

# NETTLEHAM MEDICAL PRACTICE

## Local Patient Participation Report 2011-12

Welcome to our first annual report on how Nettleham Medical Practice has worked with patients to obtain their views and together continue improving our services.

### DEVELOPING OUR PATIENT REFERENCE GROUP

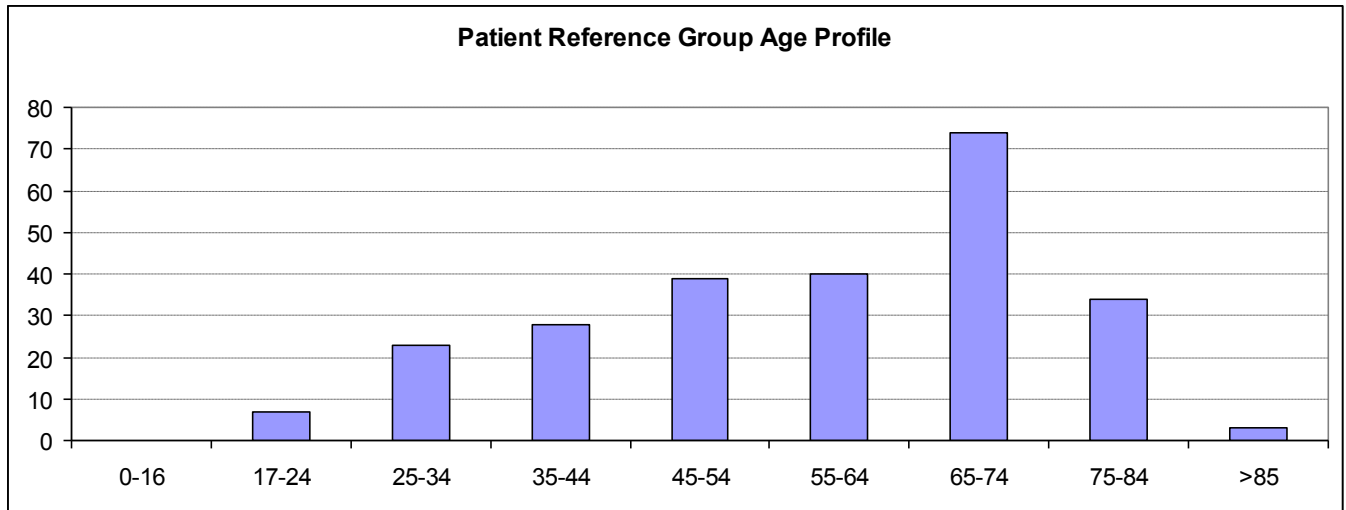
For many years Nettleham Medical Practice has had an active Patient Group who meet several times a year with the Management team of the practice to discuss issues relating to improving patient experience and also helping to raise funds for equipment for the benefit of patients. Over recent years the Patient Group has also established a very successful and popular Voluntary Drivers' Scheme which will pick up patients who have no transport of their own to come to the surgeries for appointments with only a small expenses charge to the patient.

We recognised, however, that many of our patients who do not have enough spare time to be able to become members of the Patient Group still may wish to have their views heard on issues related to the practice. We therefore wished to increase the number of patients able to express their views by setting up a second, larger group which we have called the Patient Reference Group. This group would not attend the meetings of the Patient Group, but would be asked up to a few times each year to give their opinions by e-survey or postal survey (depending on whether they have access to the internet).

The practice used a variety of methods to recruit patients to the group including the following:

- ◆ Posters in the Waiting Rooms
- ◆ Information on the Practice Website
- ◆ Attendance at Parish Council Meetings to publicise the group
- ◆ Existing members of the Patient Group kindly spent time in the Waiting Rooms to actively recruit new members – the existing members were briefed on the need to ensure a representative sample of patients were recruited
- ◆ Patients are still able to join the group and the group is still advertised widely within the practice

There are 248 members of the PRG to date. The following chart shows a breakdown of the ages of the group members.



