

Grove Patient Survey 2016

Background

This year has seen a lot of change for Grove Medical Practice. We have said goodbye to three GP colleagues and recruiting new doctors has been difficult. You may be aware of some of the media coverage surrounding national GP shortages and the difficulty many practices are facing in recruiting permanent GPs. As a result, we have relied on the use of some fantastic locum doctors over the last 4 months.

In 2015 we were sometimes experiencing waits of up to 4-6 weeks for patients to book a routine appointment with their own GP. This was frustrating for patients as well as us. We continued to have many people wasting appointments by not turning up and not cancelling before hand (DNA). This wasted between 8-20% of the appointments we offered and was simply not acceptable.

We decided we had 3 key aims in improving our service:

1. Reduce the number of DNA/ missed appointments
2. People with urgent problems need to be assessed quickly and efficiently
3. Keep continuity of care by increased access through telephone calls with their own GP

In order to try and improve waiting times, reduce wasted appointments and increase the flexibility of access to our GPs we agreed to change our appointment system to an on-the day telephone consultation based service. We still have face-to-face appointments available every day, but we ask that the problem be discussed with a doctor first to make sure we deal with the problem in the most efficient way.

This survey was therefore designed to help us find out how this working for our patients and what improvements could be made.

The Survey Participants

The survey was carried out in the first week in March 2016, approximately 3 months after the new telephone system began. We asked every person using the surgery that week to fill in the survey. We had 161 people participate.

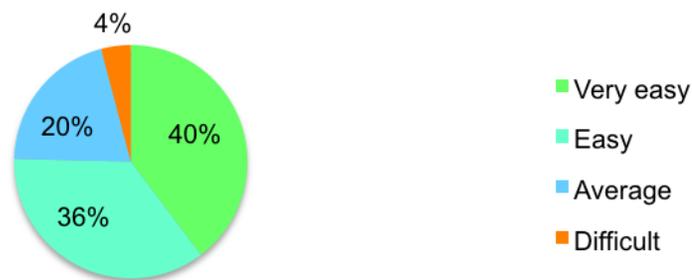
We achieved a good representation of our practice population. However, our survey was only carried out during the normal working day and did not capture patients using our extended hours appointments (evening, early morning or weekend appointments). Our survey population had the following demographics:

Characteristic	Percentage
Gender	
- Male	41%
- Female	50%
Age	
0 - 15	4.70%
16 - 24	8%
25 - 34	18%
35 - 44	11.30%
45 - 54	10.70%
55 - 64	16.70%
65 - 74	16.70%
75 - 84	10%
85+	4%
Ethnicity	
White	92.70%
Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups	2%
Asian / Asian British	2.70%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	1.30%
Other ethnic group	1.30%
Chronic disability: level of effect on activities of daily living	
Yes, limited a lot	11.40%
Yes, limited a little	24.10%
No	59.70%
Prefer not to say	4.70%

Results

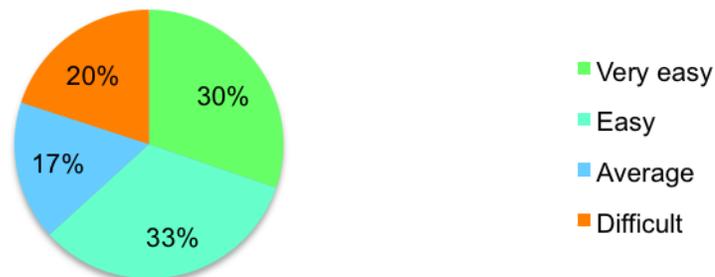
- Over 90% of people stated they agreed with each of core aims: to reduce wasted appointments, assess people with urgent problems quickly and efficiently and to keep continuity through telephone access.
- 76% of patients found it easy or very to book a telephone consultation, with only 4% of patients finding it difficult.

How easy did you find it to book a telephone consultation today?

