

Patient Participation Group Report Phase 1 2013

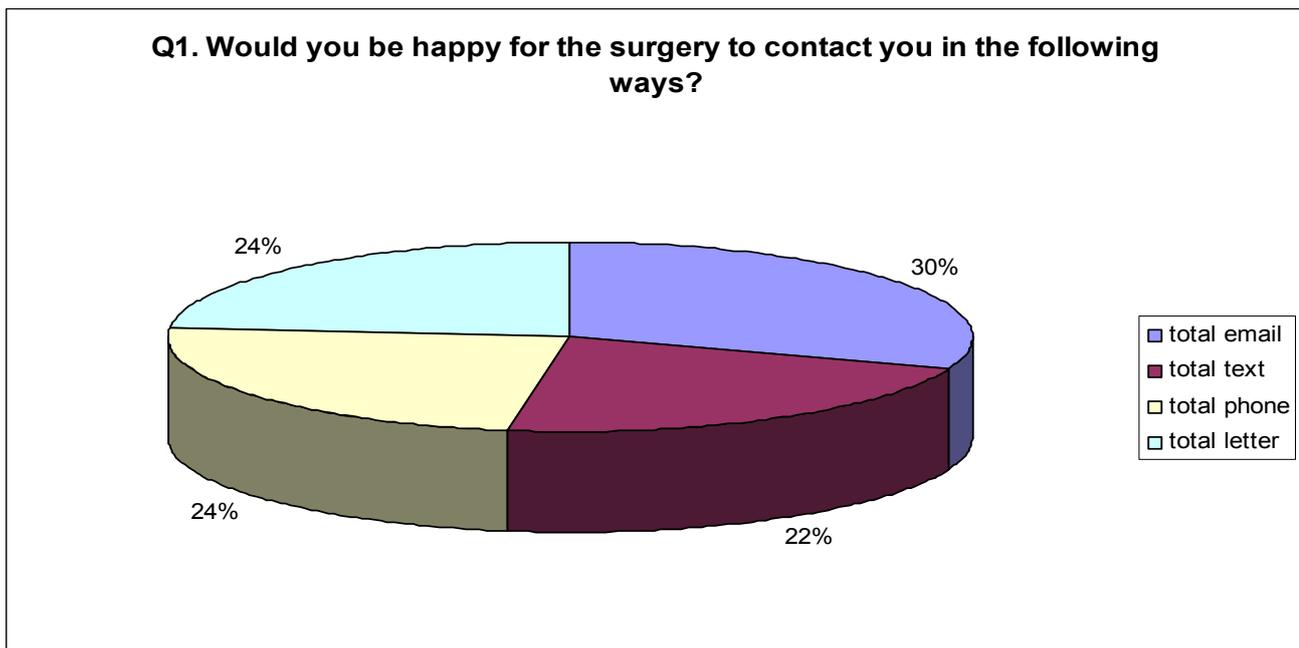
Following on from our PPG work in 2011/12, we surveyed our PPG in the summer to ask for their opinions on what they considered important issues to ask the wider practice population about. We wanted explore deeper the outcomes of the previous survey which had revealed an interest in wider forms of communication such as the use of email and SMS text as well as focusing on what could be improved for vulnerable groups.