The group additionally has the following statistics:

**GENDER:**           ♦ 57% Female           ♦ 43% Male

**ETHNICITY:**       ♦ 97.5% White       ♦ 2.5% Other

The overall Practice Patient List has the following statistics:

**GENDER:**           ♦ 52% Female           ♦ 48% Male

**ETHNICITY:**       ♦ 98% White       ♦ 2% Other

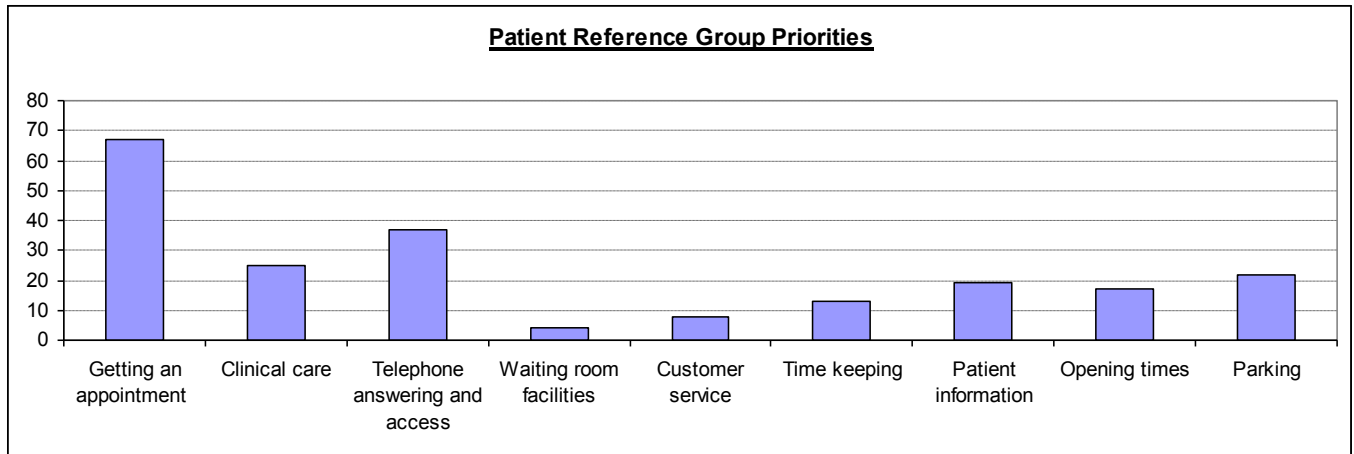
As can be seen from the above statistics, the membership of the group is representative of the practice population.

## **AGREEING WHICH ISSUES ARE A PRIORITY AND OUR LOCAL PRACTICE SURVEY**

On the form used to gather the details of those signing up to the PRG, a number of additional questions were asked.

One of those questions gave patients the opportunity to indicate the areas that they felt were a priority for the group to focus on in terms of improving systems and making positive change.

The following table shows a summary of the areas indicated by patients as their priorities for change.



As can be seen from the above chart, the main areas identified were:

- ◆ Getting an Appointment (31.6%)
- ◆ Telephone Answering & Access (17.5%)
- ◆ Clinical Care (11.8%)
- ◆ Car Parking (10.4%)

Further to this PRG survey it was agreed that the practice would look at the top two priorities in our first Local Practice Survey. Clearly these items are both concerned with Patient Access to services and so this can usefully be handled as one piece of work.

## **COLLATING PATIENT VIEWS THROUGH A LOCAL PRACTICE SURVEY AND INFORM THE PRG OF THE FINDINGS**

It was agreed to perform the Local Practice Survey using the questions shown at **Appendix 1** to this document.

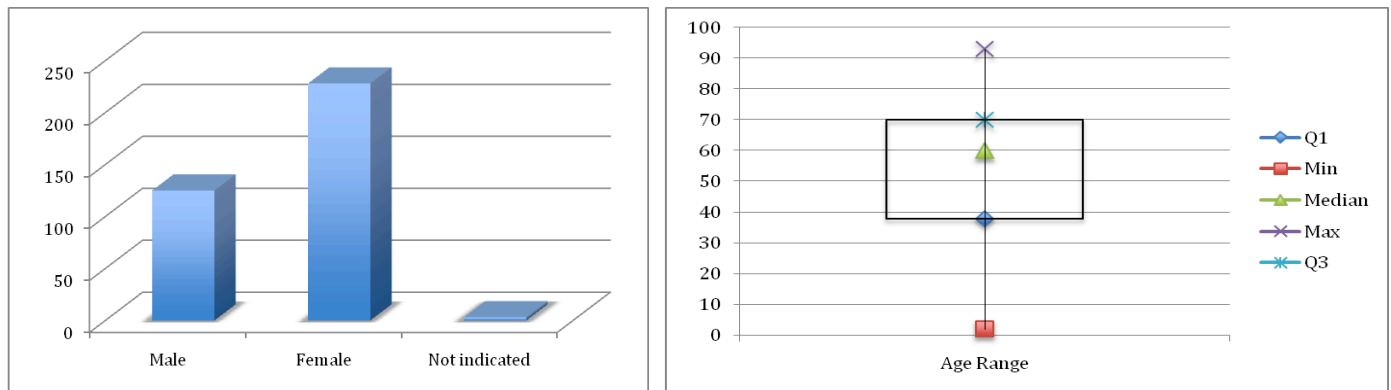
The questionnaires were administered using the Practices Patient Participation Group (PPG) which is a group of around 10 patients who have volunteered to be members of the group. This group has been in existence for some time and is involved in a number of initiatives across the practice.

