

The 2014 Survey at Grove Park Terrace Surgery.

Every year we do a survey to get feedback from patients about how they feel about the services at Grove Park Terrace Surgery. Before we do it we talk to patients and the PPG about the sort of areas we should ask about. The survey took place during December 2013 and March 2014

This year we looked at how patients felt about making appointments, getting through on the telephone, the way they were treated by staff at the practice and how much they felt that the doctors responded to the issues that patients presented when they came to see us. This was similar to the questions we asked last year with a few tweaks that we made in relation to the analysis of last years results. These are the questions that we asked

1. How well do you feel you are treated by the reception staff at the practice?
2. How do you rate the hours the practice is open for appointments?
3. How easy do you find it to get routine appointments at the practice?
4. How fast do you get to see your doctor when you arrive?
5. How would you rate your ability to get through to the practice on the phone?
6. How well do you feel you do in getting to see the doctor of your choice?
7. How important is it when you need to speak to a doctor that you can get a call back from them?
8. How well do you think the doctor understood your symptoms and how you were feeling ?
9. Did you feel at ease during your consultation?
10. How much did the doctor involve you in decisions about your care?
11. How did you feel about the amount of time your doctor spent with you today?
12. How was the doctor's patience in relation to your health concerns and worries?
13. Was the doctor able to understand and respond to the issues you visited the surgery to talk about?
14. All things considered how happy are you with the treatment and care you get at the practice?

We asked patients to rate them on five levels, two positive, two negative and one neutral or no opinion.

Last year we installed a new telephone system so we hoped that we would see the effect of that change. We felt it was important to emphasise in our questions the care that patients felt they had from the practice in relation to both administrative staff and clinicians.

Response to the survey was good, patients mostly filling in the surveys while they were in the practice, we produced 100 copies. Out of the 100 that were given out 75 were received and filled in properly, 4 were either completed with multiple boxes ticked in each category, or were incomplete. Reception staff were very active in encouraging patients to complete the survey.

Of the surveys that were completed we found that some patients left some answers blank and that is reflected in the results and percentages. Where the particular row questions were left blank we took this to mean that patients felt neutral concerning that particular question. Next year we will be careful to provide further instructions asking them to fill in all answers to all the questions.

We have split the results into several areas and question responses have been grouped according to kind.

Data concerning reception staff. (Question 1)

98% patients felt that reception staff treated them well, 2% felt neutral about reception.

This is very positive response and reflects the commitment to patient care that reception staff make.

Action and reflections

We are discussing how to maximise the goodwill reflected in the survey in relation to reception staff to further develop our patient relationships. We have a good and responsive team on reception, all of whom are skilled at dealing with patients and promote patient and person centred work. As they are the face of reception, the first people who the patient talks to or sees before they see a clinician, they are our front of house staff and we are proud of this result. We particularly note that there were no adverse comments or scores in relation to reception staff.

Practice opening hours and ease of getting appointments. (Questions 2 and 3)

The practice is open for **52.5** hours a week for patients. We close for lunch only 1 lunchtime each week when we hold our team or other meetings, we have a walk in service on 1 morning a week and have late night opening 1 night a week. We have excess capacity in relation to patient demand most times, and under normal conditions patients can usually see a doctor, though not necessarily of their choice within 2 or three days. We are a teaching practice so we have a turnover of trainee doctors and additionally a very stable clinical staff group consisting of 2 doctors, 2 nurses, and 1 Health Care Assistant. We have dedicated phlebotomy session each Friday morning.

Opening Hours

88% of patients felt that the opening hours were good. 4% were fairly happy with them, 4% didn't have any opinion and 4% said that we needed to improve our opening hours.

Allied to this only 74% felt that it was easy to get routine appointments and 16% felt it was fairly easy, 4% didn't have an opinion, 3% said it was a bit difficult and 3% said it needed improvement.

Out of all the surveys those patients that noted that we needed improvement both commented upon the fact that there were times when they either needed very early appointments or very late ones, that is either before 8 am or after 8pm during the evening.

