

**Patient Participation Reference Group  
Report 2013 / 14**

The patient participation (reference) group was established in Dec 2011 and the first meeting took place on the 20th Dec 2011.

The members of the group at the time of the December 2011 meeting were Dr Michael Wood, GP partner, Marie Carfoot, practice manager, Michelle Carfoot, reception supervisor and six patients, all of whom were registered with the practice and live in Spennymoor or one of the surrounding villages.

The practice is actively trying to attract patients from all backgrounds by displaying posters inviting patients to join the group in the waiting rooms of the practice, also the Baby Clinic and Ante-Natal clinic within the surgery. We have displayed posters in all of the local chemists and the library in Spennymoor.

To try and reach as many households as possible, a notice was placed in the local news paper "The Northern Echo" in October 2011 and also in the local news letter "Spennymoor News" in February 2012.

Two more patients joined the group in March 2012.

In September 2012 a member of the group approached the local colleges and schools and posters were displayed inviting younger people to join the group.

Seven more patients joined the group in December 2012.

The group meetings are on a quarterly basis.

The profile of the group is as follows:

Female - 16 – 24 yrs – white British – Spennymoor resident - left area in September 2013

Female – 55 – 64 yrs – white & black Caribbean – Spennymoor resident

2 Females – 55 – 64 yrs - white British – Spennymoor resident

Male – 65 - 74 yrs - white British – Kirk Merrington resident

3 Males – 65 – 74 – white British – Spennymoor resident

Female – 65 – 74 yrs - white British – Ferryhill resident

Female – 65 – 74 yrs – white British – Spennymoor resident

Male – 75 – 84 yrs – white British – Spennymoor resident

Female – over 84 yrs - white British – Spennymoor resident

Male - 65 - 74 - white British - Croxdale resident

The group are still actively trying to recruit new members by continuing to display posters in the building in waiting areas and child health clinic and on the practice website.

At the meeting in December 2013 it was agreed by the group for the practice to undertake the patient satisfaction survey early in 2014 and to use the questionnaire used in 2013 (recommended by the DoH) with a question added asking patients if they had access to the internet.

The patient survey took place between the 14th February and the 14th March 2014. Two hundred and fifty randomly selected patients who visited the practice within this period were asked to complete the questionnaire. A total of 250 questionnaires were returned and the responses were collated. It was noted that some patients provided multiple answers, or no answer at all to some questions.

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**Survey Results**

The patient participation (reference) group discussed the survey results for 2013/14 at the meeting on the 25th March 2013.

The action points identified in 2012/2013 were also discussed and the following was noted:

**Improve privacy at reception window**

This point was also an action identified in 2011/2012 and a poster informing patients that they can speak to a receptionist in private is now displayed in a prominent position at the reception window. **Action Completed 2013**

The practice will review current reception procedures and approach the PCT with the possibility of making adjustments to the reception window. **Action Ongoing** - In 2013 the Practice contacted the Estates Dept who manage the building and advised them of the privacy issues at the reception window and they agreed to review this. Due to the changes in the NHS in 2013/14 this action was never completed. A member of the group suggested "privacy cubicles" to separate the two reception windows. The Practice will contact the department again to follow up this item.

All group members agreed that total privacy at the reception window was very difficult to resolve, however it was noted that if a patient needed to discuss a personal issue, they could speak to a receptionist in private.

A member of the group also pointed out that having the TV in the waiting room does help muffle out the conversations at the reception window.

**Reception staff asking questions upon booking appointments**

One issue related to the reception staff is about them asking patients questions, particularly why they need to see a doctor or nurse.

The practice explained that the GPs instruct the reception staff to ask questions to try and sign post patients to the most appropriate service, as it is not always necessary to see a GP. By doing this, the waiting time to see a GP or nurse is reduced.

The practice agreed to review the wording used by the reception staff and to display posters and information leaflets explaining to patients why they ask the questions.

**Action Completed 2013** - it was noted that only one comment had been received regarding this item in this years survey.

**Length of queue at the reception window**

It was noted that the wait at the reception window can be quite long at times and that usually there is only one member of staff "manning" the desk.

The practice agreed to review the current reception procedures.

**Action ongoing** - the staff rotas were reviewed in 2013 and changes made to ensure two receptionists were available to cover at the reception window during busy periods. The practice explained that sometimes during staff leave this may not always be possible but that the rotas are constantly being reviewed.

**Lack of information about the services provided**

Some patients commented on having additional services and extended opening times. The practice informed the group that some of the services mentioned in the survey were already were provided by the practice and that the practice offered appointments from 7.30 am to 7.00 pm on a Monday and up to 7.00 pm on a Thursday. Some of the group pointed out they were not aware that the practice was open at these times.

It was noted by one of the group that the patient information notice board, which has the opening times etc on, is possibly in the wrong place.