Methodology & Approach

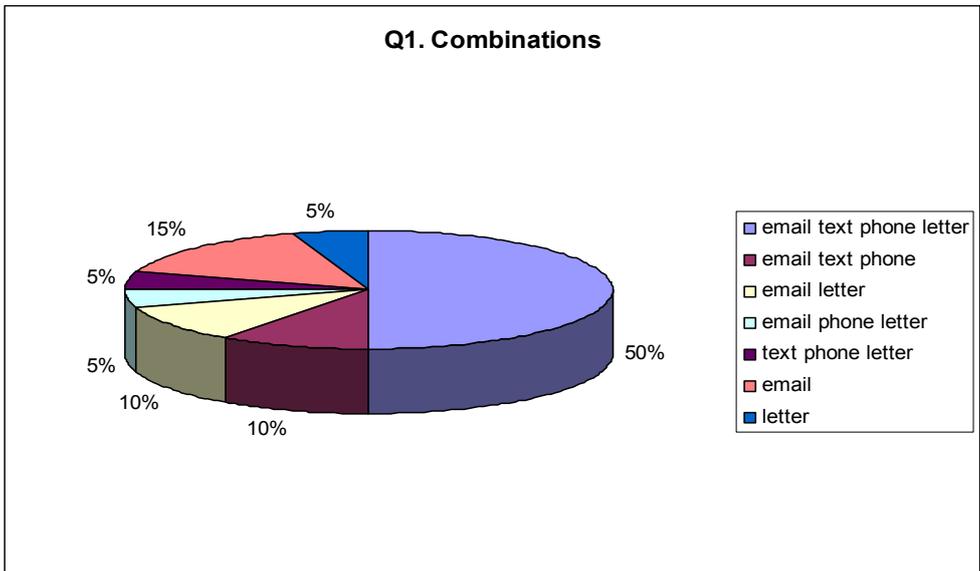
Our survey used open questions in an effort to get broader feedback but unfortunately we did not get a large response. We sent it out by email along with our summer newsletter, it was also advertised and available in the surgery's waiting room. The newsletter and survey invited anyone who would like to become part of our PPG to complete the survey and return to reception. Of our substantial PPG only about 20 percent responded but they had some very interesting comments and have enabled us to focus our practice wide survey.

Results

We split it into four sections and the first section was directed towards expanding on what types of communication they felt would be useful and appropriate for us to use when contacting patients.



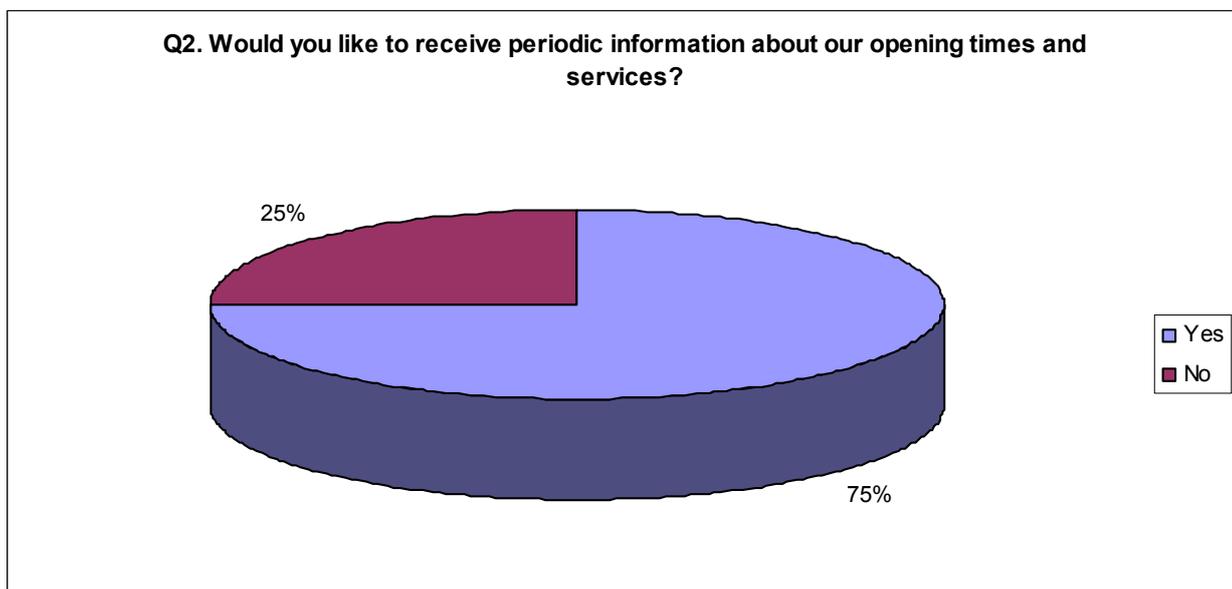
This showed a fairly even split between our four suggestions of emails, SMS text messages, telephone and letter. However we gave the option to choose as many formats as you liked and so it is interesting to see which combinations of the four proved the most popular.



