

2014 - Our Action Plan – Queens Park Group Surgery

It was agreed that the most dissatisfaction from patients was obtaining appointments and therefore this was given priority in our Action Plan. We were already operating an Access Action Plan and one of the actions is that patients are allowed to book ahead as far as they require. However, this has resulted in them forgetting their appointments and not attending.

We have changed our opening hours. We now open over lunch time at Queens Park and we also open two Saturday mornings per month for booked appointments. These Saturdays are not necessarily every other Saturday. We tend to work around the Medical Institute GP lectures on a Saturday morning so that the GPs still have the opportunity to attend these.

The main actions were:

Tackle our non attenders rate to enable to free up appointments.

Although we have been writing to non-attenders once they DNA three times, we now use SMS texting so that patients can be reminded of their appointment. They are also texted when they DNA an appointment.

Non-attenders are sometimes telephoned after each session to ask them why they did not attend and this is recorded on their record.

We have obtained OAK monitoring software to enable us to establish what our peak incoming telephone call times are. Extra capacity has been put on reception when the phones go through in the morning so that there is a member of staff concentrating on patients at the desk and the other receptionists can deal with phone calls.

To aid patients to book appointments more easily we have purchased the Patient Partner software. This enables patients to book, check or cancel an appointment directly onto to SystmOne on their telephone key pad. This gives patients another route to book an appointment and is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week so patient do not have to wait until 8.00 a.m. in the morning to book an appointment. Patients can specify which GP they require, which site and the system finds the next available appointment for them.

The areas where we could not achieve what the PRG wanted were:

Having gaps between appointments. It was suggested that we have gaps between appointments so that patients do not have to wait but this is impractical as we would provide less appointments.

It was also suggested that we use the EasyJet booking system and overbook but this was rejected as if all patients did attend the surgery would be running even later and patients having to wait even longer. We do indeed use this if we are sending out

appointments for annual checks, smears etc because we know by experience that not all of these will attend.

Provide more emergency appointments. At present, all emergencies are seen on the same day. We have put up some posters in the surgery with an explanation of minor illnesses endeavouring to educate patients what is an emergency. Also, what to keep in their medicine cabinet at home.

The progress made with the action plan

The summary of the progress as of March 2014 is:

The Action Plan that was agreed and how it was agreed

In order to develop the action plan the practice met to discuss this on 13th February 2014. From the information in previous national surveys and from feedback from our PPG and PRG the practice discussed how best we could use the information to aid the practice. It was agreed that the most dissatisfaction from patients was obtaining appointments and therefore this was given priority in our Action Plan. The comments in the surveys were discussed. It was encouraging that there were many positive comments.

Comments

Been happy with this practice at Queens Park and Riverfield Drive.
Excellent place – very clean and organized. Well done.
I think overall it's a great surgery and doctors are great. The receptionists are very good and caring and try to find an appointment every time. Thank you receptionists.
I am generally happy with the care that I receive from the practice.
I have been with this practice since 1937 and have a great respect for all of them from Dr Boyde to the present.

However, 10% of responders rated us poor or inadequate and we felt it important to endeavour to understand why. Unfortunately not all of them put comments to explain why they had scored us low. When discussing the comments we did have, we were still left with questions, for instance, when a patient says that all appointments are fully booked for the next week, could that be with a specific doctor? We will ask the opinion of the PPG when developing our next questionnaire how we can best deal with this.

Comments

You have to wait for appointments for long time, by that time sometimes you start getting better or it is too late.
The booking system has improved. But it is still difficult to get an appointment within an acceptable time.
Appointments are fully booked for the next week.

Trying to make an appointment on the day always proves to be a challenge even when calling at 8.00 a.m. with appointments generally already having been taken and no more being available. There is too long a wait for appointments which are not the same day.

We were already operating an Access Action Plan and one of the actions is that patients are allowed to book ahead as far as they require. However, this has resulted in them forgetting their appointments and not attending. The practice uses the texting facility so that patients can be reminded of their appointment.

In order to get comments from the PRG on the draft Action Plan we:

Emailed the group

Published the report on our website

Met with the PPG group in October 2013 and February 2014.

We agreed the action plan with the group on 13th February 2014

The main actions were:

Tackle our non attenders rate to enable to free up appointments.

Consider our opening times.

How to improve access.