The PPG worked in the waiting room during busy surgeries across the working week and spent time with patients asking them to complete their views on the forms provided. The survey period lasted for two weeks and was carried out at both the Nettleham and Cherry Willingham sites.

## **RESULTS OF THE SURVEY**

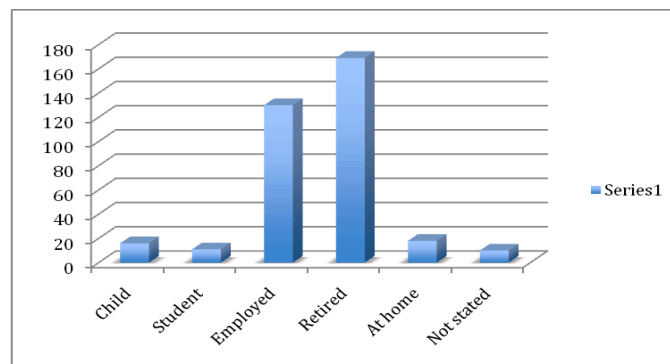
In total there were 354 completed surveys returned. The following is a summary of the results.

## About the patients responding...



The above charts show some of the demographics of responders to the survey.

The survey also asked patients to give brief details of their occupation and the results are shown below.

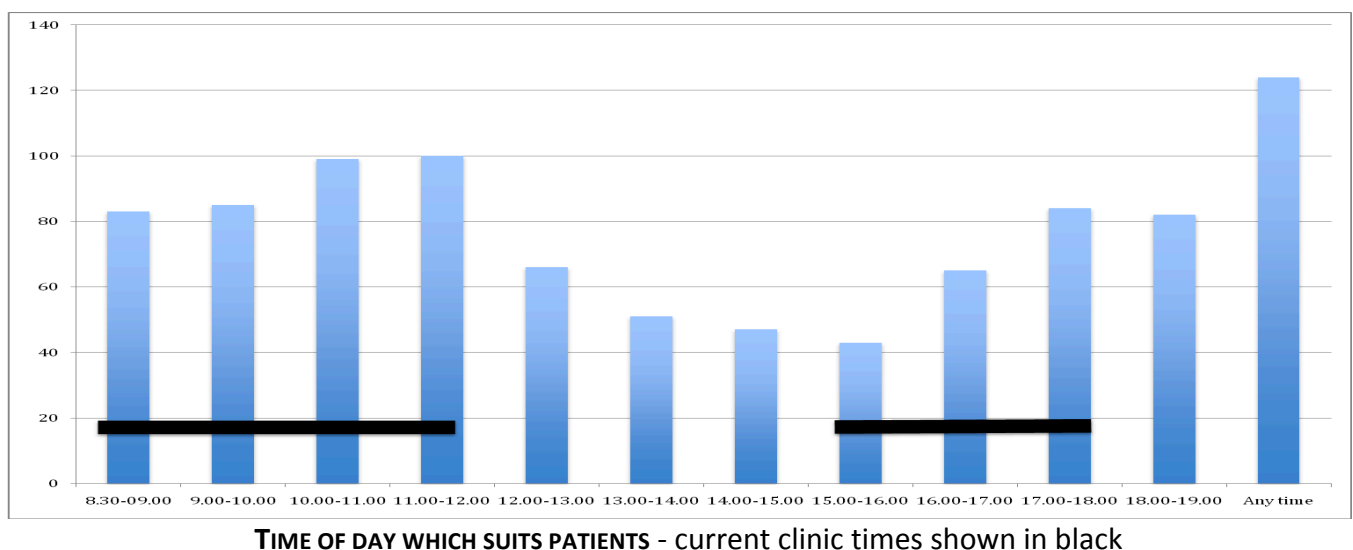


## About the surgery...

The questionnaires went on to ask about the patients preferences with regard to appointments at the surgery.