The practice agreed to review this and move the notice board to a more prominent position.

**Action completed 2013** - Due to some of the comments received regarding opening hours again in this years survey it was agreed to carry this action over again to 2014

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**Internet Access**

68% of patients surveyed had access to the internet.

**Accessing the surgery by telephone**

It was noted by the group that only 16% of people surveyed found getting through to the practice by telephone very easy, 50% found it fairly easy and 25% found it not very easy.

33% of patients found ordering a repeat prescription by telephone easy, 23% found it fairly easy and 32% said they had never tried. Only 5% found the ordering of prescriptions not easy or difficult.

The Practice had a new telephone system installed in February 2013 that allows patients to leave a voice mail message to order prescriptions and to cancel appointments. It was hoped that this would reduce the demand on the reception at busy times allowing the receptionists to deal with booking appointments and enquiries more quickly.

The group commented on how good the prescription order and collection service the local pharmacies offer so the practice will continue to promote this service.

**Action** - As 68% of patients surveyed had access to the internet and several comments suggested being able to book appointments and order repeat prescriptions online would be helpful, the Practice will review the online services available as it may also help reduce the contacts by telephone.

**Appointments**

66% of patients found it easy or fairly easy to book appointments ahead and 30% found it not very easy or difficult.

27 % of patients surveyed said they could see the GP of their choice within 1-4 working days and 50% had to wait 5 days or more. 13 % of patients surveyed said they had never tried to see a GP of their choice.

40% of patients surveyed said they could be seen the same day if they were willing to see any GP, 18 % could be seen the next day, 32% could be seen within 2-4 days, 7% had to wait 5 days or more, and 8% said they had never tried.

73% of patients said it was easy or fairly easy to see a GP the same day if the problem was urgent.

44% of patients surveyed were seen within 15 minutes of their booked appointment time 42% were seen within 15 - 30 minutes and 19 % said that they had to wait over 30 minutes.

Appointments can be booked by telephone (01388 811455) or in person.

The GPs are usually available on the following days:

Dr M R D Wood – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday

Dr J E Staines – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

Dr K A van den Brul – Monday, Tuesday and Thursday

Dr A N Herd – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday

Dr A J Henderson – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday

Dr S Paul (salaried doctor) – Tuesday and Friday

The Practice appointment system was discussed and it was confirmed that patients could book an appointment up to 3 weeks in advance with a GP of choice and that same day appointments are available for patients who need to be seen urgently. No actions were identified in this area.

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**Surgery Opening Times**

55% of the patients surveyed were very satisfied with the opening times of the surgery and 38% were fairly satisfied. Only 3% were not satisfied at all.

The practice currently advertises the surgery opening times and out of hours arrangements on posters displayed in the surgery, on the practice website and in the practice leaflet.

The information advertised and displayed is:-

Surgery opening times, including the extended surgery times offered by the practice

Monday	7.30 am - 7.00 pm (extended surgery times 7.30 am – 8.00 am & 6.00 pm – 7.00 pm)
Tuesday	8.00 am – 6.00 pm
Wednesday	8.00 am – 6.00 pm
Thursday	8.00 am – 7.00 pm (extended surgery times 6.00 pm – 7.00 pm)
Friday	8.00 am – 7.00 pm

Out of hours arrangements

Between 6.00 pm and 8.00 am Monday – Friday and from 6.00 pm Friday – 8.00 am Monday the Urgent Care Centre at Bishop Auckland Hospital provides emergency cover for the practice. The out of hours service can be contacted by telephoning 111.

**Action** - Several comments received suggested that the surgery is open before 8 am and evenings. As the Practice already is open at this time it was agreed to advertise the opening hours in a local newsletter. The Practice will agree this with the other GP Practices in the town and arrange this.

**How satisfied were you with your last appointment with a doctor at the surgery?**

The following questions were asked:

Did the GP:-

allow you enough time – 76% were very satisfied and 22 % fairly satisfied

ask about your symptoms – 76% were very satisfied and 18 % fairly satisfied

listen to you – 78 % were very satisfied and 16% fairly satisfied

explain about tests & treatments – 72 % were very satisfied and 18% fairly satisfied

involve you in decisions about your care and treatments – 69% were very satisfied and 18% fairly satisfied

treat you with care and respect – 82% were very satisfied and 14% were fairly satisfied

take your problems seriously – 73% were very satisfied and 14% were fairly satisfied

Did you have trust & confidence in the doctor you saw?

79% were very satisfied and 15% fairly satisfied.

Were you happy with the privacy of your conversations with the doctor?

82% were very satisfied and 12% were fairly satisfied.

The results this year for patients being very satisfied with their GP are almost the same as 2012/13.

The practice and the group were very pleased with these results and no actions were identified.

