

TANGMERE MEDICAL CENTRE

PRACTICE SURVEY 2013

Tangmere Medical Centre is a purpose built surgery with ample parking and excellent facilities. The list size currently stands at just over 4,000, the majority of them young families with only 14% over the age of 65. Tangmere has a largely white British patient list, over 80% falling into this category. There are a growing number of eastern Europeans, many of whom do not speak very much English. The practice has three part time partners and one retainer, all of whom are female.

The Practice is open from 8.00 until 6.30 each day. Reception does not close for lunch. Surgeries run throughout the day. In addition, the doctors offer a late surgery from 6.30-7.30 every Monday as part of the extended access enhanced service.

RECRUITMENT OF PATIENT REPRESENTATIVE GROUP

The terms of the patient participation LES required that the Practice develops a structure that gains the views of patients and obtains feedback from the practice population. Tangmere has an active Patient Group which was set up three years ago and now has more than 350 members. The group organizes weekly walks, they arrange educational talks and they produce a quarterly newsletter which is distributed to patients. All new patients are invited to become part of the patient group and the members do try to attract members from all age groups and backgrounds.

When the surgery signed up to the enhanced service, the chair of the PRG approached members of the group who were interested in assisting with the compilation of a practice survey to attend a meeting. Efforts were made to attract a good cross section of patients, particularly patients with young families who were under represented in the group. A message was put on the practice website and posters were put in the waiting room so that patients who were not already in the patient group could also attend. The doctors also personally invited patients to put forward their view.

It is recognized that it is difficult to form a truly representative patient group of patients. In an ideal world, the practice would have liked to attract representation from a wide age group, covering all ethnic groups. However, it was found that many patients were disinterested and were not prepared to get involved.

After discussion with the PRG the survey was designed based on the following:-

The priorities of the surgery

- To reduce the numbers of patients using A&E during surgery hours
- To ensure that patients are seen by the appropriate clinician, not necessarily the doctor.
- To improve access for patients

PRG priorities and issues

- To improve access
- To reduce waiting times for appointments
- To pay for prescriptions by credit or debit card
- To request prescriptions on line
- To be able to contact the doctor by telephone

In previous years, to achieve the required number of completed questionnaires, double the number of copies had to be sent out. In recognition of this, it was agreed that 200 surveys would be posted to patients, selected at random from the practice list. If the practice still failed to achieve the correct number of completed questionnaires, any extras required would be handed out at random by the reception staff.

As we approach the end of the year, the Practice has reviewed the outcomes of the patient survey and looked at the action points to see how successfully changes have been implemented. The action plan included:-

- Sign to be put on reception to advise patients to request a double appointment if they feel that they need extra time with the doctor.
- A system will be set up so that prescriptions can be ordered on line.
- The doctors will carry out a pilot, offering telephone consultations to see how best to incorporate them in surgeries
- The practice will investigate the possibility of making appointments on line
- The practice will start to take debit and credit cards in the dispensary

DOUBLE APPOINTMENTS

Although there is a sign in reception advising patients to make a double appointment if they feel that they need more time with the doctor, it is extremely rare that patients actually request more than one appointment.

It is difficult for the staff to ascertain whether a double appointment is needed with a doctor. When making an appointment with a nurse, patients are more prepared to share the reason for the appointment. This enables the receptionist to make sure that the appointment is long enough. When making a doctor's appointment, however, patients are often not prepared to give a reason, the result being that invariably only a single appointment is booked. This was discussed at a recent practice meeting and it was suggested that reception staff actually ask patients if they need more time at the time that the appointment is made.

ORDERING PRESCRIPTIONS ON LINE

Since the survey was carried out, the surgery has changed computer system. The new system is much more up to date and offers greater flexibility.

Patients are given the option of either emailing their repeat prescription requests or registering for on line access to the surgery clinical system. If they would like to do this, they simply come in to the surgery and request a user name and password. They can then access the appointment system via the surgery website and can order their repeat medication. If their medication review is outstanding, they will not be able to order a prescription without first coming to see the doctor.

A number of patients now use the email facility. The surgery has only recently started to offer the on line option.

TELEPHONE APPOINTMENTS

Demand for appointments has increased over the past year. Many patients do not actually need to see a doctor. Often they just need advice about medication or wish to discuss a result. Sometimes they have a simple question that they would like answered without having to come into the surgery. In these circumstances, the receptionist will take the patients contact details and a brief summary of what they would like to discuss. This is then passed to the doctor who, depending on the urgency, will telephone the patient on the day or within the next few days.

APPOINTMENTS ON LINE

With the new computer system, there is the option of booking appointments on line. This has now been activated and patients are able to book routine appointments. To do this, they need to register for on line use. They need to be given a user name and password and they will then be able to access the clinical system via the surgery website.

At present, appointments can only be booked with the doctors. It is possible that this will be reviewed in the future and may be changed to include nurse appointments.

USE OF DEBIT AND CREDIT CARDS

The surgery now accepts both credit and debit cards. This has made a huge difference to patients. The majority now pay for their prescriptions by card. It is only rarely that cheques are used.