

## Patient Participation DES – Patient Survey Report GP Appointment Booking System

### The Heron Practice Patient Forum

The Patient Forum was established in 2008.

We currently have 9 members who are “face to face” members of the Patient Forum. Meetings are held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday in February, May, August and November each year; they are chaired by the patient members on a rotational basis and are attended by the practice’s Senior Partner and Practice Manager. The Patient Forum will have met on 4 occasions between 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2012 and 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2013.

During 2011 the practice established a “virtual” Patient Forum; this was set up through the practice website. This forum enables patients who want to provide feedback/comments to the practice, but who are unable to attend meetings, to do so; all correspondence is via email. Establishing this forum has enabled the practice to ensure we obtain feedback from more of our patients thereby giving us a more balanced view of what patients think of our services. The number of patients currently signed up is 193.

We are very keen to increase the number of patients who are members of both the “face to face” and “virtual” Patient Forums; particularly in the underrepresented groups. We therefore actively promote the groups via our practice website, posters in the waiting room and members of the practice team opportunistically ask patients if they are interested in joining one of the groups.

The breakdown of the current profile of the two groups is as follows:

	<b>Number of Face to Face Patient Forum Members</b>	<b>Number of Virtual Patient Forum Members</b>	<b>Total Number of Patient Forum Members</b>
Male	2	67	69
Female	7	126	133
<b>Total number of members</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>202</b>
Under 16	0	0	0
17 – 24	0	18	18
25 – 34	0	73	73
35 – 44	0	42	42
45 – 54	2	24	26
55 – 64	3	22	25
65 – 74	4	12	16
75 – 84	0	2	2
Over 84	0	0	0
White British	1	20	21
White Irish	0	5	5
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed White & Black African	0	0	0
Mixed White & Black Asian	0	1	1
Indian	0	4	4
Pakistani	0	1	1

Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Black Caribbean	0	1	1
Black African	0	1	1
Chinese	0	1	1
Other	8*	159*	167*

\* The practice has changed clinical systems (from EMIS LV to EMIS Web) since the survey was initiated and completed; the demographic details in relation to the categories for ethnicity are now slightly different and the transfer of data has resulted in the majority of patients being recorded as "other" (ethnicity and other related nationality data). We have taken this up with EMIS, the clinical system supplier.

### **Background to the Survey**

The practice was aware as a result of written complaints, patient suggestions and general feedback given to members of the practice team that some patients found having to book GP appointments by telephone inconvenient.

The clinical system used by the practice has the facility to enable patients to book appointments "online" and therefore we approached members of our Patient Forum group to see if they felt a survey to determine whether this facility would be of interest to patients should be run. Members of the group confirmed their approval and requested that a formal proposal in relation to this be submitted at the Patient Forum meeting which was to be held on the 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2012.

The practice submitted details of how the survey would be undertaken eg. the proposed questions and how the survey would be advertised etc. at the Patient Forum meeting held on the 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2012 as requested. Members confirmed they were happy with the proposal; however they requested some amendments to the questions. It was agreed that the amendments would be made and that a final draft of the proposal be submitted to the meeting to be held on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2012 for ratification. The proposal was subsequently discussed and agreed by the members of the Patient Forum at the meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> November.

### **The Survey**

Questionnaires were made available to patients between Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> of December, 2012 and Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January, 2013. This is usually an exceptionally busy period for the practice and so the survey was carried out during this time in an attempt to maximise patient feedback.

Informative posters were displayed in the reception area, as well as in all the clinical rooms, and information was included on the practice website and on the waiting area LED screen encouraging patients to participate in the survey. The practice had also established a virtual patient forum group via the practice website and patients who had signed up as members were sent an electronic copy of the questionnaire which they were able to complete and return online.

Copies of the questionnaire were attached to all repeat prescriptions that were processed during the period the survey was running and copies were also distributed throughout the waiting area for patients to fill out while they were waiting for their appointment. Members of the practice team opportunistically encouraged patients to participate in the survey whenever they had patient contact.

