

Follow up to GP patient experience report

Why are we publishing this report?

In February 2017, we published the results of our project that looked at the non-clinical patient experience at GP practices. We wanted to follow up on that project to find out what difference what we said had made.

What did we do?

In October 2016, 10 Healthwatch Bucks volunteers:

- visited 47 individual GP surgery waiting rooms
- Viewed 55 GP surgery/practice websites and
- Called 61 GP surgery/practice when we knew they were closed to hear their out of hours message.

The aim was to understand what information was provided. We looked for good practice and to identify opportunities for low cost improvements to the patient experience.

When the summary report was published, we wrote to each GP surgery/practice with a full breakdown of our findings and provided a “**Good Practice Checklist**” for surgeries/practices (reproduced at **Appendix A**). We asked each surgery/practice to let us know what actions they would be taking to improve their information and this report summarises that.

What did we discover?

Overall

We had replies from 26 practices/surgeries. Many replies gave us further information about the actions they had taken as a result of our recommendations. In summary:

- 15 said that they had made changes or planned to take action as a result of our findings
- 12 noted that they would be using our good practice guide
- 12 said that they had involved or would be discussing the results with their Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) and
- 6 disagreed with elements of our findings or our approach.

What practices said they have done

The majority of practices that replied (15/26) provided more details of the changes they had made or actions they had taken. These included:

- improving the telephone answering messages and increasing the amount of information available on website
- making information clearer
- having a new website and
- making changes to the waiting room and telephone systems

Other specific actions we were told about included:

- in one practice reception staff sat in reception for 10 minutes to get an insight into the patient experience. Every 6 months reception staff will complete the survey to make sure standards are either maintained or improved
- another practice plans to review patient notices and review the practice website for ease of navigation. The PPG (Patient Participation Group) has been asked to test out the website for ease of use from a patient perspective
- an IT (Information Technology) expert who would be on hand at the next PPG meeting to discuss ideas and actions where possible
- a practice created a number of posters to explain to patients about services offered including an extended hours service, a text messaging service and information on how to join the practice's patient participation group. These were displayed on the main door and two areas of the waiting room to ensure they were prominent to patients
- a practice making changes to ensure that patients know that they can speak confidentially to a member of staff and updating their website with details of how patients can access their medical records and
- reviewing uniforms for reception and administration staff.

Response to those who disagreed with our findings

Some practices disagreed with our findings and our approach. We were pleased to get feedback on our approach and will look to build that into any similar project in the future.

The findings reflected a snapshot of what our volunteers saw on the day. We provided each practice with individual feedback, which was not made public. We hope that although some practices disagreed with specific findings that the reports combined with our good practice checklist have helped improve patient experience in Buckinghamshire as illustrated above.

Our recommendations

We welcome the positive response made by so many of the practices to our report.

We would encourage all practices to continue to use the “**Good Practice Checklist**” (Appendix A) and to work with their PPGs to help identify what patients would find most helpful and convenient and where improvements can be made to the patient experience.

What are we doing to ensure these are delivered?

We will continue to collect patient feedback and support the work of the CCGs, practices and PPGs to help improve the patient experience.

Appendix A - Patient Information Good Practice Checklist

General

- Noticeboards should be labelled and group related information
- Add a posted, removal or review date to posters and information
- Staff should be easily identifiable whether by ID badge or uniform

Accessibility

Ensure that information about the following is displayed in a location so that it is obvious to patients:

- “in appointment” chaperones
- “in appointment” translation/signing services
- alternative formats, such as braille, ‘easy to read’ and different languages
- availability of hearing (inductive) loops

Service Information

Ensure that information about the following is displayed in a location so that it is obvious to patients:

- the Out of Hours Service (around the entrance so that it is visible out of hours)
- repeat prescription service
- how to obtain blood test results
- how to get access to medical records
- surgery opening hours (so it is visible at all times from outside the surgery)

Patient Involvement

Ensure that information about the following is displayed in a location so that it is obvious to patients:

- the complaints procedure
- surgery/practice Patient Participation Group
- patient satisfaction/feedback surveys or forms
- surgery/practice performance or patient satisfaction