### CONVENIENT TIME OF DAY FOR AN APPOINTMENT

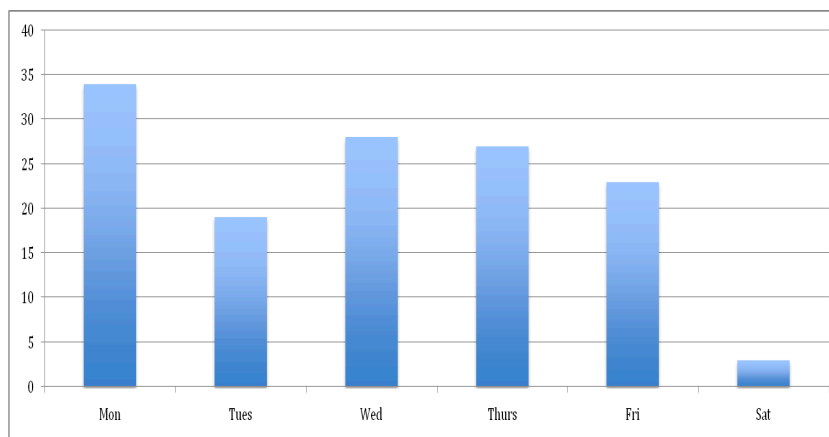
One of the questions asked focussed on the times and days which were most convenient for the patient to attend the surgery for an appointment. The results are detailed in the following charts...



It can be seen that the largest number of respondents said that they would have an appointment at any time.

As can be seen from the above chart, the current clinic times (shown in black) largely match up with the preferred times of day for patients to attend for their appointments. Notably the most requested time not within the normal surgery hours is the 6.00 – 7.00 pm slot and this need is met to some extent each week by the Extended Access clinic on Thursday evenings, which confirms that this service is valued.

### **MOST CONVENIENT DAY OF THE WEEK FOR AN APPOINTMENT**



The above chart shows the patient preferences for appointment availability according to days of the week.

These results were not entirely as expected, as although current demand for appointments is highest on a Monday and lowest on a Wednesday and Thursday, the days which suit patients for routine appointments do not follow the same pattern.

Looking at the appointment availability at the practice, this does match the demand pattern relatively well. However, these figures will be used as the practice considers changes to the appointments system over the coming weeks.

### **BOOKING APPOINTMENTS IN ADVANCE**

The next area that was investigated using the survey was concerning the pre-booking of appointments. Patients were asked how important it was to them that they had the ability to book an appointment more than two weeks in advance.

The results showed the following:

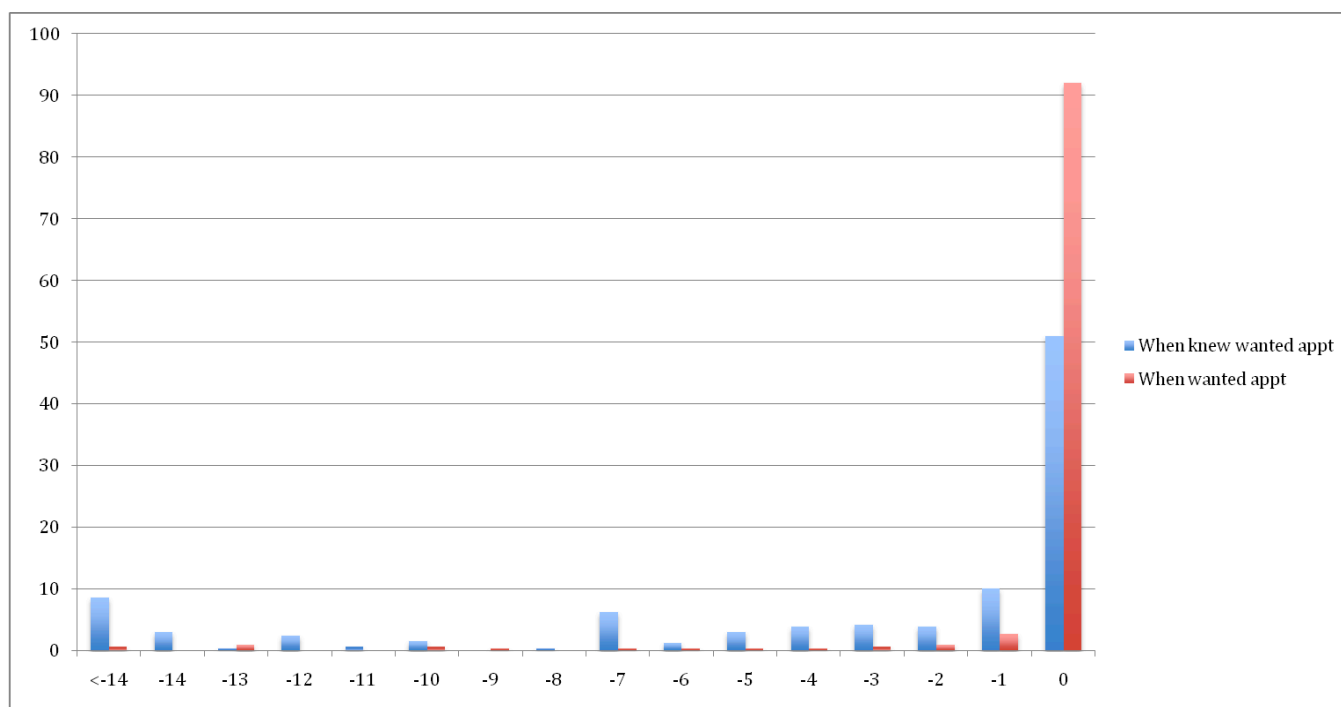
- ◆ Not at all Important: 56%
- ◆ Quite Important: 24%
- ◆ Very Important: 20%

