

# Patient Forum

Report of activity for the period October 2011 – March 2012

In September/October last year the practice invited patients to be part of a new Patient Reference Group as a means of consulting on the services we offer and considering how these might be improved and enhanced.

The wish was for the group to become a forum for constructive discussion, which was as representative of the local community as possible and that it develop to be led and managed by patients.

The group was advertised in the waiting room by poster and leaflets, a 'splash screen' on the practice website [www.sydenhamgreenpractice.co.uk](http://www.sydenhamgreenpractice.co.uk) and opportunistic discussions with patients.

There have so far been 39 patients who have submitted applications to be part of the group which is in two parts. There is a face to face group which has met 3 times with regular meetings planned and a 'virtual' group who are contacted by email with updates on progress of the group and whose input is sought as appropriate.

The makeup of such a group is of course dependent on patients who are willing to volunteer to give up their time to be involved. We are very grateful to those who have joined and the positive way in which they have so far contributed. One of our aims was that the group be as representative of our population as possible and so it is good that we have 7 patients who are non-white, a member who is dependent on a wheelchair and a member who is severely deaf. The age ranges represented across both groups are:

20-29 = 3

30-39 = 7

40-49 = 7

50 – 59 = 8

60 – 69 = 7

70 + = 7

This helps us get input from a cross section of our patients on the issues that particularly affect them.

We have discussed further ways of increasing the membership across all areas of our population and a new recruitment exercise will be undertaken shortly using text messages and the next newsletter.

One of the decisions made by the group was that we should be called the 'Patients' Forum'

At the first meeting, on 12 October, we discussed areas that the Forum felt were issues for the practice. These were mainly focussed on appointments, how they were organised and could be accessed. They included:

- Frequently appointments in the morning were taken soon after the practice opened with patients queuing outside the surgery to get the appointments that were available
- Discussed the possibility of increasing telephone consultations and giving the patients choice over whether to use these rather than visiting the practice – this would reduce the numbers of face to face consultations but increase the numbers of appointments overall
- Doctors telephoning patients should make it clear who they are and that they are ringing from the surgery
- The possibility of a doctor triaging the queue of patients when the practice opens
- How to increase the usage of technology based solutions eg MJog, Emis Access, Surgery POD
- Seldoc is hard to access - Can the practice increase Saturday surgeries

- DNA's the problem of patients not keeping their appointments and the impact on availability of appointments

It was agreed to plan a survey of patients to look at the appointments system and Seldoc and for the practice to carry out a pilot of telephone consultations with one doctor per day.

The practice should also seek to increase awareness of the means of access to patients through technology and the website. A new newsletter was also prepared and displayed in the waiting room specifically focussing on the technology being employed to allow greater access to records and appointment booking etc.. A second newsletter was issued in March covering the availability of appointments, the options available to patients, details of the shortage of doctors the practice has suffered for some months and again advertising the Forum with a tear-off slip if patients are interested in joining.

The difficulty of triaging the morning queue was discussed as it was felt by the practice that it would be hard to implement and would have a significant effect on the availability of routine appointments. It can be re-visited at a later stage after the agreed changes have been made and evaluated

When the group met in November suggested questions were discussed and subsequently a draft was circulated to all member of the group with feedback encouraged and received. The final questionnaire was then printed for distribution in the practice and the questions placed on Survey Monkey and linked to the practice website with a 'Flash Screen' with a direct link to the survey asking patients to complete the survey. Copies were also taken to the housebound by our nurse for the elderly and all Forum members encouraged to participate.

The responses were obtained from Survey monkey and the completed handwritten forms were added to the results. Copies of the results were distributed to the Patient Forum and discussed at the 25 January meeting.

As a result of the survey and the pilot undertaken by the practice

- The appointments were re-worked so that each doctor 'lost' 4 face to face consultations but added 8 telephone consultations.
- Half of these were pre-bookable and the others available on the day.
- The message on the telephone was changed so that all patients were advised that the appointments had changed as a result of the forum
- The practice prepared a second newsletter, circulated to the Forum for comment, explaining the types of appointments available, the days worked by the clinicians and the presence each day of a duty doctor for problems 'that have to be dealt with that day' – a suggestion made by the Forum members.
- A further survey will be conducted to assess patient feedback
- The results of this further survey will be shared with the Patients' Forum for discussion and decisions about further changes to be made to the practice

**The summary of the survey is as follows:**

**1 Would you favour a greater number of appointments being available to book in advance rather than 'on the day'?**

	Response percentage	Response count	Replies
Yes	87.3	55	63
No	12.7	8	
Replies		63	

**2 Is your experience of telephone access to the practice satisfactory?**

	Very satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory	Neither	Moderately unsatisfactory	Very unsatisfactory	Total
Numbers	13	24	11	8	8	64
%	20.3	37.5	17.2	12.5	12.5	

**3 Have you used the telephone appointment system?**

	Response percentage	Response count
Yes	82.0	50
No	18.0	11
Replies		61

**4 If YES was it:**

	Very satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory	Neither	Moderately unsatisfactory	Very unsatisfactory	Total
Numbers	11	16	9	10	5	51
%	21.6	31.4	17.6	19.6	9.8	

**5 What has been your experience of using SELDOC – the out-of-hours service?**

	Very satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory	Neither	Moderately unsatisfactory	Very unsatisfactory	Total
Numbers	7	8	13	4	3	35
%	20.0	22.9	37.1	11.4	8.6	

**6 Are you aware you can book appointments and order prescriptions on-line?**

	Response percentage	Response count
Yes	75.4	46
No	24.6	15
Replies		61

**7 Have you registered for these on-line services?**

	Response percentage	Response count
Yes	54.1	33
No	45.9	28
Replies		61

The practice also produced the first of a planned series of newsletters which focussed on the means of accessing practice services through technology. These were placed in the waiting room and on the practice web site.

## Accessing the practice:

### The reception is open

Monday – Thursday	8am – 6.30 pm
Friday	7am – 6.30 pm
Alternating Wed/Thurs evenings to	8pm
Alternating Saturdays	8 – 10.30am

### Surgeries times are:

These vary with each doctor/nurse but are within the following hours:

### Core hours during which full service is provided:

Monday – Friday	8am – 12.30 pm and 2pm – 6.30pm
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### Extended hours – for pre-booked appointments only

Friday mornings	7 – 8am
Alternating Wed/Thurs evenings	6.30 – 8pm
Alternating Saturdays	8 – 10.30am

During core hours the practice can be accessed in person or at the phone

During extended hours the reception is open but the phone lines are closed and any requests for medical assistance can be obtained through Seldoc our out of hours provider.

### On-Line access

Patients can also register for on-line access to appointment booking, repeat prescription ordering and viewing medical records – please ask at reception for more information.

### Extended hours

During extended hours pre-bookable appointments are available for doctors. The clinicians choose to either be on the Friday morning rota or the Wednesday/Thursday evening rota.