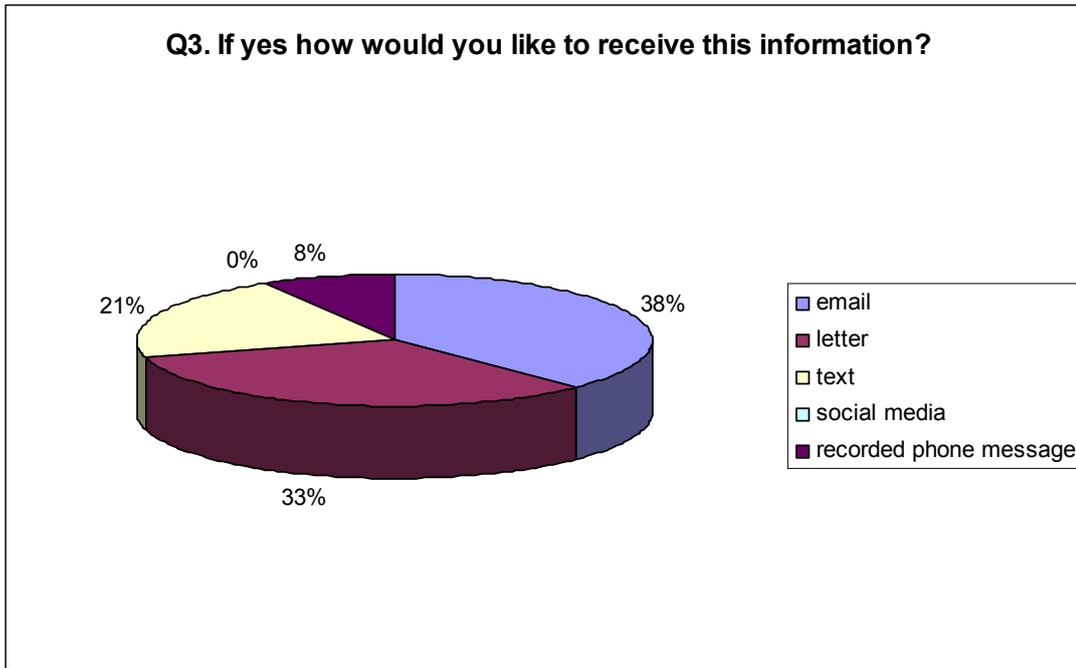
The majority of those who answered were happy with a combination of all four types of communication but the largest proportion after that were happiest with emails alone with SMS texts seemingly the least popular.

We have been asking all new registrations and as many patients as possible to provide us with an email address as well as permission to contact them this way. We have been doing this with mobile phone numbers and getting signed consent to contact them by text as well.

We wanted to find out if the PPG felt that we could be providing more information directly to patients rather than relying on patients themselves to seek information either through our website or speaking to staff at the Surgery.