Again, it was not as expected that such a high percentage of patients would feel that it was not important to them to be able to book appointments up to two weeks in advance. However, it is

understood that the current booking system in the practice has, to some extent, shaped patient demand and expectation to request appointments on a same or next day basis as either 'urgent' or 'emergency'.

The last area that the Practice Survey considered was also concerning the pre-booking of appointments. Patients were asked the date on which they first knew that they wanted the appointment that they were attending for. Also, that if they had a free choice, which day would they have preferred the appointment to be on (if not on that day!) This was in an attempt to quantify the current demand for pre-booked appointments and whether the current system was meeting that need.

The results are shown in the following graph.



**SUMMARY - WHEN PATIENT FIRST KNEW THEY WANTED THE APPT, & WHEN THEY ACTUALLY WANTED THE APPT TO BE EXPRESSED AS 'DAYS BEFORE APPOINTMENT'**

The information shown in the graph is most easily expressed in the following percentages:

- ◆ 92% of patients had appointment on a day that suited them
- ◆ 97% of patients had an appointment within a week of that when they wanted it
- ◆ 50% of patients first knew that they wanted an appointment on the day of the appointment (*ie were seen within 24 hours of requesting the appointment*)
- ◆ 73% of patients first knew that they wanted an appointment 4 days or less before their appointment
- ◆ 97% of patients first knew that they wanted an appointment less than 7 days before their appointment

The most striking element from the graph above is that a large percentage of patients are being seen on a 'same day', 'urgent' or 'emergency' basis. Through this appointments review and the subsequent planned changes to the appointments system, the practice are aiming to encourage patients who are able to book a few days in advance to do so, thereby leaving more space for patients who genuinely need to be seen on the same day.

In addition to the above responses, there was a large amount of helpful feedback received through the 'comments' section on the forms. These are discussed in the next section.

## **PATIENT COMMENTS**

There were a large number of comments included on the forms. The following shows just a summary of the feedback received:

### ***Appointments***

- ◆ The vast majority of patients book appointments on the day they wanted them
- ◆ Current clinic times do appear to suit the majority of patients
- ◆ Most patients do not mind which day of the week they have their appointment

### ***Advance Booking***

- ◆ Many patients commented that it was important to them to be able to book a small number of days in advance (2/4 days ahead) in order to get the same clinician
- ◆ Many patients only felt that book on the day availability was important
- ◆ Some patients wished to be able to book more than 2 weeks in advance

### ***Cherry Willingham Surgeries***

- ◆ Lots of feedback on Cherry Willingham surgery, often asking for longer surgery hours at the branch
- ◆ Requests for Pre-booking of appointments at Cherry Willingham surgery

### ***Extended Access Surgeries***

- ◆ Requests for evening surgery and Saturday morning surgeries each week (it is not clear if the respondent was aware that Saturday morning surgeries are in place already under Extended Access)

### ***Phoning at 8.30am***

- ◆ Lots of comments on how hard it is to get through on the phone at 8.30am
- ◆ Lots of comments on the problem of phoning continually at 8.30am only to get through and there's no appointments left
- ◆ Some comments regarding the difficulty of needing to phone at 8.30am as this coincides with the school run
- ◆ Some comments on the need to specify the request as an 'emergency' in order to get an appointment

### ***Continuity of Care***

- ◆ Some comments stating that it is difficult to see the doctor requested
- ◆ Some feedback on the difficulty of getting to see the same doctor twice
- ◆ Many comments stating 'would like to see own doctor'

### ***Internet Booking***

- ◆ A number of requests to be able to book a greater number of appointments via the internet

Some other comments were also received on non-related issues and were dealt with separately as appropriate.

