



THE GLEN MEDICAL GROUP

Patient Participation Annual Report March 2013

INTRODUCTION

The history of our Patient Reference Group (previously called the patient forum) is documented in the report published 11/12. Since 2008 we have continued to recruit and develop. This year we have welcomed 3 new members. The aim of our group continues to be to:

- Share ideas for Practice development with our patients
- Discuss current topics within General Practice
- Assist at Practice open days/Patient Meetings
- Assist in resolving any practice problems

Agreement of Priorities

A Meeting was held with our Patient Reference Group (PRG) on 4th October 2012 (*see copy of minutes on website*). It was agreed with the group that although we made significant changes last year, i.e. changing system to provide appointments opening on the day there still seems to be issues around our access, in particular telephone access and appointments for working people. The general views from the PRG were that access seemed to be more difficult, particularly early morning telephone access.

It was noted however that there had been a technical fault identified with the telephone lines coming into the practice. The practice had been unaware of this for sometime as the phone lines are part of the PCT network. This has now been rectified and is being closely monitored by both the practice and the telephony department.

Members of the PRG discussed the queuing system on the phones and although they accept that we require some sort of system to deal with the volume of calls they felt the length of time waiting is sometimes unacceptable particularly at 8.30am and once you have waited in a queue it was not then acceptable to be asked to hold after a receptionist answers the phone. The difficulty in getting through on the prescription line was also mentioned. As we do not have the staff to extend the hours at the moment we are looking at other ways for patients to order their prescription. One of our group members volunteered to trial ordering his prescription via Emis Access so we can be sure it works before rolling out to all patients.

There was lots of discussion around availability of appointments for working people and how the system seemed to favour those patients who are either retired or unemployed. The group felt patients who are employed in 9 to 5 jobs

are at a disadvantage when it comes to making appointments. They are usually on their way to work at 8.30 and if they are able to ring from work they do not necessarily need to come down that day, but also do not wish to wait 2 weeks for next routine appointment. The overall feeling was that we have very good provision of appointments for the same day or pre booking an appointment for 2 weeks ahead, but a shortage of appointments in between.

We agreed the main points the PRG would like to see on the wider patient population survey would be

1. Telephone Access
2. Ordering Prescriptions
3. Routine appointments
4. Reception staff

We worked with our PRG to produce a survey, sending them draft copies and taking on board their suggestions on questions and layout etc. When the final survey was agreed 500 copies were distributed to a random cross section of our patients in January 2013.

Survey Results

A copy of the full survey results can be found on the practice website. The results of the survey were collated and emailed to all members of the PRG in advance of our meeting on 14th March 2013.

The overall results of our survey were quite pleasing. Reception in particular scored very highly 97% very or fairly helpful with a total of only one or two negative comments.

Areas of concern were as we suspected early morning telephone access; although again our scoring for telephone access was quite high, 84% of patients found it very or fairly easy to get through. Taking note of the comments made on the survey and in light of the discussions with our PRG this is an area we aim to improve.

Routine appointments, also quite a good score 80% of patients felt it was very or fairly easy to get a routine appointment. Again we looked at the comments made on the survey and as discussed with the PRG it was particularly comments made by employed patients that we plan to try and address in the near future.

Other areas of concern from the wider patients surveyed were once again the car park, which has been an ongoing issue and as discussed and documented at previous PRG meetings is really out of our hands as the access was agreed between the landlord and the council.

ACTION PLAN

Priority Areas

Our PRG meeting to discuss the results was held on 14th March 2014 [link to minutes](#). Although we are pleased with the overall scores, we felt it was important to take note of some of the comments which reinforced some of the earlier discussions with the PRG. As a group we feel the priority areas for the practice to improve are

Early morning telephone access

Ordering of Prescriptions

Routine appointments

Implementation of the Action Plan

Routine Appointments

As a result of our Practice survey and following discussions with our PRG the practice has now rearranged how our appointments are made available. We still offer two thirds of our appointments as pre bookable available up to 4 weeks in advance but we have now taken the decision to release the other third of appointments 48hours prior. These appointments will be released at 8.30am and 1pm, hopefully easing the pressure to phone at 8.30am on the day. Patients who need to be seen on the day can still access a GP through the telephone triage system, which we feel is a good service meaning anyone who feels they are unwell has access to speak to a clinician usually within 2 hours of calling the Practice. A couple of our GPs are considering altering the times of their afternoon surgeries to accommodate the patients who require later appointment.

On reflection the Practice and the PRG are in agreement that previous changes to the appointment system seemed to have had a negative effect on our access especially for those who work. We hope the above changes will improve this access.

Prescription Line

At present our prescription line is open from 10 – 11am daily. Some of the comments in the survey and discussions with the PRG have showed this to be problematic, again particularly for working people. There is the option to drop your prescription in the post box, order in person or request by email. With the help of one of our members of the PRG we have trialled the ordering of prescriptions via Emis Access which some patients have, for sometime used to book appointments. This does involve patients coming into the surgery to register and obtain a password. In April we plan to have a further promotion to inform all patients of this service. A couple of members from our patient group have very kindly offered their services to come along and help show patients how to use this system. As part of our recent staff restructure we also now hope to be able to extend the times we open our telephone line for ordering prescriptions, the suggestion from the group is as late in the day as possible possibly 4.30-5.30pm.

Telephone Access

We have already implemented a staff log in log out system on the telephones which means although there is still a queuing system for busy periods the number of lines coming in should always match the number of staff to answer the call therefore eliminating the need to put anyone on hold once they are through to a member of staff, unless of course they need to be put through to another area or have a query answered. Again we have more staff logging in to answer calls between 8.30 and 9.30 which is when the most calls come through. We plan to relocate our incoming telephones from the back reception office to upstairs, we feel the benefits of this will increase confidentiality and it will also enable management to monitor busy times more closely and any identify problems with telephone access quickly. As also discussed with our PRG it is sometimes difficult for the staff answering the calls in the office to go out and help at the desk when it is busy. The plan is to have a support receptionist doing admin work in the office which can be left to help at the desk when it is busy. We have already started planning this new rota and hope to have it up and running during April/May.

Car Park

On further discussions with the landlords they are looking into the costing of a second barrier to allow patient access to the front section of the car park. We will keep patients informed of their decision.

PUBLICISING INFORMATION

We plan to publicise this report on our Practice website along with the full results of the survey and minutes from our Patient Reference Group meetings. We will also highlight the changes we have made and all the information required for our patients to access these services via our

Practice Leaflet

Quarterly Newsletter

Practice Website

NHS Choices Website

Patient call in screen in waiting room

Poster in waiting room

A Note from The Glen Medical Group

Finally the new management team would like to thank our Patient Reference Group for their help and support to produce the survey this year and for their time and ideas to help implement what will hopefully be an improvement to our service.