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**Appointments with the Practice Nurse**

43% of the patients surveyed found it very easy to arrange an appointment with the practice nurse and 50% found it fairly easy. Only 2.8% found it not easy at all.

The following questions were also asked.

Did the practice nurse:-

allow you enough time - 70% were very satisfied and 22% were fairly satisfied

ask about your symptoms - 65% were very satisfied and 22% fairly satisfied

listen to you - 67% were very satisfied and 22% fairly satisfied

explained about tests and treatments – 66% very satisfied and 20% fairly satisfied

involved in the decisions about your care – 60% very satisfied and 21% fairly satisfied

treat you with care and respect – 71% were very satisfied and 19% fairly satisfied

took your problems seriously – 68% were very satisfied and 20% fairly satisfied

Did you have trust and confidence in the nurse you saw?

70% were very satisfied and 19% fairly satisfied

Were you happy with the privacy of your conversation with the nurse?

71% were very satisfied, 18% were fairly satisfied and 0.8% were very dissatisfied

The results this year for patients being very satisfied with the care received from the practice nurse has reduced very slightly compared to the 2012/13 results and it was suggested that the retirement of the senior practice nurse in Dec 2013, who had been with the Practice for 25 years, might have had an impact on the results.

Overall, the practice and the group were very pleased with the results.

**Receptionists**

63% of patients surveyed found the receptionists in the practice very helpful and 32% found them fairly helpful.

**Building**

49% of patients surveyed felt that their conversations could be overheard at the reception window but didn't mind, 22% were not happy about this and 11% were aware that the patients could speak to a receptionist in private if necessary.

85% of patients surveyed thought the surgery was very clean and 14% thought it was fairly clean.

63% of patients surveyed thought the waiting room was very comfortable and 27% thought it was fairly comfortable.

66% of patients surveyed thought the signage inside and outside of the building was very clear and 25% thought it to be fairly clear.

**Action** - The problem with confidentiality at the reception desk was noted and the practice will speak to the NHS Property services regarding this.

**Overall Satisfaction**

60% of patients were very satisfied with the service offered by the practice and 39% were fairly satisfied.

The practice and the group were very impressed with this result.

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**Comments and Suggestions**

The group discussed the comments and suggestions from the survey results and the following action points for 2013/2014 agreed:

Improve privacy at reception window

**Action Ongoing from 2013** - In 2013 the Practice contacted the Estates Dept who manage the building and advised them of the privacy issues at the reception window and they agreed to review this. Due to the changes in the NHS in 2013/14 this action was never completed. A member of the group suggested "privacy cubicles" to separate the two reception windows. The Practice will contact the department again to follow up this item.

All group members agreed that total privacy at the reception window was very difficult to resolve, however it was noted that if a patient needed to discuss a personal issue, they could speak to a receptionist in private.

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Car Parking

There were several comments received on the lack of available parking at the Health Centre and members of the group had experienced this problem. A discussion took place and noted that many people use the Health Centre parking when visiting the local shops and leisure centre. The mammography screening van also contributes to the problem but the Practice confirmed that the van is to be removed in the next few weeks. The Practice explained it is very difficult to monitor who uses the parking facilities but will contact NHS Property Services and bring the problem to their attention.

A member of the group suggested that a "community bus service" may help with the car parking issues and would be a great help to patients who rely on family or friends to bring them to the surgery for appointments etc. In other local areas the local council offer a service which collects people from home or on local bus routes and takes them to the local surgeries. The group thought this would be a very good service and agreed to investigate this further. A member of the group will contact the Local Area Action Partnership to see if any funding is available to support this.

Opening Hours

Some patients commented on having additional extended opening times, i.e. early morning and late evening. The practice informed the group the practice offered appointments from 7.30 am to 7.00 pm on a Monday and up to 7.00 pm on a Thursday.

The opening times are currently on display in prominent positions in the waiting areas in the Health Centre, on the practice website and the practice leaflet, but the group thought that patients who do not visit the surgery very often would be aware of this. The Practice agreed to contact the other GP surgeries in Spennymoor with a view to put a joint advert in the local newsletter delivered to every household in the town, giving details of the opening times.

On-line Prescription Ordering and Appointment Booking

68% of patients surveyed had access to the internet and several comments were made about having online access for ordering prescriptions and booking appointments.

The Practice will look at making this service available in the next few months.

The group did raise concerns that people who don't have internet access may not be able to get an appointment by telephone but the Practice assured them that not all appointments would be released to be booked online. It was also felt that the introduction of this service, particularly the ordering of prescriptions, may reduce the demand on the telephone lines and improve telephone access.

**A copy of this report, minutes of the group meetings and of the results of the patient survey are available to view upon application to the practice.**

**A copy of this report will also be sent to the NHS England for information.**

26.3.2014