## PRACTICE DISCUSSION

The results of the survey were presented and discussed at a Partnership meeting where potential changes to the booking system to try to improve the experience of our patients were planned.

Overall, this review seems to support making the majority of appointments bookable 4-7 days ahead, with urgent needs dealt with on the same day. It is hoped that this may lead to a more responsive service, thereby improving continuity of care.

The primary stressor for the practice and for patients remains the 8.30am rush for appointments.

## AIMS OF THE NEW APPOINTMENTS SYSTEM

After discussion, it was agreed that the aims of the new appointments system would include:

- ◆ Reduction in pressure for Reception at 8.30am each morning – spread the demand throughout the day
- ◆ Providing a range of appointments for same day requests up to one week in advance
- ◆ Planned surgery workload which includes sufficient 'Same Day' appointments
- ◆ Increased Continuity of Care even for 'Same Day' appointments
- ◆ Reduction in 'Just in Case' appointments – increase patients confidence that they can book appointments when they need them without having to say that it's an emergency
- ◆ Reduce number of telephone calls taken by Reception overall – patients only needing to make one call to make an appointment booking
- ◆ Telephone appointments to be released up to 7 days in advance
- ◆ Internet booking of appointments expanded as part of this process

## INFORMING THE PRG OF THE FINDINGS OF THE LOCAL PRACTICE SURVEY AND GAINING THEIR AGREEMENT TO THE PLANNED CHANGES

The above planned new appointment booking system was shared with the PRG by either e-mail, for those who provided an e-mail address, or by post.

A copy of the report sent to the PRG is shown at **Appendix 2** to this document.

Along with the report, the members of the PRG were also sent a paper, detailing the suggested changes to the way appointments are handled at the practice, together with a ballot paper for them to put forward their views on the suggested changes.

The ballot paper which was included in the pack gave them the opportunity to view and comment on the findings of the Local Practice Survey – a copy of the ballot paper is also shown in **Appendix 2** to this document.



The PRG voted as follows in relation to the changes suggested to the appointments system. (99 responses overall)

<b>VOTES IN AGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN:</b>	<b>97 VOTES</b>	<b>98%</b>
<b>VOTES AGAINST THE PLAN:</b>	<b>2 VOTES</b>	<b>2%</b>

A selection of other comments received is as follows:

### ***Continuity of Care***

- ◆ I do like to see the same doctor so this is a good idea
- ◆ This will hopefully address the 2 biggest problems with getting an appointment – reducing the need to telephone at 8.30am (& the associated problems of getting through and getting an appointment) & speeding up the resolution of patient problems if continuity of care is available (as the same problem wouldn't need to be explained to various doctors on various occasions). A much needed improvement – I hope it is successful!
- ◆ I think this is an excellent idea. From discussing these issues with local residents, I have found one of the most frustrating problems is the lack of continuity of care. Hopefully the new system will redress this issue.
- ◆ Hopefully this will give better continuity of care
- ◆ The system seems worth a try but it does not feel as though it will deal with the issue of continuity of care. Also it might be seen as reducing early morning calls for the surgeries benefit, not the patients – suggest a six month trial period.

### ***Phoning at 8.30am***

- ◆ I would be in favour in general but, concerns include: getting an appointment for sudden exacerbation of an illness, ringing at 8.30am and continuity of care.
- ◆ Must be better than the 8.30am lottery!

### ***Internet Booking***

- ◆ Will patients without access to the internet have sufficient appointments available when they telephone?

### ***Extended Access Surgeries***

- ◆ Could a second evening each week be made available for appointments? This could help take the pressure off during the daytime.
- ◆ More appointments available outside of normal working hours would be useful – I can attend inside working hours if it's me that's ill, but as I also have responsibility for bringing my children in if they are ill... this can be difficult...