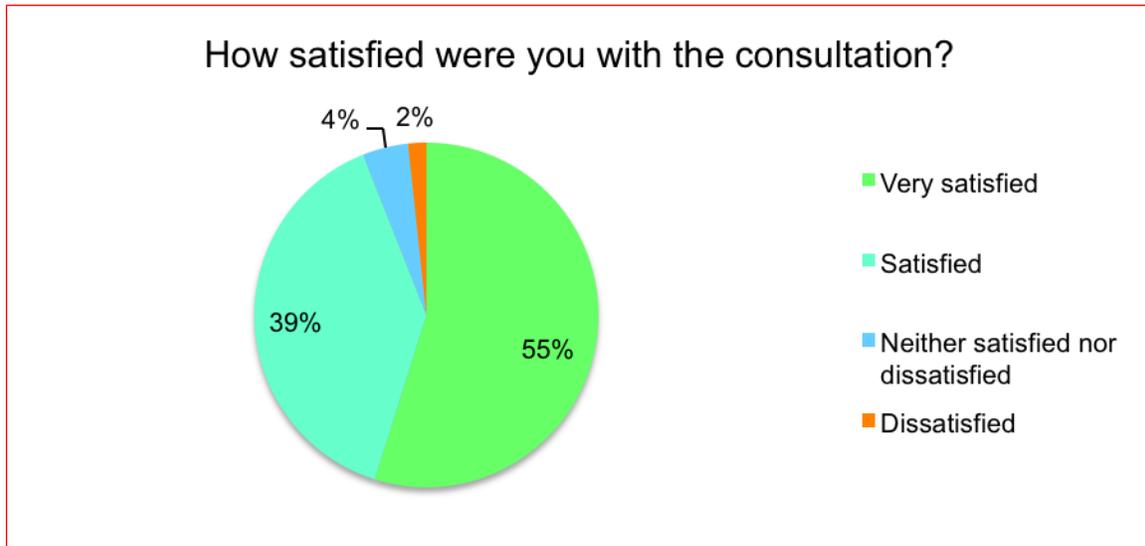


- 63% of patients found it easy or very easy to book and appointment at a date and time that suited them.

How easy was it to get an appointment to see a doctor or nurse on a date or time that suited you?



- 94% of our patients were satisfied or very satisfied with their consultations.



- Only 57% of our patients were aware that we had an independent nurse prescriber.
- 84.4% of people felt that knowing the nurse could prescribe for common conditions would make them likely or very likely to see a nurse.
- Only 25.3% of patients are aware of the Pharmacy First campaign.

Analysis of the survey comments

Not everybody made comments on the survey but of those who did give some more detailed feedback, some common themes were observed.

We had some very positive feedback about the use of telephone access as a means of providing increased consultations with a doctor.

Patients appreciated the ability to book a telephone consultation that day and also be seen face to face that day if needed.

“Good. A few weeks ago I came into book and appointment. The duty doctor phoned me back. I had an appointment that morning. She was very thorough. Very good service”

“Able to speak to doctor on the day that you phone up”

“It seems to be working and very well”

“Helpful, effective when an appointment at surgery is not practical due to other commitments”

Some patients feel the current system is difficult for people who work.

“May be difficult to be able to answer call from doctor whilst at work if the call time is not set”

“Waiting for a doctor to call in the morning is disruptive ... and having to reschedule ...at the last minute is also a problem. However I completely understand why it needed to be done. It would be far more convenient work wise for me to book a routine appointment in advance”

There were a couple of comments about difficulty in getting through to reception on the telephone.

“Much easier to get an appointment but very hard to get through on the phone at peak times”

“Spend too much time waiting for the phone to be answered”

Three people commented that they did not wish to disclose the nature of their problem to a receptionist

“I don't feel comfortable needing to explain my condition over the phone when it's not my doctor/nurse in order to get appointment”

A few people felt that there should still be a facility to book appointments with GPs in advance. Sometimes this was due to work commitments, two people commented on the need for this due to chronic health conditions.

Some comments also revealed a minority of people who were appeared confused by the service and were unsure how to use it. There were also a couple of comments about difficulty seeing their own specified GP.

Response from Grove Medical Practice

We would like to thank everybody who took the time to give us feedback in order that we can continue to review and improve the service we offer all of our patients.

We are delighted that 94% of our patients were satisfied or extremely satisfied with their consultations.

1. Accessibility

We were pleased that the majority of our patients are able to book a telephone consultation and subsequent face-to-face consultations easily or very easily.