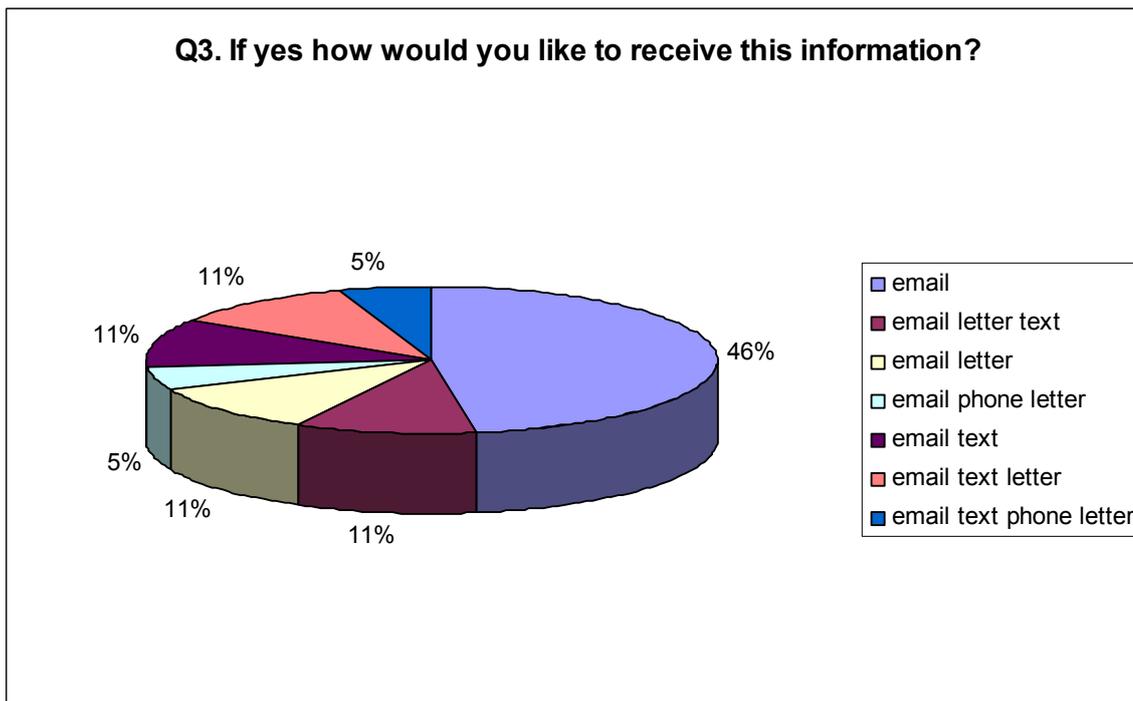


We then wanted to know how they would like this information to be received.

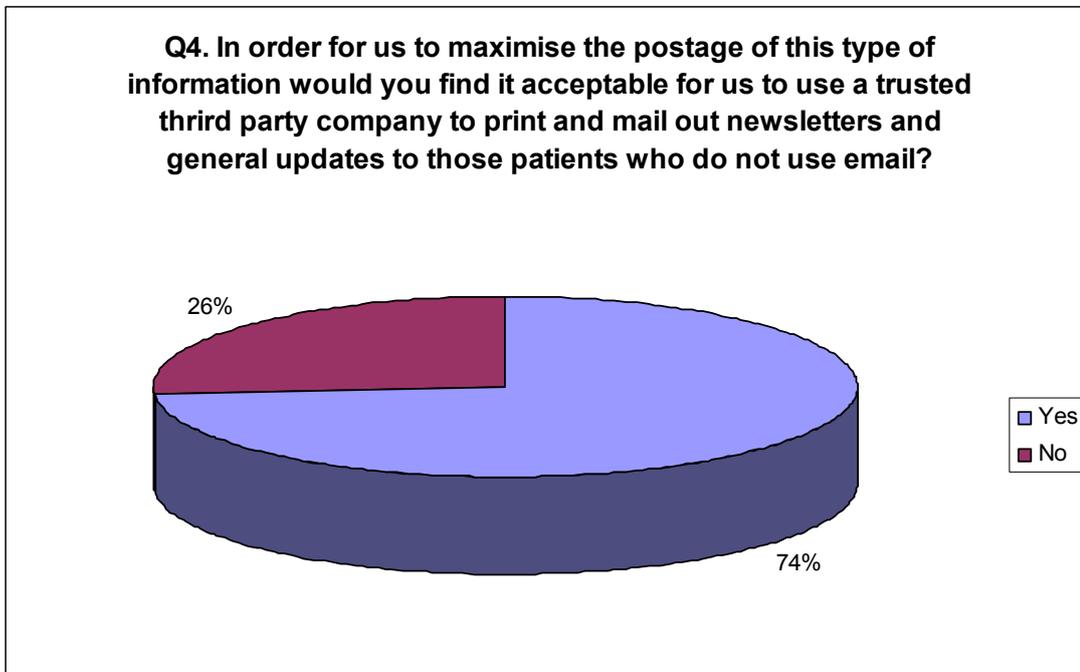


We offered the option of by email, letter, SMS text message, social media such as Twitter or Facebook or a recorded telephone message that they could dial in to and listen to. We currently have our opening times and contact details available on our telephone menu so that patients who may want to know our address or when we close can call our phone number 24hrs a day and listen to this information by choosing 2 on the menu.

