

Dear Ken,

I hope you're well.

Firstly I'd like to thank the group for providing support at the Flu clinic; we really appreciate their help on the day. I'd also like to thank you personally for organising the event in the hall. It was nice to get back to some normality.

I wanted to write to you about the Patient Access Survey (listening survey) from November 2022 onward. We have received a response that we wanted to share with the group.

Four hundred forty-one of our patients took place in the survey. Unfortunately, I cannot share the report as it has identifiable patient data. Still, the area's patients identified as concerns were, I believe, discussed in the last couple of meetings. These were:

1. The wait time is too long on the telephones
2. E-consults are not available over the weekends
3. Wait times too long to see a Clinician
4. I wasn't aware of the practice website
5. Prefer face-to-face appointments

We also received a lot of positive feedback:

1. I got a telephone appointment fairly quickly
2. Occasional long wait in the call queue but generally answered promptly and courteously
3. No complaints. The staff were very diligent
4. Consultation was thorough and caring. Concerns addressed sympathetically

Addressing the areas of concern, we have made the following changes:

We recognised the wait on the telephone was long at times; this was unavoidable due to patient demand and the sheer volume of calls we were receiving first thing and ongoing during the survey period. We shortened the telephone message as this delayed patients getting through, although we still have a welcome message delivered by Dr Foster. We increased staff answering the telephones at peak times. We have a call board, which my Office Manager monitors to identify the call traffic and can allow for extra staff to answer at busy times.

We also changed the appointment system, and now all appointments default to face-to-face unless the patient wishes to discuss the problem over the telephone. We have staggered our appointments to release, 3,7,14 and 28 days, so we try not to ask patients to phone back first thing in the morning. The girls signpost patients to 7-day, Pharmacist, NHS111, Walk in Litherland, Minor injuries at Ormskirk. We do this to free up capacity and be available for those needing to see a GP.

Regarding E-consults, the volume received has to be managed safely; therefore, we do reach a point in the day when we have to switch them off due to capacity. A Clinician monitors and responds to these during the day, but it does take them away from seeing face-to-face patients on the day. We are due to have PATCHS, our new online tool that is replacing E-consults and will be much more user-friendly for patients and Clinician/Admin staff and can signpost patients on entry of their symptoms. This is being released in January and supported by iMerseyside.

The Practice Newsletter has been well received, and we have seen an increase in Facebook followers and Website traffic. I regularly post patient information on both these platforms to keep patients updated on available services. I will also put posters in the waiting room promoting this.

We are also changing our telephone system to cloud-based in December – January 2023. Doing this will improve patients' experience when contacting the Surgery. The system will allow us to identify patients on the GSF register and supersede their call to the Receptionist. Patients can see our telephone number rather than the No Caller ID. We can allow for remote working, which will help if we are experiencing a staff shortage. Users will get their own line to dial out and unlimited patient call queuing inbound lines.

Our new consulting rooms are near completion, allowing us additional capacity for Clinicians to work from. We are looking at getting a GP Assistant and an experienced Care Coordinator. This will support the team moving forward.

I wondered if you could share this with the group and allow for feedback on their concerns and ideas for improvement.

Kind regards,

Sarah.