**Patient survey on Oakenhurst Medical Practice Surgery Opening Times**

April 2018/ Dr J Gavan

**Introduction**

The practice analysed the results of the most recent 2016/17 National Patient Survey. The practice consistently achieved higher than the national average and local, patient satisfaction feedback across all the measured parameters. The one area where we were slightly below the local average, but above the national average was around the surgery opening times.

At Barbara Castle Way Health Centre (BCW HC), we are open from 8am-6.30pm daily and offer extended hours till 9pm on a Wednesday.

At Mellor Branch Surgery we aim to be open from 8.30am – 5pm on Monday, 08.30-13.00 Wednesday and 8.30am – 16.30 Friday. Closed Tuesdays and Thursdays.

**Method**

40 questionnaires were handed out in the surgery waiting area at Barbara Castle Way over a 6-month period.

Initially we left the questionnaires in the waiting area but very few were completed. We therefore asked our two medical students assigned to the practice, to hand out the questionnaires to patients and collect them on completion. This was much more successful and we shall continue with this method in future.

**Results**

All 40 questionnaires were completed. The results were collated, including any comments made.

**Are you happy with the present opening times at BCW HC?**

Yes - 32 (80%)

No - 7 (17.5%)

No comment – 1 (2.5%)

Comments made;

* Saturday opening – 4 (10%)
* More appointments –2 (5%)
* Open at weekends – 1 (2.5%)

**Are you happy with the present opening times at Mellor Branch Surgery?**

Yes - 20 (50%)

No - 9 (22.5%)

No comment – 11 (27.5%)

Comments;

* Open more days – 3 (7.5%)
* Longer opening hours – 1 (2.5%)
* Regular opening hours – 1 (2.5%)
* More practice nurse appointments – 1 (2.5%)

**Would you be interested in a regular early morning surgery at Mellor starting at 7.30am?**

Yes - 19 (47.5%)

No - 14 (35%)

No comment – 7 (17.5%)

**Do you think we should offer some surgeries with 15minute appointments instead of the present 10minute appointments?**

Yes - 30 (75%)

No - 8 (20%)

No comment - 2 (5%)

**Did you know that it is possible to be seen later in the evening and at weekends in a service run by all the practices in Blackburn and Darwen based in different health centres in the town?**

Yes - 17 (42.5%)

No - 22 (55%)

No comment - 1 (2.5%)

**At the weekends this service is going to offer practice nurse appointments. Would you be interested in using this service?**

Yes - 32 (80%)

No - 7 (17.5%)

No comment - 1 (2.5%)

**Please add any further comments about the practice opening hours and surgery times**

**Opening Hours**

* More appointments after 6pm for working families
* More 7.30am appointments please
* Would be good to have a weekend service in the surgery
* I was not aware the practice was open late on a Wednesday evening
* Please to know about the weekend appointments

**Appointments**

* Please deal with everything in one appointment as it is difficult to make further appointments due to work
* Opening times is a not a problem, it is getting an appointment as you have to ring on the day and I cannot always do that
* When ring for an appointment have to ring very early at 8.30am and I am busy

**Mellor Surgery**

* Please reopen soon
* More efficient receptionists at Mellor

**General Comments**

* Overall, I am very happy with the practice
* No problems at all
* The doctors do their job very well and efficiently – thank you

**Discussion**

The results confirm that most patients are happy with the present surgery opening hours. Yet, there are a number of areas where we can improve.

A few people commented that they would like the surgery to be open at weekends. As a practice this is not possible due to a lack of funding. However, a service has been organised by our Local Primary Care organisation which all the practices within Blackburn with Darwen are members. Our patients have access to this service for practice nurse appointments, including smears and for more urgent medical problems a GP service is also available.

There is a general acceptance that GP surgery times should increase to 15minutes. However, this would be at the cost of fewer overall appointments. This is something that the GP’s need to look at and possibly trial at some stage in the future.

Mellor Branch Surgery has been closed for the past 6 months due to refurbishment. Prior to the closure, the opening times were erratic due to problems with staffing and occasionally a shortage of doctors. This has caused upset for the residents of Mellor. I think this is why a significant minority of patients were not happy with the Mellor opening times.

With the reopening of Mellor within the next few weeks, we need to listen to the comments made in the survey and offer a more stable timetable. With this in mind we are proposing to open all day Monday and Friday and Wednesday morning. The surgery will be staffed by one member of staff on a regular basis, in order to offer continuity. The surgery will not be open as many hours as before, but by slightly reducing the hours offered, we can give a more consistent regular service.

We are also proposing to offer an early morning surgery at Mellor starting at 7.30am on the second and fourth Mondays of the month, to cater for patients who commute to work. This will be on a trial basis for 6 months after which we will ask for feedback and reflect upon the response to the early start surgery.

**Summary**

The survey results are positive but there are areas which we need to reflect upon. There is a lack of knowledge within our patient population about the range of appointments that are available. Hopefully by publishing this survey on our website and displaying the results within the waiting rooms we can inform our patients about the GP evening and weekend appointments and weekend practice nurse appointments.

We also need to continue to encourage our practice population to register online in order to book appointments online and order repeat medication. In addition, there is a wealth of information about the practice on our website which is easy to access.