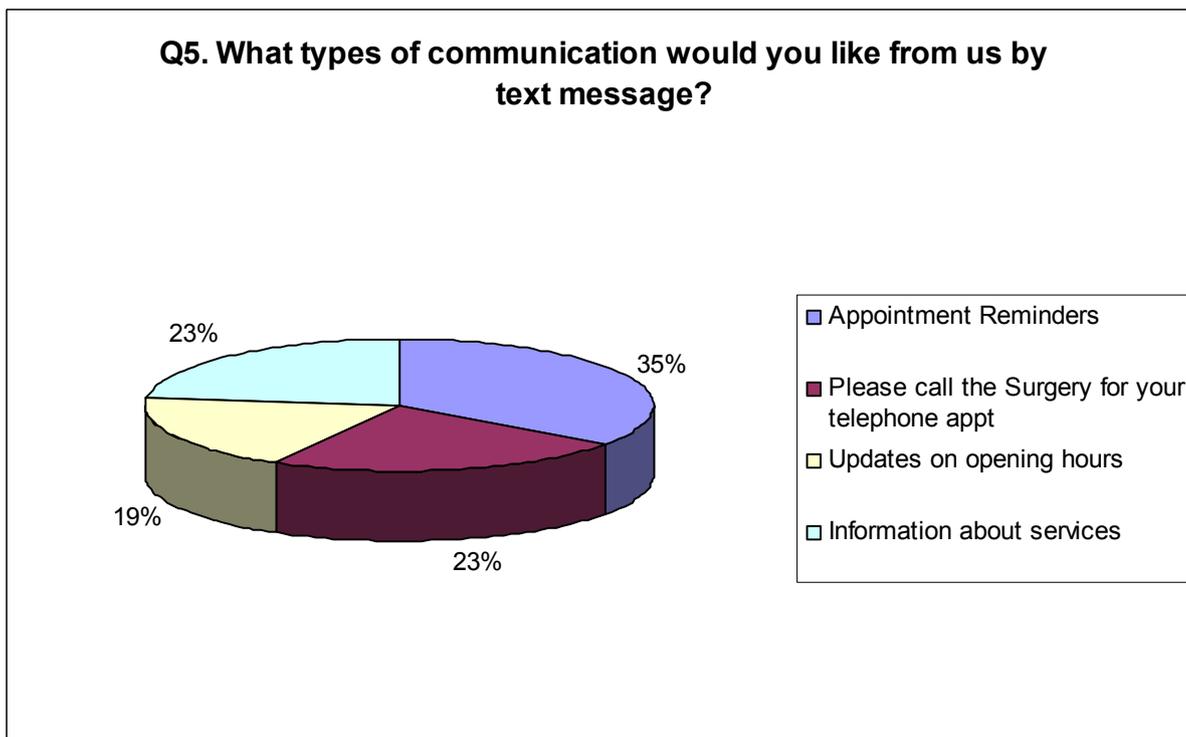
Again we invited respondents to choose as many options as possible as well as leaving any suggestions of their own. We did not receive any suggestions but the combinations of options chosen shows that again email has proven the most popular with nobody choosing social media at all.



