

## You said, we listened

Thank you to all patients who took the time to provide feedback on our appointment system. We received 448 responses and a member of our Patient Participation Group kindly analysed the results and produced the attached report.

Please see a table below of the main issues that patients commented on in the survey and the practice response to these issues.

	Issue identified	Response/Action undertaken
1	Ability to book online. Requests to accommodate booking for appointments with nurses and for blood tests.	The practice will continue to offer certain appointments online. This will include on the day call back with the duty doctor and appointments with the Practice Nurses e.g. travel vaccinations, cervical smears. Unfortunately, it is difficult to make all appointments with the nurses available to book online as the online system does not recognise the variety of clinics that they provide and the skill-set that each individual nurse has.
2	Ability to see own GP	We recognise that this can be a problem and anticipate that the new appointment system will help ensure continuity of care. Doctors are encouraged to book patients in for a follow up appointment if this is required or will signpost the patient to reception with a follow up slip to enable this booking to be made.
3	Ease of getting through on the telephone	The practice is investing in additional phone lines and an additional reception team member. All non-clinical staff will be required to help answer the telephones on a Monday morning, which is our busiest time. We will continue to review and analyse the data from our telephone provider and make any necessary changes to ensure that patients are not holding for an unnecessarily long time.
4	Routine appointment availability	We anticipate that the new appointment system will help to free up capacity and will mean that routine appointments are within a much more appropriate time-frame.
5	Attitude and behaviour of reception team members	All reception staff members have recently received customer service training, both a face to face practical session and via online training. Excellent customer service and improving the patient experience is of paramount importance to us and we will continue to provide ongoing training and investigate any issues with individuals when required.
6	Not being informed that the appointment is with the Nurse Practitioner	The duty doctor will call back all patients and we aim to call the majority of patients back within a 2 hour period. The triaging doctor will determine which clinician the patient should be booked in with. The doctor will inform the patient who they will be seeing.
7	Turnaround of prescriptions	We aim to turnaround prescriptions as follows; 2 working days for repeat prescriptions and up to 5 working days for acute prescriptions. Please note that if repeat prescriptions need to be reauthorized, the prescription could take up to 5 working days. Please ensure that prescription requests are

		put into the surgery in good time.
8	Practice capacity	<p>A comment was made about the practice having too many patients and/or too few GPs. Our current list size is just over 12,800 patients. Our General Medical Services Contract does not allow us to close our list and we are therefore unable to refuse to register a new patient who lives within our boundary area.</p> <p>There have been national reports about the difficulty in recruiting GPs. We found ourselves in the position of being unable to recruit GPs and therefore took the decision to recruit additional Nurse Practitioners. Nurse Practitioners are highly skilled clinicians who are able to see and treat patients with minor illness. All of our Nurse Practitioners are able to prescribe.</p>
9	Not enough early or late appointments	<p>The practice offers extended hours and provides appointments outside of core practice hours (8.00 a.m. to 6.30 p.m.) as follows:  7.00 a.m. to 8.00 a.m. on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday  A late clinic is provided once a month based on GP availability.  A weekend clinic is provided the last Saturday of each month (moved forward a week if there is a bank holiday weekend).</p> <p>Patients are also able to attend Extended Access appointments at Sollershott Surgery in Letchworth.  Appointments are available as follows:  Monday to Friday 6.30 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.  Saturday 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.  Sunday 8.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m.</p> <p>Patients can book these appointments via our reception team.</p>
10	How the system will work for those patients who are deaf or hard of hearing	<p>Patients who are deaf or who are hard of hearing are able to use a service called "voice to text".  If patients are unable to use this service then exceptions will be applied to ensure that services can be accessed.</p>
11	Specialist clinics being held on the same days	<p>The practice offers clinics such as the diabetes clinic on a Tuesday morning and this involves four different clinicians. Unfortunately we are unable to provide these on different days due to clinician availability. Having specialist clinics on different days would also mean that our appointment system would need to be regularly rescheduled. If a patient's condition is well controlled then they only have to attend the surgery for a review appointment once a year.</p>
12	Patients having to tell the receptionist why they want an appointment	<p>The reception team are asked to obtain some brief information from patients; this helps the doctor to prioritise the list of patients who require a call back.  All of our reception team have undertaken care navigation training. They do not triage patients, however, they are encouraged to ask patients if they have tried over the counter medicines etc before booking in with the doctor.</p>
13	A request to consider	<p>Unfortunately we are not in a position to offer this at</p>

	video/skype appointments	present. We do not have the technology or the broadband speed to support this. There is also ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of video consultations.
14	Concerns about not being able to book an appointment directly with the nurse	GPs will be triaging all requests for appointments with a GP or Nurse Practitioner. Patients will continue to be able to book an appointment directly with a Practice Nurse or Healthcare Assistant via reception.
15	Concerns about how to have a conversation with a doctor on the phone if the patient is unsure when the doctor will be calling	The triaging doctor will aim to call the majority of patients within 2 hours. We appreciate that patients may not be able to take calls at certain times. We would therefore request that patients stipulate if there is a particularly good time to call and the doctor will try their best to call as near to this time as possible.
16	More blood test appointments available at the practice	The phlebotomy service is funded by East & North Hertfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group. We are aware that there is limited capacity to a phlebotomy appointment at the practice and have fed this back to the CCG. Patients are able to access the walk in clinic at the Lister Hospital.
17	Charge for appointments/fine patients who do not attend appointments	We are unable to charge patients for NHS services as per our General Medical Services contract.
18	Provide car parking for patients	Unfortunately we are unable to offer car parking facilities for patients.
19	Phones being closed over the lunch period	We currently close our phone lines between 12.45 and 1.45 p.m. This is to enable the reception team to complete any administrative tasks i.e. processing prescription requests. We are considering whether to keep the lines open over the lunch period, however, there are no immediate plans to change this.
20	Re-instatement of the ear syringing service	There is no funding for ear-syringing within our General Medical Services contract. We have high demand for services that have to be provided as part of our contract and we therefore do not have the capacity to offer this. Aside from the financial reasons, there is also evidence that ear syringing can cause complications such as ear infections, perforation of the ear drum and tinnitus.
21	Use of locums for emergency appointments only	It was suggested that the practice should only use locums to provide emergency appointments in order to free up permanent GPs to provide routine appointments. We have used a number of locums over the past 4 weeks or so to provide routine clinics in order to help clear our backlog before the new appointment system is implemented on 7 May 2019. However, we generally only use locums when we are short staffed due to sickness or urgent last minute cover that is required. In these situations, locums will always be used to provide book on the day cover.
22	Updates in the waiting area about waiting time	We will investigate if this is something that we can put in place.
23	Out of hours appointments	Out of hours appointment are provided by Herts Urgent Care and can be accessed via 111.