to recruit to the PPG we;

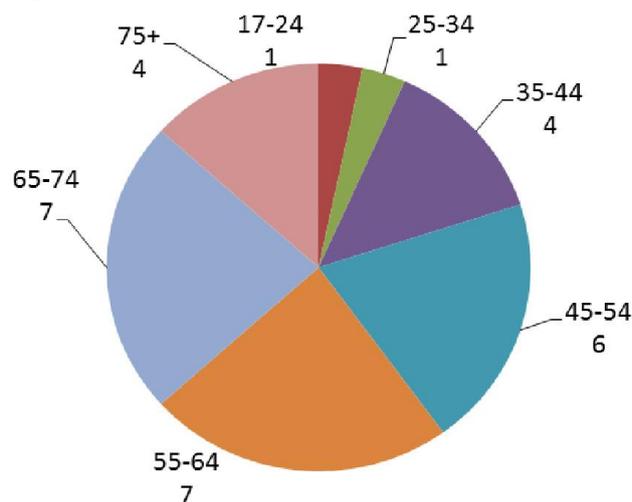
- advertised in the surgery on our two digital (TV) information screens ;
- displayed a leaflet in the waiting area ;
- advertised on our web site and
- pro-actively approached specific groups of patients e.g. ethnic minorities and young mothers, in order to try and have a balanced representation.

We currently have 30 members constituted as follows;

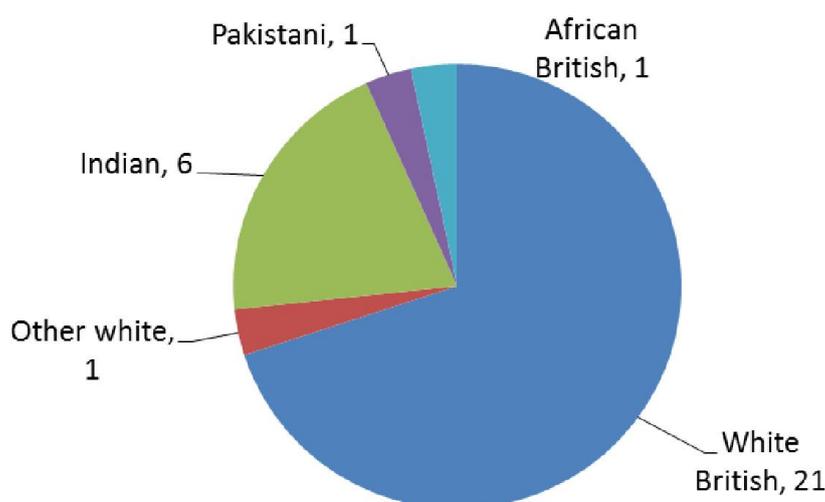
**Gender of group members**



**Age of Group Members**



## Ethnicity of Group Members



**We are still open to new recruits – see our website to join up**

## REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Last year we acknowledged that things were not perfect and we made three commitments

1. Improve the quality and consistency of the messages being given out by the reception team
2. Improve patient communications
3. Provide phlebotomy (blood taking) within the surgery

What have we done?

- Additional staff training for all our staff – however, from the results of this year's survey this appears to be a continuing/worsening problem.
- Re-designed and improved web site – this is now more user friendly and interactive, providing patients with an opportunity to comment on our services through the Friends and Family Test – update health records by providing information regarding such things as smoking and alcohol use – sign up for copies of the newsletter and a special section for carers. And lots more – [www.watermeadowsurgery.co.uk](http://www.watermeadowsurgery.co.uk)
- Published further editions of our patient newsletter
- Employed a phlebotomist – this means that we are now offering blood tests at the surgery