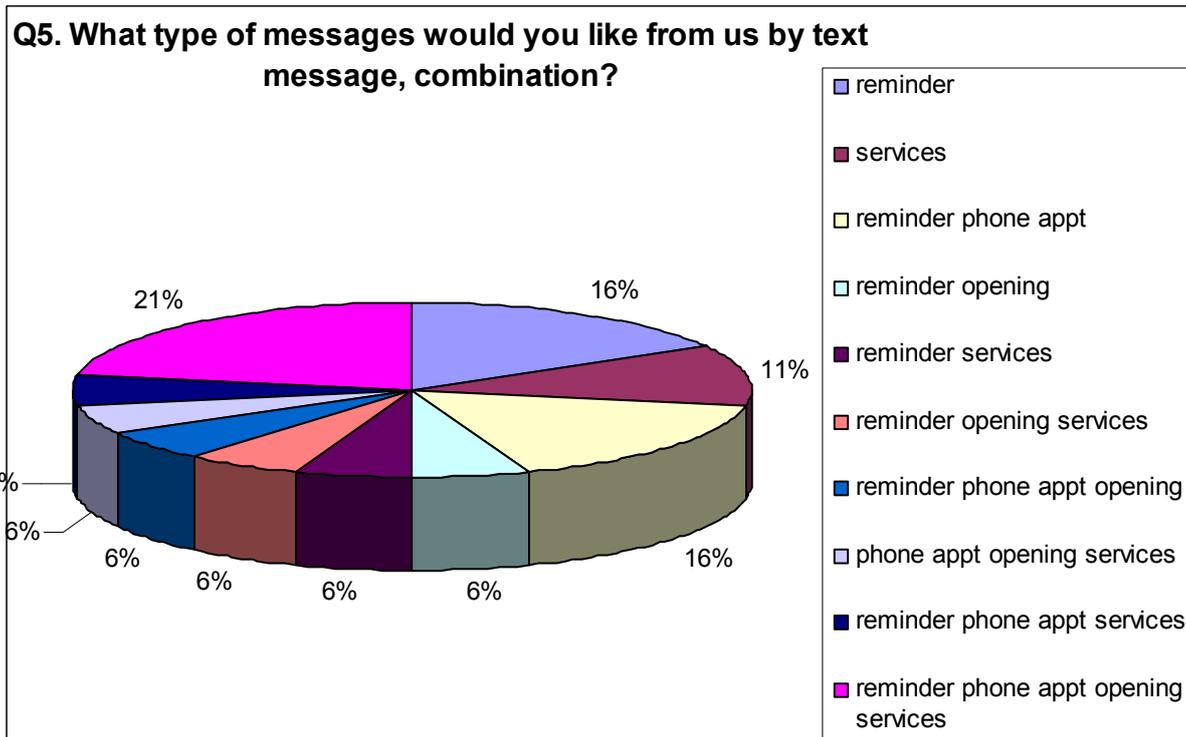
Historically we have sent information to patients using letters but this is becoming increasingly time consuming and costly. We have been exploring alternative ways to continue doing this and found that it is possible to use a trusted third party company to print and mail out letters. We wanted to know how our practice population might feel about this and three quarters of the PPG were in favour.



Text messaging is a relatively new way to contact patients and we were interested to find out what they felt was an acceptable use for this format.



Again this was a very even split between the four suggestions we provided. However in the breakdown of popularity it was appointment reminders that were chosen.



The combination of all four proved most popular but after that is was the idea of texting patients a reminder of the time and date of their appointment that got the majority of the vote.

The second section of the survey was about building development as we wanted to know if there was anything about our premises that they felt needed to be improved or updated. Over the past year we have been doing a number of projects aimed at improving our facilities and we wanted some opinion as to what else we might need to consider.

We asked 'Is there anything in The Surgery such as the waiting room or consultation rooms that you would like to see updated or improved?' We did not get many response to this question but the answers we did get were extremely useful.

'Ok for me'
 'The waiting room is perhaps not the high point of The Argyle Surgery, but it is certainly functional. I don't think updating it necessarily needs to be a priority.'
 'No, all is OK for me'
 'Waiting room is fit for purpose. Ideally chairs could be more comfortable'
 'A piece of foam on the door which keeps banging leading from the waiting room to the doctors!'
 'No'
 'I am conscious of the small size of the waiting room and this is a concern as other patients may carry infections and many who use the waiting room are old or vulnerable in other ways to this.'
 'More reliable technology - the booking in screen working all the time, the bp machines working etc'
 'If it's possible to put a different TV channel. Instead of news a music channel. Because as patients I think we need entertainment instead of news misery. Thanks'

'paint the doors'

