

Enter and View Report:

DR JOHNSON & PARTNERS

Address:

Sheen Lane Health Centre
Sheen Lane
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London
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Website: www.sheensurgery.nhs.uk

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Healthwatch Richmond Enter and View Representatives:
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Introduction

In February 2014 Healthwatch Richmond held a public GP Forum with local residents, GPs and key organisations involved in General Practice. We asked the community for feedback about their experiences of using the GP services. The feedback we received encouraged us to further investigate the level of service provided in the Borough.

Healthwatch Richmond analysed data collected in the Ipsos Mori July 2014 and January 2015 GP Patient Report. We triangulated this data from practices across the borough with data available on NHS Choices between January and September 2014, data collected for the Healthwatch Richmond Infobank, the Friends and Family Test and our GP Report, March 2014. This information indicated that there was a variation in patient experience of GP services across the borough. We identified practices with high, medium and low levels of patient satisfaction and cross-referenced these with comments on NHS Choices. Based on this we identified a number of practices to visit across the range of patient experience. It was based on these findings that Dr Johnson and Partners was selected to receive visits.

Our intention in conducting Enter and View visits to GP surgeries, was to identify both positive practice and any issues on which we may make recommendations for improvements.

Dr Johnson and Partners is located in Mortlake and has a total of 10,908 patients registered, 1360 of whom registered in the last twelve months. Dr Johnson and Partners is located within Sheen Lane Health Centre and shares the building with another GP practice, Dr Jezierski and Partners. The practice has one practice manager, seven doctors, one healthcare assistant, three practice nurses, six receptionists and one practice secretary.

Methodology

Setting up the visits

The visits to Dr Johnson & Partners took place on the 28th and 29th April 2015. Each visit was undertaken by two staff or volunteer authorised Enter and View Representatives and lasted two hours, one taking place in the morning and the other in the afternoon to ensure greater accuracy and representation in our data. Enter and View Representatives undergo a thorough recruitment and training process including application, references, interviews, Enter and View training, specific training on conducting visits in GP Practices, and DBS checks. All the Enter and View representatives carried photographic identification cards at all times during the visits.

The practice was contacted in advance and mutually acceptable dates were agreed for the visits, which was then confirmed in writing. The visits were conducted in line with the Healthwatch Richmond Enter and View Policy, a copy of which was provided to the practice before the visit.

Conducting the visits

Enter and View representatives approached patients in the waiting room of the practice, introducing themselves, Healthwatch Richmond and the purpose of the study. Patients were then asked for their consent and, once given, volunteers conducted a semi-structured interview. Our interviews with patients encouraged comments on both positive and negative aspects of the practice and focused on:

- Access to services
- Quality of care
- Overall satisfaction with the practice
- Any improvements patients would like to see

In addition, practice staff were interviewed and an observational audit of the service was carried out at each visit.

Each of the Enter and View Representatives provided written reports of their findings, which were analysed by Healthwatch staff to identify trends and key issues arising from the data collected. These findings are presented below.

Limitations

Whilst we tried to ensure accuracy in data by conducting our visits on one afternoon and one morning, it became clear that most of the patients we spoke to were either retired or currently not working. It is important to note that this may have had an

impact on our findings, particularly in relation to opening hours and accessibility of booking appointments.

It came to our attention after our first visit to the practice that we spoke to patients from both practices. As a result, we have used just the feedback from our second visit in this report where we only spoke to patients at Dr Johnson and Partners. The data we collected was therefore more limited than we had originally intended.

Overall Findings

Overall, our findings correlate with those found in the Ipsos Mori July 2014 and January 2015 GP Patient Report - that patients at Dr Johnson and Partners are highly satisfied with their experience of the surgery.

Most importantly for patients, the staff at the surgery were described as, “*patient-centred*,” with an empathetic, caring and efficient attitude to the care and treatment they delivered. This, for the patients, created a warm, friendly atmosphere and a surgery that they wanted to be part of. In addition, staff told us that they were well supported in their role, are offered to attend regular training and are actively encouraged to learn.

Our findings revealed small areas for improvement. Some patients we interviewed said they were unable to see the same doctor unless they booked ahead and often had to wait to see their desired doctor. This concerned patients, especially when requiring a same day appointment and needing continuity in their care. Additionally, some patients told us that they felt their appointments were rushed.

Physical Environment

The surgery is one of two surgeries at Sheen Lane Medical Centre and both practice names are clearly marked on the outside of the building. We also observed signs detailing opening hours, including bank holiday opening hours, on the entrance to the building.

The surgery provides excellent wheelchair and pram friendly facilities, with level access, automated doors, a lift going up to the first floor and wide open hallways.

Our volunteers observed clear signage to rooms and toilets and found the premises to be generally clean and pleasant. Patients reported a general satisfaction with the environment. We observed a hand sanitiser at the entrance and alcohol rub at reception.

Whilst the building was generally quite clean, we did observe some paper on the floor and one patient we spoke to commented that the building could do with a *“lick of paint and a tidy up.”* Since our visits, the practice told us that all patient areas were repainted earlier this year in a £13,000 refurbishment.