Action and reflection

Only 3% of patients thought we needed improvement in our opening hours. Although this is a very small percentage, it represents the demand for out of normal hours appointments, and though we do offer late night appointments each week a small proportion of patients would wish this to be extended. The recent developments concerning extending opening hours in the evening and at weekends which has been in the news is on our agenda. We are speaking to other local practices and working with the CCG to explore how on a local level we can extend our services.

Only a very small proportion of patients felt that it was difficult to get routine appointments and this reflects the number of clinicians we have working at the same time, both doctors and nursing staff. No patients felt it was hard to get routine appointments which is very encouraging. It also in many ways reflects the fact that we can usually offer patients an opportunity to see the doctors, particularly, very quickly. Because of this it is logical to assume that in Grove Park Terrace Surgery patients may not feel they have to ask for an emergency, same day appointment and consider that most requests for an appointment are routine. Next year in our survey we will ask a question about access to our emergency appointments in order to clarify this deduction.

Telephone Calls (Question 5)

77% felt they could get through easily to the practice on the telephone, 7% felt it was not so easy, 12% felt neutral about it and 4% said it needed improvement. None of the patients thought that getting through to the practice on the telephone was hard.

Action and reflection.

84% of patients felt positive about getting through to the practice on the telephone, this cumulative score reflects the fact that we have an efficient telephone system, but of course there are times when the demand exceeds our capacity to answer the telephone despite the new system, we still have one receptionist answering. We have little power to manage the demand from patients, and though we can realistically predict it we are not able to control it.

What we can do is to do all we can to answer as promptly as possible and to make our background actions, as far as receptionists are concerned as slick as we can without taking away the personal and patient centred approach that we have. The interesting thing here is that this answer represents the ability of our reception to cope with the demand as presented on a daily basis rather than any fault in our system. It would be difficult to improve this as it would not be possible to justify an additional receptionist. We will continue to monitor our capacity in relation to demand.

Telephone consultations (Question 7)

75% of patients liked the telephone consultations. 12% felt them fairly important 13% felt neutral about them.

Action and reflection.

There is no action here as far as patients are concerned. The popularity of this facility is clear but as availability of our doctor consultations is good the need and therefore perhaps the value our patients put on telephone consultations is less important for them than seeing the doctor face to face. The average time for telephone consultations is about three or four minutes and receptionists are skilled at judging whether or not they can divert face-to-face consultations to the clinicians but for most of the time patients will choose a face to face consultation if possible. There is no action here.

How fast the doctor sees you when you arrive. (Question 4)

92% said it was medium or good. 8% felt neutral about it.

Reflection and Action

We feel this is a good score and as there were no negative comments we will continue what we do in this respect.

Getting to see the doctor of your choice. (Question 6)

83% said they could get to see the doctor of their choice easily, 9% were satisfied, 6% had no views about it, 2% said it was very difficult.

Action and Reflection

There were only 2% of patients that thought getting to see the doctor of choice was bad. This is a very encouraging result particularly as we have a high turnover of our trainee doctors. It reflects our capacity and the expertise of reception staff particularly in accommodating patient need in relation to seeing a doctor of choice. We will continue to monitor this.

Doctors understanding of symptoms (Question 8)

92% of patients gave us a good or very good score in this area, only 2% of responses were adverse and no one thought they were not listened to 6% of patients were neutral about this.

Action and Reflection

We think this is an important achievement for the Practice. On looking at the adverse comments concerning this question, it was clear that the 2% concerned not so much that the doctor did not listen to them but rather that they had attended with multiple conditions whose resolution exceeded the consultation time. Additionally from discussion, because one particular patient, who identified himself, had been dealt with very respectfully by the doctor concerned, It would appear, as it was an emergency appointment, he was disappointed in not seeing a particular doctor. Clearly if a patient presents in an emergency slot we cannot predict which doctor he or she sees.

Did you feel at ease during your consultation (Question 9)

No patients responded by saying they felt either ill at ease or that improvement was needed. 92% of patients felt very at ease during their consultations, 5% felt pretty good about it. 3% felt neutral about it. That is an excellent overall score as no patient felt unhappy about their feelings during the consultation.

Actions and reflections.

A good result in this area no action.

How much did the doctor involve you in decisions about your care? (Question 10)

No negative responses in this area. 87% felt that the doctor involved them in decisions; 4% felt that the doctor somewhat involved them and only 9% felt neutral about it.