### ***General Comments***

- ◆ This sounds very sensible! ...hope it works.
- ◆ Something needs to be done I think – good
- ◆ I very much appreciate the volunteer driver scheme – such a good service
- ◆ The system seems to be working well from my point of view – why is this change necessary?
- ◆ I think this proposal is very good and will minimise frustration for patients
- ◆ This is a good move

- ◆ Working people need to have appointments that fit in with their work, non working people may need to take appointments later in the day and be flexible
- ◆ Anyone really ill should be pleased to see any doctor that's on duty
- ◆ A positive step forward and a good response to patient's feedback
- ◆ It's going to be very difficult to develop a system that covers all patients' needs. The proposal seems to strike a balance between urgent and regular non urgent appointments
- ◆ Quite happy with the current system but this would seem to improve upon it. What's not to like?
- ◆ This is a very good idea...
- ◆ Timekeeping for appointments is important. While understanding that this is difficult, it is frustrating to attend a pre-booked appointment and have to wait a considerable time on occasion to be seen.
- ◆ Please ensure that there are enough urgent appointments available each day
- ◆ Thank you for the service that you provide
- ◆ At last! Scope to book an appointment a day or so in advance and plan other things around that!
- ◆ ...this could work but it needs to be carefully applied
- ◆ Thank you for listening to the needs of your patients

So, as can be seen from the above results, the PRG voted conclusively in favour of the proposed changes to the appointments system. It is therefore agreed to proceed as planned.

## **THE AGREED PLAN**

The suggested start date of the new appointments system is Wednesday 9 May 2012.

Patients will be informed about the new system in the following ways:

- ◆ Posters in the Waiting Rooms and Reception area
- ◆ Flyers on the Reception desks
- ◆ Information on the Practice website
- ◆ Updates on the Patient TV in the Waiting Rooms
- ◆ Inclusion in Local Newsletters
- ◆ Receptionists informing patients

It is anticipated that the new appointments system will be assessed after 6 months, to ensure that the objectives are being met.

## OPENING HOURS OF THE PRACTICE PREMISES

The opening hours of the practice premises are **8.30am** (8am for urgent calls or appointments) to **6.30pm every week day**. In addition, the practice is open every **Thursday evening from 6.30pm until 8.00pm** and every **Saturday morning from 9.00am until 12.00 noon**.

Routine Clinic times are as follows:

### NETTLEHAM

#### Monday to Friday

8.30am – 11.30am & 3.20pm – 6.00pm

#### Extended Access Hours

**Thursday evening:** 6.30pm – 8.00pm\*

**Saturday:** 9.00am – 12 noon\*

### CHERRY WILLINGHAM

#### Monday to Friday

**Mornings:** 8.30am – 11.45am

**Monday afternoons:** 3.20pm – 6.00pm

\*Please note that the Thursday evening and Saturday morning appointments can be booked ahead. There is no phone access to the surgery at these times as our line gives details of the emergency out of hours service.

All patients are seen by appointment by telephone **Nettleham** or **Cherry Willingham Surgery** on

**(01522) 751717**

All emergencies are seen the same day.

**TELEPHONE CONSULTATIONS** are now available by pre-bookable appointment.

**HOME VISITS** are available for people unable to get to the surgery for medical reasons (lack of transport is not a valid reason for a home visit). If you need a non-urgent visit please try to contact the surgery before 9.15am.

For **URGENT VISIT REQUESTS** phone between 8.00am and 6.30pm

## Appendix 1 – The Local Practice Survey

### Nettleham Medical Practice – Appointments Survey

We were very pleased with the recent Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire. Overall, 84% of our patients rated us as good, very good or excellent. However, we continue to strive to improve the service we provide to our patients and therefore we are reviewing the way patients book **appointments with doctors**.

We would be very grateful if you could answer a few questions about **the appointment you booked for today**.

- 1) Today's date:
- 2) What date did you first know that you wanted this appointment?
- 3) If you had a free choice, on which date would you have wanted this appointment:
- 4) Please tell us which times & days are most convenient for you to attend the surgery for an appointment (tick as many boxes as apply):

- 8.30am to 9am
- 9am to 10am
- 10am to 11am
- 11am to 12pm
- 12pm to 1pm
- 1pm to 2pm
- 2pm to 3pm
- 3pm to 4pm
- 4pm to 5pm
- 5pm to 6pm
- 6pm to 7pm

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday

- 5) How important is it that you are able to book an appointment **more than two weeks in advance**?

- Not at all important     Quite important     Very important

- 6) About the patient:
  - a. Age of patient:
  - b. Occupation of patient:
  - c. Gender of patient:

- 7) Any other comments:

## Appendix 2 – Report sent to the PRG – Findings of the Survey & Ballot

# Nettleham Medical Practice

14 Lodge Lane, Nettleham, Lincoln, LN2 2RS  
Tel: 01522 751717 Fax: 01522 754474  
www.nettlehammedical.co.uk

16 March 2012

Dear member of our Patient Representative Group,

Thank you for signing up to be part of our Patient Representative Group. We are now writing to you to let you know about the survey that we have undertaken as a response to your feedback.

