

Kintbury & Woolton Hill Surgeries 2022 Patient Survey Overview

Questionnaires were emailed out to 330 randomly selected patients totalling over 3% of our registered patients. Questionnaires were also available for collection from the surgery Reception desks at both Kintbury and Woolton Hill. Included with the questionnaire was a separate document providing information on some of the new services recently introduced at the Practice.

New working Practices and new ways of accessing appointments had been quickly introduced by the Practice in response to the Covid pandemic. The Patient survey was aimed at gaining feedback on these changes and finding out how our patients would like to access our services in the future. The survey also sought to establish whether our patients were aware of the range of new Primary Care Network supported services available to them and to gain feedback on the benefits of these new services.

Given the number of questionnaires sent out by email, and the availability of paper versions of the questionnaires at each surgery over a 4-week period, it was rather disappointing to only receive 65 responses (this figure included one returned questionnaire where the patient declined to respond to the questions asked). It is difficult to gauge why so few responses were received from patients that had the questionnaire emailed to them (just 19 responses from this group). It is quite possible, given peoples concerns over computer viruses, that patients were just wary of opening the email, although the email advised patients that they could verify that the email was genuine by contacting the surgery. In future we could perhaps advertise the fact that we would be emailing questionnaires out to patients a week or two before we send them out. For future surveys we also need to consider how we can increase the number of responses from patients aged under 55. In this survey, responses from patients aged under 55 amounted to less than 19% of the total returned. Pleasingly the percentage of responses from patients at each surgery very closely matched the percentage of patients registered at each surgery site.

The results of the survey are set out in full in the accompanying document. However, I believe that it may be of benefit to highlight and comment on several of the main issues and findings from the survey.

With the onset of Covid the NHS had to make changes to the way it worked in order to operate safely whilst still providing patients with access to medical services. For GP Practices this meant moving to an initial telephone triage service for GP appointments to assess whether the patient needed to come in for face-to-face appointment and also utilising text and email to liaise with patients. As Covid restrictions eased, the Practice began to offer more pre-bookable GP appointments whilst still providing a telephone triage service for 'on the day' medical issues. It is pleasing to note that patients are generally in favour of this mix of appointments with 95% of respondents saying that they would like to see the Practice continue providing the mix of 'on the day' and 'pre-bookable' appointments.

During Covid, the Practice introduced a text messaging service to advise patients when their medication was ready. This service has proved to be extremely popular with patients (98% reporting

that they found this service to be beneficial) and has had the added bonus of reducing the number of telephone calls to the surgery.

Our GPs now frequently use texts to provide patients with advice on how to manage medical conditions such as high cholesterol. Once again this has been popular with the majority of patients as it can often mean that patients do not need to book and attend follow up appointments with their GP. Clearly some patients will prefer to discuss their results with a GP and the Practice still provides those patients with the opportunity to arrange a face-to-face, or telephone appointment with their GP.

The option for patients to be able to send photos of medical problems such as rashes and other skin problems to their GP via a text has not been quite as popular. However, 63% of respondents did find this option to be helpful. The main concerns with this service might well be due to issues with the technology, with Practice staff quite often fielding calls from patients who have not been able to attach photos via the text link provided.

The Practice has continued to provide access to both GPs and Nurses outside of our core opening hours. Our Practice works with the two other Practices in our Primary Care Network (Lambourn and Hungerford) to provide access on each weekday evening and on every Saturday morning. In terms of Kintbury and Woolton Hill, this means that we provide surgeries on two evenings each week (Mon to Thurs) between 18:30 and 20:00 (Mon and Weds one week followed by Tues and Thurs evening the following week) and a Saturday morning surgery (including a Phlebotomy clinic) every other Saturday. In addition, the Practice provides an evening telephone surgery on a number of Fridays throughout the year. The survey results indicate that 91% of patients feel that the extended opening times meet their needs, with a slightly lower figure of 88%, reporting that the range of services on offer meets their medical needs.

In terms of the new clinical services introduced at the Practice, we clearly have work to do to increase awareness and benefits of the new services on offer. Hopefully the information sheet provided with the survey form will help in this process.

At the time that the survey was undertaken just 33% of respondents were aware that the Practice now offers appointments on Weds, Thurs and Fri with a diagnostic physiotherapist. All of these appointments are directly pre-bookable with waiting times of usually no more than a week for an appointment. 70% of patients that were aware of this service felt that it was a useful, or very useful clinical service for patients. Anecdotally, patients that have had appointments with our diagnostic physiotherapist (Dr Toks Aluko) have been extremely positive about the benefits of the service and the speed at which their problems are diagnosed and addressed.

Awareness of the availability for an appointment with a specialist Mental Health Practitioner at the Practice was much lower, with just 17% of respondents knowing that this service was available. Although Practice Reception staff will often 'signpost' patients to this service where it is appropriate, patients can call and book these appointments directly.

The lack of awareness that the Practice employs a Clinical Pharmacist was probably very much due to the fact that, at the time the survey was undertaken, our pharmacist had been off work for an extended period and then subsequently left the Practice. We finally managed to recruit a new

Clinical Pharmacist in early 2023 (Elan Ward). Elan will play a significant role in supporting our GPs in a number of ways such as reviewing and monitoring long-term health conditions and in providing advice to patients about their medications. As such we anticipate that more and more of our patient population will become aware of this important service over the coming months.

It is perhaps less of a surprise to find that awareness of both our Care Co-ordinators and our Social Prescriber was at a low level (16% and 17% respectively). Access to these services is via a GP and only made where the GP feels, after discussions with the patient, that the important non-clinical support that can be provided by these groups will be of benefit to the patient. These are relatively new services at the Practice as time goes on we would expect awareness of these valuable services to increase.

When looking at the survey results for the general questions in the survey, it is interesting to note the importance placed by patients (65% scoring this question as important, or very important) on the provision of an increased range of services available at our surgery sites. This is perhaps an area that we need to explore further and establish exactly what services patients would like to see provided at a local level. Clearly both funding and a lack of physical space could impact the ability for the Practice to satisfy this wish.

Previous survey results have regularly highlighted the issue of car parking, particularly at Kintbury surgery) but only 34% of respondents rated the importance of additional car parking as being important to them in this survey. As with earlier surveys, the majority of these responses were again from patients that regularly use Kintbury as their main surgery. The Practice is constantly looking for ways to improve car parking but there are no clear solutions available to the parking problems at Kintbury. Car parking at Woolton Hill has improved recently with the Council providing additional off-road parking opposite the surgery in response to complaints from road users regarding the difficulties caused by on-road parking outside the surgery.

Whilst the provision of bicycle racks was not regarded as that important by the majority of patients responding to the survey, the Practice has installed cycle racks for patients at our Kintbury site in the hope of reducing (albeit very slightly) car parking demand.

The final question in the survey again provided an interesting response from patients with 69% indicating that they would be prepared to travel slightly further to access increased and improved facilities. Given the response to the earlier question about the provision of a wider range of services this should perhaps not come as a surprise. Several respondents added a caveat advising that their response depended on the provision of car parking, as they would probably need to drive and also on the distance involved. Other respondents highlighted the value that they placed on having a local surgery and dispensary and would not want to travel further. Again, this is perhaps an area where the Practice need to seek more information from our patient population.