Some of the patients we interviewed said greater modernisation would improve the general environment, *“it would be nice to have an electronic board showing when your appointment was.”* Another commented that they found it a *“bit old fashioned.”* Most patients we spoke to preferred the personal approach taken by the doctors and nurses who would come and collect them from the waiting area. A small play area for youngsters, which was being used during our visits, certainly contributed to a more informal, family atmosphere.

The waiting area was very spacious and at the time of our visits had plenty of chairs to match the number of patients. There was some confusion as to whether patients should sit in the waiting area parallel to the surgery’s reception area due to a lack of distinction between the two surgeries. One patient told us that she found it *“odd that there are two practices side by side.”*

Our volunteers noted that the reception area was very close to the waiting area and that four receptionists sit quite close together, not conducive for privacy. A notice at the desk does explain that privacy can be arranged should a patient need it.

We observed that staff, including receptionists and doctors, were not wearing name badges despite some of the patients being new to the surgery. This provided further confusion among patients who were unsure as to which surgery staff were attached to.

We recommended that a sign should be present in the waiting area with the pictures and names of the practice team so that patients are aware of the clinical team available to them. In addition, all staff should wear name badges, which includes their job title and the surgery’s name.

Practice's Response

The practice assured us that they are in the process of issuing all staff with name badges.

Patient Advocacy

Patient Feedback

From our observations, we noted that patients could make a complaint or compliment easily if they needed to. Compliments and Complaints leaflets and the Friends and Family test are presented clearly at reception. The complaints record showed that there have been 2 complaints in 2014/2015.

Patients also have the opportunity to influence the practice by joining the Patient Participation Group (PPG), which is clearly advertised in the surgery and on the practice website. The Practice Manager informed us that the two practices at Sheen Lane Health Centre have joined together to try to make the PPG more representative and robust. The Practice Manager also told us that the surgery's PPG is very pro-active and effective.

Moreover, the PPG has worked hard to engage with seldom heard groups within the practice population by advertising in a variety of ways: registration forms for new patients, a poster in the waiting room, the practice's website, by PPG members visiting the surgery to talk to patients in the waiting room and recently, by building up an email list.¹

When asked about the PPG, most patients were unaware of their existence or function within the surgery, despite the clear advertisement.

Information

Our visitors observed large amounts of printed information in the practice but reported that it was not often well organised or maintained as perhaps it could be.

A number of patients said they had found the information displayed in the practice useful especially in relation to their condition or felt that they could ask their doctor for information if needed. One patient told us that their friend, another patient at the surgery, had received exceptional care at the surgery because she was signposted to relevant support networks by the medical team.

While there was a significant quantity of information in the practice there were some important pieces of information that we did not observe and felt should be provided by the practice. This included information in alternative languages or how to access this information for people whose first language was not English. The Practice Manager told us that the British Sign Language (BSL) service is more regularly used than the translation service.

¹ PPG report 2014/2015

We recognise that the practice has access to a translation service, and that producing leaflets in multiple languages may not be financially feasible. We recommended that the practice produce a small amount of information in multiple languages, for example a poster that advertises the availability of a translation service may not be expensive.

Practice's Response

The practice told us that they would liaise with Richmond CCG to see if they could access a small amount of information in multiple languages to place within the practice.

Appointments

Booking appointments

Access to appointments varied across patients interviewed: some were able to get an appointment on the day if they needed whereas others had to wait a week or two. Several patients felt that this was due to the increase in popularity of the surgery since the influx of patients from Deanhill surgery. The majority of patients interviewed noted that they would only be able to get a same day appointment *“if it was an emergency.”* Two patients told us that they have had to use the Teddington Walk-in centre or A&E for medical attention because they could not get an appointment.

Most of the patients we spoke to were positive about getting an appointment by calling up and that the receptionists *“work hard to get you an appointment you want.”* One patient did note that they *“often have trouble getting through on the telephone so I just come in to book an appointment.”*

Nearly all the patients we interviewed told us that seeing the Doctor of their choice required waiting for them to become available, *“If you want to see a specific doctor then you need to book ahead and often have to wait.”* One patient reported having to wait one month for an appointment because the doctor of his choice was not available. The lack of continuity in care concerned some patients, *“I get different advice with every GP and a different prescription with every GP.”* The practice's PPG have worked to mitigate this issue by informing patients when GPs work via the practice website.²

In addition, some concern was raised about the length of appointments. One patient told us that there was a certain *“time pressure”* and that they felt they had to speak concisely about their problem. This was supported by another patient, who told us that they *“didn't feel the doctor gets to see you long enough.”*

The surgery has recently set up an online booking system, which is advertised on a poster in the waiting area, the practice leaflet and on the digital information screen. About half of the patients we spoke to were not aware of an online booking system. Other patients that were aware but didn't use the system, said they found it easier to

² PPG report 2014/2015

phone because you can “*explain your condition to the receptionist.*” Some patients found the process of registering “*confusing*” or didn’t know how to register.