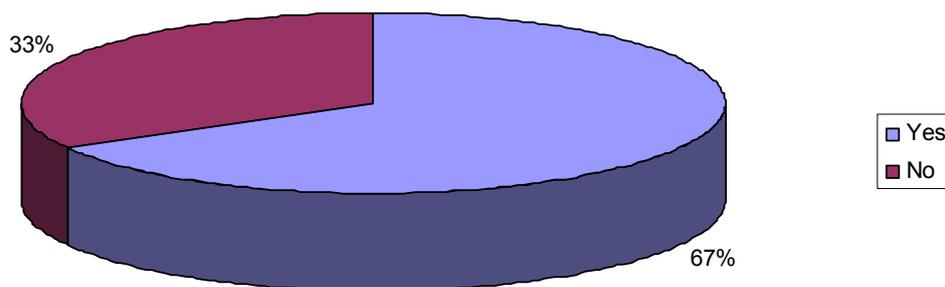
'General tidying up and redecoration of waiting room otherwise everything else is terrific'

'the blood pressure machine is good but could be better presented - this is an important service for those managing b/p/pressure'

This has highlighted some of the problems with our waiting room and we intend to try and resolve as much as possible.

The third section of the survey was focused on vulnerable groups. We wanted to know if the PPG had any suggestions as to how we could better help patients such as those who are elderly, disabled, a carer or have a learning disability. Firstly we wanted to know how many of our PPG considered themselves part of a vulnerable group and luckily it was the majority of those who answered our survey.

Q7. Do you consider yourself part of a vulnerable group such as a carer, elderly patient, disabled patient, learning disability?



We asked *'Do you have any ideas or suggestions how certain or all vulnerable groups could be better helped whilst at the Surgery?'*

We received the following comments:

'Be seen out of turn'

'I am impressed by the support and care received from doctors and nurses. My one slight criticism is that sometimes the office staff do not always appreciate that disabilities are not necessarily obvious and that privacy needs to be respected'

'Suggestions would depend of the main kinds of difficulties experienced and I hesitate to speculate.'

'Waiting room is not comfortably accessible for those with disabilities, especially motor disabilities'

'No'

'Pictures of doctors and team members'

'Do you offer a session for carers for those looking after adults with dementia. Linking in Mothers and babies to children centres'

We can use some of these suggestions to direct our practice wide survey and hopefully improve where we can.

The last section was left open for any suggestions from the PPG. We asked *'We would like to know if you have any suggestions about what we should be consulting our patient population on in order to help us improve the Surgery as a whole. Do you have any ideas or suggestion of topics for our patient survey?'*

We received the following comments:

'I think that with the new NHS commissioning role for GP's it would be interesting to survey your patients on what they think of the services that you will be buying for us, and what we would like you to prioritise in those services.'

'Explanation of Surgery's policy on new NHS commissioning services and GP's role in this in regard to consultation with patients.'

'The important kinds of questions all seemed to be covered. Maybe ask if patients would prefer more online appointment availability. The last time I tried only the first and last in the day were bookable that way'

'Appreciate your difficulties with the online appointments system provider but having something workable would really help. Would it be possible to access one's own test results - and perhaps other information - online?'

'Not really. Just to say thank you to all the staff at the surgery for providing such a brilliant service'

'I wonder how patients feel about having their full names displayed for all to read'

'This is a very basic survey. After q1 lots of the subsequent questions weren't actually relevant to my first answer. Get someone who designs surveys to do a more sophisticated one.'

'Notifying changes in staff i.e. new doctors or services'

It was unexpected and welcome to get answers concerning that of GP's new role within commissioning and we would like the opportunity to inform our patients further as to how this will affect the surgery as a whole. We fully intend to involve this subject in our patient survey and will explore different ways of getting clear guidance to our population.

Response Next Steps:

Although we did not get the size of response we would have liked this survey has proved very useful and we will tackle the issues raised in our next survey which shall be aimed at all of our patients. We would like to find out what the wider patient base feels about utilising email and text messaging as well as in what context they feel that this is appropriate. We would like to know how often patients would like to receive updates and pertinent information about the surgery as well as how they would like it to be delivered. We shall also continue to explore ways to best serve vulnerable groups and to help make their experience at the Surgery easier and more helpful.

To establish the wider patient population views on these areas we will conduct a wider survey and report back to the PPG for implementation.