The progress made with the action plan

The summary of the progress as of March 2014 is:

You said

Appointment availability

We did

Plan how to tackle our non attender rate

The results are:

We are continuing to inform patients of our non attender rate weekly and, wherever possible, the impact on the practice and patients is explained to them, for instance if patients do not attend or book more than one appointment and do not cancel the latter one. Some patients also book several appointments for other members of their family or community and it has been noted that often these patients do not attend. It was requested at our PPG meeting that leaders of the community will speak in the Mosque to explain the impact on the availability of our appointments

We have put larger and more posters up in the surgery and we will continue to write to those patients that do not attend for a concurrent three appointments. We also write to all patients that have booked through Patient Partner directly with an explanation that appointments can also be cancelled or checked in the same manner. Sadly it is often the same patients that frequently do not attend. We have also started to include a paragraph in these letters saying that if this behavior continues they will be invited into the practice to discuss the problem. There will also be a feature once again in the next

PPG newsletter. The posters do provide a talking point at the surgery but it tends to be from our compliant patients that are surprised that so many appointments are unattended.

It was the intention last year that, after each surgery, all non attenders would be telephoned. This does not happen after every surgery due to time constraints but it does still happen from time to time. The approach used is “You did not attend for your appointment at the surgery today, are you OK?” The feedback has been very interesting, from the very apologetic to annoyance. We will persevere as much as possible to endeavour to get our message across that these wasted appointments are a waste of resource and unfair on other patients who are not always able to obtain the appointment of their choice because of the DNAd appointments.

You said

Improve access

We did

Opened at lunch time and provided a Saturday morning surgery. Provided a new system, Patient Partner, so that there is another method of accessing our appointment system. Telephone appointments. Increased the sessions of our Minor Illness Practitioner

Opening Hours

Opened at lunchtime and provided a bi-monthly Saturday morning surgery.

Patient Partner

The practice invested in a new system called Patient Partner where patients can book, cancel or check an appointment from their telephone key pad. Patients can also book via telephone, in person or by the website but this gives patients another option and they can choose the slot and GP they require, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.

Telephone Appointments

If there are no appointments left on the day of the patient telephoning, these patients are given a telephone slot. These are shared out between all GPs on duty. The GP will then decide whether that patient needs to be seen on that day or to make an appointment for another time. We are using the advanced access system, always endeavouring to deal with today’s work today.

Minor Illness Practitioner

Our Minor Illness Practitioner also has increased her sessions to 7 per week. She has also just qualified as a Minor Injuries Practitioner and we are hoping this will enable her

to prevent avoidable A&E attendances. By increasing her capacity we have been able to free up more GP slots.

You said

Consider our opening times

We did

Discussed and agreed to maintain current hours. Please note we have recently changed our hours so that we are open at lunchtime at Queens Park and by providing a bi-monthly Saturday morning booked surgery.

Confirmation of our opening times

Although the majority of our patients were happy with our opening times there were those that suggested a change in times. At present we operate a full 9.00 a.m. – 6.30 p.m. service on both sites and offer extended hours of late evenings three times a week with the last appointment at 7.40 p.m.

Recent changes to our opening hours have been to open during lunch hour at Queens Park Surgery and we also introduced a Saturday morning booked surgery twice a month.

As a result of the survey we have not changed our opening times but we have decided to maintain the enhanced extended hours. They are:

Queens Park opens five/six days a week. The premises are open from 8.00 to 6.30 p.m Tuesday and Thursday and until 8.00 pm (last appointment at 7.40 pm) on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. A Saturday morning booked surgery operates twice a month. The surgery is closed on Sundays and Bank Holidays. There are GP and Nurse sessions every day at both Queens Park and Honeysuckle Way.

The appointment times at Queens Park are as follows:

Morning	Monday to Friday	9.00 am to 11.30 am
	Saturday (bi-monthly)	9.30 am to 11.30 am
Afternoon	Monday to Friday	2.00 pm to 4.30 pm
Evening	Tuesday and Thursday	4.30 pm to 6.20 pm
	Monday, Wed, Friday	5.00 pm to 7.40 pm

NB: We are open during lunch time at Queens Park Surgery.

The session times at Honeysuckle Way are as follows:

Morning	Monday to Friday	9.00 am to 11.30 am
Afternoon	Monday, Wed, Thursday	3.30 pm to 5.30 pm
Evening	Tuesday and Friday	4.30 pm to 6.20 pm

NB: The surgery at our branch surgery Honeysuckle Way is closed between 1pm and 2pm Monday to Friday.

For out of hours service please call 01234-351661. The calls are then passed on to the out of hours service BEDOC. BEDOC is a GP led service and works under a contract from NHS Bedfordshire.

For dental problems please call 01234-310210 if you are not registered with a dentist.

Please ring the surgery number 351661; a recorded message will give you the telephone number of the duty doctor (have a pen and paper ready). PLEASE LISTEN TO THE ENTIRE MESSAGE – it will be repeated. There is always a doctor on call for urgent advice and consultation.