## **Results of the Survey**

A total of 253 completed questionnaires were returned; the breakdown of responses for each question is detailed below:

### **Have you recently had to make an appointment with a GP at The Heron Practice?**

Total number of responses = 245 (253)

Yes = 221

No = 24

### **If yes, how did you book the appointment?**

Total number of responses = 247 (253)

At the reception desk in person = 85

By telephone = 162

### **If you booked the appointment at the reception desk in person did you:**

	Yes	No	No Response
Find the procedure straightforward/convenient?	100	10	143
Book the appointment with your GP of choice?	71	31	151
Book the appointment on your chosen date?	66	39	148
Book the appointment at your chosen time?	77	30	146

### **If you booked the appointment by telephone did you:**

	Yes	No	No Response
Have difficulty getting through to the practice?	93	81	179
Find the procedure straightforward/convenient?	127	35	91
Book the appointment with your GP of choice?	92	66	95
Book the appointment on your chosen date?	73	86	94
Book the appointment at your chosen time?	88	68	97

### **Do you have access to the internet?**

Total number of responses = 202 (253)

Yes = 164

No = 38

### **Would you book an appointment on-line (ie. via the internet) with a GP at The Heron Practice if this facility was available?**

Total number of responses = 249 (253)

Yes = 167

No = 82

### **Are you male or female?**

Total number of responses = 195 (253)

Male = 62

Female = 133

## What age are you?

Total number of responses = 214 (253)

Under 16 = 2

17 – 24 = 18

25 – 34 = 55

35 – 44 = 48

45 – 54 = 27

55 – 64 = 34

65 – 74 = 20

75 – 84 = 8

Over 84 = 2

## What is the ethnic background with which you most identify?

Total number of responses = 209 (253)

White British = 110

White Irish = 5

Mixed White & Black Caribbean = 1

Mixed White & Black African = 0

Mixed White & Black Asian = 0

Indian = 6

Pakistani = 1

Bangladeshi = 4

Black Caribbean = 9

Black African = 15

Chinese = 1

Other = 57

## How would you describe how often you come to the practice?

Total number of responses = 191 (253)

Once a month or more often (12 or more times each year) = 39

Once every 1 – 2 months (6 – 12 times each year) = 53

Once every 3 – 4 months (3 – 6 times each year) = 63

Once every 6 – 12 months (1 – 2 times each year) = 36

## Evaluation of the Survey

The results indicate that, in general, patients who completed the questionnaire find the procedure for booking a GP appointment straightforward and convenient. It is clear, however, that there are issues with:

- **Patients being able to get through to the practice via the telephone**  
The practice has recently employed additional reception staff and we feel that we have sufficient resources to deal with the volume of calls we receive. Unfortunately there are ongoing problems with the telephone system, which was commissioned and is managed by NHS East London and the City.
- **Patients being able to book with their GP of choice**  
None of the GP's work full-time and this can limit the opportunity for patients to see their own doctor. The practice is struck by the difference in satisfaction levels between those patients who book appointments with their GP of choice at the reception desk in person (70%) and those who book via the telephone (58%); we feel this could be a call handling issue.
- **Patients being able to book an appointment on their chosen date/at their chosen time**  
The practice undertook a major review and overhaul of the appointment system two years ago which was successful in addressing the issues at that time; this clearly needs to be repeated in the light of the survey results.

Again, the practice is struck by the difference in satisfaction levels between those patients who book an appointment on their chosen date/time at the reception desk in person (63% & 72% respectively) and those who book via the telephone (46% & 57% respectively).

A number of patients who completed the questionnaire indicated that they would book an appointment on-line if the facility was available.

In view of the above we are proposing to:

- Continue liaison with NHS East London and the City about the ongoing problems with the telephone system
- Undertake further training with our reception team to ensure an efficient and consistent service is provided to all patients when they request appointments irrespective of whether they attend the practice in person or contact us via telephone
- Review the current appointment system to ensure it is “fit for purpose” and provides maximum flexibility for patients
- Activate the on line appointment booking facility for GP appointments
- Update all information relating to the appointment system to ensure patients are given clear guidance about booking appointments

### **Review of the Survey Results and Proposals for Change – Patient Forum**

Members of the “face to face” Patient Forum have considered the patient survey report and have subsequently approved the report for submission and publication.

Members have agreed to the proposals as detailed in the report and have requested that:

- the practice implement the proposals as soon as is practical
- the patient survey report be made available on the practice website and in the waiting area
- copies of the patient survey report be made available for patients to take away from the practice
- the practice report back on the progress made at the next Patient Forum meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2013

In addition, members have expressed their concerns about the ongoing problems with the telephone system and will write to NHS East London and the City about this matter.