Action and reflection

A good response, it means that the clinicians are effective and patient centred in their approach. This will be continued and monitored

The amount of time spent with the doctor (Question 11)

94% felt the time spent with them was good or very good. 6% felt neutral about it and there were no negative comments.

Action and reflection

We feel that this is a reflection of the fact that our consultation times are appropriate and appreciated. During the year we have increased our consultation times to 15 minutes which we feel has worked for patients and is reflected in this result. We will continue with these timings for as long as our balance between demand and capacity allows.

Concerning the doctors patience (Question 12)

88% said that the doctor's patience was very good. 4% felt it was good. 4% were neutral and 4% said it needed improvement. No patients said it was bad.

Action and reflection

This is a good score and reflects what we do. It may be though that we can do a little more research on this and match it to any verbal or written comments made by patients. This is an important area since as a training practice we do monitor our clinicians patient responses very carefully.

Doctor's response to issues. (Question 13)

92% thought that the doctor understood the issues well or very well. 8% felt neutral about this. There were no adverse comments.

Action and reflection

We feel this is a good score and will continue to reinforce our person and patient centred responses to patients. This also reflects the fact that as a training practice we are keen to encourage our trainee doctors to actively engage with patients as a part of their own learning.

How happy are you with your treatment at Grove Park Terrace Surgery (Question 14)

84% said they were very happy with their overall treatment at the practice, 8% were quite happy, 8% felt neutral about it and only 2% were not very happy. No one said the overall treatment was bad.

Action and reflection

We feel this is an excellent score a real reflection of the service we give to patients.

Some of the comments that were made. Names have been left out.

- The staff at Grove Park Terrace Surgery are always friendly and attentive, it is a pleasure for me and my children to attend.

- I'm very happy with the service and the staff are always polite and friendly. Full marks for the phone consultations
- As I work in central London it is sometimes difficult to get suitable appointments. I would really like more late clinics and weekend service if possible. Lovely team easy to communicate.
- My doctor knows me very well so it is easy to get help. Quite often I have more than one issue, usually related, depends on the GP sometimes I feel rushed if it is not a doctor I know.
- Love the Surgery, best we ever had and I am 63! My family have been at the surgery for a number of years and we are always received with courtesy and efficiency. Most everyone is nice and caring. Very Happy with my surgery/practice here.
- Best doctors ever. Wonderful reception team. Friendly caring, can get appointments.
- There is one column missing which should say *excellent*. Your surgery seems a very happy place. All the staff are always friendly and helpful in every way I feel like being part of a big family when I attend. PS every doctor is always very thorough.
- No issues, very straightforward.
- Excellent in all cases.
- The one Dr here I came to see told me I had ten minutes slot and out of the three things which was the most important, they really all were. Feel the one Dr is out of touch. Sometimes with my health problems I need to see my favourite doctor and don't want to see anyone else anymore.
- Always charming receptionists, always helpful and understanding.
- I love this surgery, everyone is good.
- Very good service, excellent GP's. Perfect reception staff. All good, helpful and friendly. Answers are a general average of appointments in the last 6 months Dr A is a great doctor, other GP's I've seen less so. Extremely good practice in everything. I'm impressed –especially as I have seen other not so good surgeries in Croydon. Thank you.
- Bedside manner from Dr B could be better.
- Very Happy with all aspects of care at the practice.

Conclusions and overall Actions taken.

The results of our survey are pleasing and reflect the service we offer to patients. The area most highlighted positively is the reception staff relationships and effectiveness with patients and coming very close the treatment that patients receive from our clinicians. Adverse scores were few and far between and there were only two areas that we were scored bad by 3 patients. Those areas were getting routine appointments and getting to see the doctor of choice. We consider these 'bad' scores inevitable in many ways, getting a perfect score in our survey would be impossible. In relation to the last three bad scores it was easy to ground them because patients had added comments and identified the reason for their scoring. Each of these has been addressed either in relation to a particular identified incident or by examining our practice and have been discussed.

Further action will be to discuss the results of the survey with the staff group as a whole and discuss areas that have been highlighted both positively and adversely.

Dr G Williams and Clive Polles

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