We are also delighted that people have continued to show support for the new telephone access system through the patient survey and the Friends and Family feedback we collect every month.

We did not get feedback from patients seeing us during our extended hours and it is important that we consider this when analysing the survey, especially with regards to a minority of comments about access for working people.

We do offer extended hours appointments on
Monday evenings 18:00 – 20:00
Tuesday mornings 07:00 – 08:00
Saturday mornings 07:30 – 10:00

People who work take many of these consultations up. We also offer appointments in the evenings until 8pm on weekdays and Saturday and Sunday appointments via The Hub, which is based at Grove Medical Practice. The Hub began a few months ago and many patients are not aware of this service we offer. There will be increasing publicity over the next few months about this service offering 8am – 8pm GP cover 7 days a week.

Patients can already book into The Hub directly for a face-to-face consultation with a local GP without booking a telephone consultation with a GP first.

It is interesting that while there were a couple of comments concerning the ability to take a telephone call whilst at work, other patients felt this system provided better access to a doctor without having to leave work to come to the surgery.

We are confident that patients who are unwell that day and need to be seen are getting an efficient service. Patients who want to book a routine appointment for a non-urgent problem seem less clear on the process. We ask them to phone on the day they want to be seen. This may be on their day off, or could be arranged with work when needed in the same they would have done under the old system. If a patient wants to speak to their own GP first but needs an appointment outside working hours for a non-urgent problem we endeavor to offer an appointment in our extended hours or with a GP colleague in The Hub in the evening or on the weekend.

2. Reduced wastage of appointments

We have already seen our DNA rates drop since we introduced the new appointment system. This means more appointments available each week for our patients.

3. Continuity of care

We have realised through talking to our patients that many do not know what days their own GP works so are not sure which days to call to speak to them. This has been in part due to staff changes and our GPs having to move days and do extra cover sessions to meet clinical need. We will be publishing our GPs timetables on our website so that patients know when to call.

4. Receptionists asking what the problem is

Our receptionists do not triage our appointments or telephone calls, we have never asked them to do this.

The GP Partners have asked our receptionists to gain an understanding of the problem for two very important reasons:

1. We have an emergency presentation protocol in place so that if anyone calls or comes to the surgery with certain problems, they are dealt with quickly, efficiently and safely. It is vital we know straight away if someone has a potentially life threatening condition

2. We have employed and trained staff in specific support roles to help our patients directly allowing GPs to have more time to do what we do best – deal with people who are sick! If patients have a problem with your prescription, or a problem that needs discussion with the pharmacy then often our reception staff can deal with this directly on the phone or our Medicines manager can. If patients have a problem with a referral or hospital appointment, or need a form

completing or a letter written by the doctor then our PAs who can arrange directly.

If the patients are too embarrassed or feel the problem is too personal, they can tell reception staff that it is personal.

5. Telephone access

The majority of people found it easy or very easy to get through to reception on the telephone. It is busier at peak times, for instance we receive 400 - 450 calls on an average Monday, and we have 25 – 30% of all our patient consultations on this day! We also have a rise in calls and requests for appointments on late Friday afternoons.

We are trying to be more responsive during these times and have therefore recruited 2 new full time receptionists who are due to start in the next few weeks. However, we also ask that patients be aware of our busiest times, if you avoid our peak times for making routine requests it will make it easier for you as well.

Telephone consultation bookings with GPs are made in specific time periods. Our receptionists will give the patient a call back window, for instance in the first morning session patients will be called back between 08:30 am and 11:00am. We have instituted call back deadlines to make sure patients are responded to as promptly as possible.

6. Understanding of our resources

There was a lack of awareness of our nurse prescriber and also of the national Pharmacy First campaign. We need to promote the resources available to our patients as pharmacists are trained to deal with many common minor conditions and can prescribe free prescriptions to people who are entitled to them.

7. Some patients are unclear about the process

Although a minority of patients seemed unclear, it is important that we continue to publicise how you access your GP and also continue staff training so that our reception team can give clear guidance on this so that all patients can access the system appropriately when they need to. We will be meeting with reception staff to promote this.