### PATIENT PRIORITIES

As you know, on the initial questionnaire for this group, we asked you what your priorities for the practice were. By far, the highest priorities were “Getting an appointment” (31.6%) and “Telephone Answering and Access” (17.5%).

### WAITING ROOM SURVEY ON THE APPOINTMENT SYSTEM

We therefore carried out a survey of 354 patients in the practice (with thanks to our Patient Participation Group for spending many hours in the waiting room!) to measure our current performance and also find out our patient preferences.

The results surprised us, as 92% of patients do get an appointment on a day which suits them! Furthermore, our clinic times do match the times of day which suit our patients best.

However, clearly the main stressful points in the system are:

- The 8.30am rush
- Lack of “continuity of care” that is being unable to see a doctor of your choice

The current system means most patients have a choice of either a same day appointment or one in 4 weeks time, with often nothing available in between. As doctors do not see patients every day of the week, this means that ensuring continuity of care is extremely difficult unless you book 4 weeks in advance.

### A PROPOSED NEW SYSTEM FOR BOOKING APPOINTMENTS TO SEE A DOCTOR

We have looked over these results and are considering introducing a system where we release the vast majority of appointments up to a week ahead. We believe this will improve a patient’s chance of seeing a doctor of their choice, as well as patients not having to phone at 8.30am to ensure an appointment. This will allow urgent calls in the morning to get through in a more timely fashion. There will still be urgent appointments on the day for those that have issues which need to be dealt with on that day.

73% of our patients knew they wanted their appointment within 4 days of their actual appointment, and 97% of patients knew they wanted their appointment within 7 days of their actual appointment. This suggests that the vast majority of patients do not usually wish to book more than a week ahead.

Only 20% of patients surveyed felt the ability to book an appointment 2 weeks in advance is very important, with 80% feeling it’s “not at all important” or only “quite important”. Interestingly, several patients who marked their forms ‘very important’

#### Partners

*Dr Sally Waller*

*Dr John Craven*

*Dr Mark Protheroe*

*Dr Simon Baker*

*Dr Catherine McParland*

*Dr David Sheehan*

*Dr Olaleye Oginni*

*Dr Philip Williams*

#### Associate GPs

*Dr Rama Srinivasan*

*Dr Ian Lacy*



wrote comments saying that this is the only way to ensure continuity of care. We believe under the proposed new system, continuity of care will be improved for more patients than currently.

The main change patients will notice is that rather than being offered an appointment on the same day, or being asked to ring back the next day at 8.30am, they should find a selection of appointments being offered over the next few days.

While this change will not increase the number of doctor appointments at the surgery, what we hope to do is use the appointments we do have in a far more efficient way, which does not lead to everyone phoning in at 8.30am!

#### **OTHER POINTS TO NOTE ABOUT WHAT IS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE**

- You are able to book appointments on the internet for both sites. In the proposed system above, you should have significantly more appointments to choose from than currently.
- We understand that travelling to our surgeries can be difficult. Our Patient Participation Group kindly runs a volunteer driver scheme – they can provide lifts to the surgeries for a token fee. Ask a receptionist for details.
- We do offer a limited service on a Thursday evening and Saturday morning for routine appointments only. As you can imagine these appointments are very popular. We would ask that, where possible, these are used by people who can't attend the surgery during regular surgery hours.
- We are absolutely committed to maintaining a branch surgery at Cherry Willingham. Unfortunately with limited financial resources, we are unable to offer afternoon openings apart from on Mondays. We will continue to look for ways of improving the service at Cherry Willingham. Again, we would ask that patients with transport book appointments at Nettleham Medical Practice to allow patients who are unable to travel access to that invaluable service.

**We are keen to ensure that this system is what patients want, so we would be grateful if you could return the slip on the next page to Nettleham Medical Practice or our branch surgery at Cherry Willingham by Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2012.**

Please mark your envelope 'Appointments System Survey' or just drop off the slip to Reception at either site.

Thank you for your continued support of the surgery

#### ***The Partners***

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I do / do not\* support the proposed change to the appointment system  
(Please circle your response)

Other Comments:

Name:

Signed:

*Please return this slip to the box in reception at Nettleham or Cherry Willingham surgeries by **Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2012.***