We recommended that the practice should consider different ways of promoting the online appointment service so that all patients are aware of it. In particular, patients need greater clarification on the process of registering for the online system.

Practice’s Response

The practice told us that they advertise their online appointment service widely by sending texts to all patients, advertising the service on the website and in the practice and discussing it with all new patients. They asked for suggestions as to how they might ensure that patients are aware of the service.

Waiting Times

Patients reported mixed waiting times, ranging from 10-40 minutes after their appointment time. One patient reported that waiting 45-60 minutes is commonplace at the surgery. Another patient noted that when appointments are late the, “*Doctor always explains why the appointment was late, which is a nice touch.*”

Opening hours

The majority of patients we spoke to were happy with the opening hours. However, there were a few comments that suggested some patients were unaware of the surgery opening hours, “*it would be helpful to have evening and weekend appointments available.*” The practice does offer Saturday morning appointments.

Conversely, one patient we interviewed said she was “*delighted*” the surgery is open on Saturday mornings and that she can easily pick up her prescriptions on her way back from work. We observed that the opening hours are clearly displayed on entrance to the practice.

Out of Hours

Most patients we spoke to knew that they could look in the practice leaflet for information about the out-of-hours service. We did observe that the NHS Direct number was being advertised on the electronic screen in the waiting room rather than NHS 111. We informed staff that this would need updating.

We recommended that the practice should consider promoting the opening hours elsewhere in the building to ensure that patients are aware of the times that service is available to them. In particular, we recommended that the availability of weekend appointments and how they can access them should be promoted to patients.

The NHS Direct number advertised in the surgery should be updated to NHS 111 so that patients are correctly informed.

Practice's Response

The practice assured us that they would consider how they might best promote the extended opening hours.

Quality of care

Staff

The majority of people we spoke to praised the practice staff. This is further supported by the compliments received by the practice³, one patient thanking the team for their '*efficient, caring responsiveness.*' We hope that the practice will pass on the positive feedback that we have gathered from patients about staff.

From our interviews with staff we were told that they feel well supported in their role, are offered regular training and are encouraged to learn. The Practice Manager has a schedule of their qualifications, and a training programme for each staff member. Staff told us that they enjoy their job and try to accommodate patients as much as possible.

The Doctor we spoke to told us about a daily coffee meeting that all doctors are encouraged to attend in order to share problems or solutions with other doctors. The Doctor also told us that when it is noticed that another staff member isn't regularly attending these meetings, "*we will have a word with them because we all know how important it is.*" Regular away days for the whole team are also organised to encourage team work and to develop strong professional relationships.

However, the Doctor also spoke to us about the pressures of an increasing patient population on the medical team, "*15 years ago I used to be able to take a lunch break, it just isn't possible now.*"

Receptionists

The majority of patients responded very positively to questions about the reception team. Receptionists were described as "*delightful,*" "*friendly,*" "*attentive*" and "*polite.*" Most patients also noted that the reception team treat them with respect and consideration. Some patients also noted that reception staff have considerably improved in terms of behaviour and attitude, "*used to be quite fierce but now they are much more friendly.*"

Doctors & Nurses

Most patients we interviewed were highly satisfied with the medical team and felt very involved in their care treatment. Patients generally agreed that the team was very patient-centred because they first and foremost try to, "*understand the needs of the patients.*"

³ NHS Choices, <http://www.nhs.uk/Services/GP/ReviewsAndRatings/DefaultView.aspx?id=44954>

One patient noted that the best thing about the practice was the doctors because they are “*not condescending, there are no power imbalances.*” Another patient particularly praised the younger doctors, perceiving them as “*more open-minded*” but also confirmed that all the doctors delivered a high standard of care.

Two patients provided negative comments about the GPs, although no specific doctor was mentioned. Some patients also made comments on the overstretched nature of the doctors and suggested that the surgery should employ more locum doctors.

Final Recommendations

The practice assured us that they are in the process of ensuring all staff wear name badges. The practice also told us that they would liaise with Richmond CCG to establish a small amount of information in multiple languages in the practice. Additionally, they told us that they have advertised the online booking system widely and are looking for other ways to ensure patients are aware of the system. Finally, the practice responded that they would explore how they might promote the practice opening hours, especially extended weekend opening times, within the practice.

We understand that the practice is doing as much as it can to promote the online booking system to its patients. The low awareness among patients of the online booking system is a borough wide issue and we therefore, will be in contact with Richmond CCG to discuss how they might work to increase awareness.

We would like the practice to consider our final recommendations:

Information

Healthwatch Richmond would like to have an update on whether Richmond CCG were able to provide the practice with information in multiple languages. The practice should also contact other practices in the borough who already have information in multiple languages, which could be shared. For example, at Richmond Green Medical Centre, a Language Identification guide is given out by receptionists to patients when required.

Patient awareness of opening hours

Healthwatch Richmond would like to have an update on the promotion of opening hours within the practice.

Conclusion

Healthwatch Richmond welcomes the practice's response and commitment to implementing our recommendations. We look forward to receiving assurance that the recommendations have been implemented.