

Millcroft Medical Centre Patient Experience – what you said, and what we have done to try to improve your experience.

How do you let us know what you think of our services? :-

- **GP Patient Survey** – this is sent to a random selection of patients once a year by IPSOS Mori on behalf of NHS England. It asks questions about patients' experience of the treatment they receive from doctors and nurses, about how easily they can access services, and about their experience of dealing with reception staff.

The number of patients who respond to the questionnaire varies, but for our last published questionnaire results, 104 patients responded.

The following is an overview of the results of the survey, although there are many more questions in the survey than just these.

Where patient experience **is best** ?

✓ 100% of respondents had confidence and trust in the healthcare professional they saw or spoke to during their last general practice appointment
Local (CCG) average: 97% | National average: 96%

✓ 98% of respondents felt their needs were met during their last general practice appointment
Local (CCG) average: 97% | National average: 95%

✓ 96% of respondents were involved as much as they wanted to be in decisions about their care and treatment during their last general practice appointment
Local (CCG) average: 95% | National average: 93%

Where patient experience **could improve** ?

↗ 33% of respondents find it easy to get through to this GP practice by phone
Local (CCG) average: 57% | National average: 70%

↗ 36% of respondents usually get to see or speak to their preferred GP when they would like to
Local (CCG) average: 51% | National average: 50%

↗ 67% of respondents were satisfied with the type of appointment they were offered
Local (CCG) average: 78% | National average: 74%

For a full report of the findings of this survey, please go to <https://gp-patient.co.uk/report?practicecode=N81016>. You will be able to look at all the questions, and compare our results with those of other practices.

You will see that those patients who completed the survey showed high levels of satisfaction in some areas, but that they were concerned about other aspects, particularly about accessing services.

- **Friends and Family Test** – we have very short questionnaires called the “Friends and Family Test” that simply asks patients whether, based on their recent experiences of our service, they would recommend us to their friends or family. These questionnaires are available on paper or on our website, and can be completed as often as a patient wishes. We ask another question, which will vary from time to time, and the responses to these are looked at by the whole practice team.

The results are reported to NHS England on a monthly basis, and we use any particular comments made to think about how we can improve our systems and service and improve patients' experience.

Other than the “recommendation” question, other concerns that were most often raised were:-

- The time it took to get through to the talk to someone on the 'phone.
- The ability to make a suitable appointment
- The length of time kept waiting after the appointment time.

We're pleased to say that we also had a great many positive comments about the care of our clinical and reception staff though, and that many of you say that you are happy with the service that we provide, which is always really nice to hear.

- **Patient Participation Group** – our Patient Group feeds back their experiences of our services to the practice at regular meetings, and gathers the views of fellow patients in informal sessions in the waiting room from time to time. We discuss the results of questionnaires with the Group.

Representatives of the Group will be chatting with patients soon to find out whether there is anything in particular that patients think that we could do better.

- **Complaints and comments** – patients sometimes need to complain about our services, either directly to the practice or via NHS England and the details of these complaints always looked at very carefully to see whether there is anything to learn from a general point of view about our services as well as about the particular individual circumstances.

What are the areas of most concern to our patients?

There are some common themes across all areas of patient feedback, and these are:-

- **Accessing our services by telephone** – patients often find that the telephone lines are engaged, particularly early in the morning. We are very conscious that that this can cause anxiety for patients, and really want to work to make it better for everyone.
- **How easy it is to make an appointment** – sometimes patients find it difficult to arrange a routine appointment.
- **The length of time patients are kept waiting after their appointment time** – patients have particularly mentioned their waiting time.

What have we done, and what do we plan to do, about what you've said?

Accessing our services by telephone

We have:-

- **Recently had a new telephone streaming system installed.** This allows patients to be directed to the appropriate members of staff to deal with their query. It also allows for a "queuing system" so that most patients ringing will be placed in a queue rather than having to ring back numerous times. This system is due for further improvement shortly so that fewer patients will hear an "engaged" tone when they ring.
- **Increased the staffing available to answer the telephone**, and made sure that as many members of staff are "logged into" the main telephone number as we can at all times. By "streaming" patients to the correct people to deal with their query, we hope that this will improve efficiency in dealing with calls.

- **Continued to keep our staff rota under review**
- **Provided separate cancellation and repeat prescription voicemail facilities** so that patients can easily leave messages requesting repeat prescriptions, or cancelling appointments at any time of the day that suits them. We actively publicise these facilities in our practice leaflet, on our website, on all letterheads, on repeat prescription slips, in our regular newsletters and on the patient “calling board” in the surgery. By making as much use as possible of these facilities, we hope to avoid unnecessary calls.
- **Ensured that we monitor** members of staff making themselves available to respond to incoming calls.
- **Made it possible to book, check and cancel appointments, and order repeat medication on-line** by encouraging patients to register for Patient Access. All newly registering patients are offered this choice, and existing patients are encouraged to register. This gives patients the option to use on-line facilities some of the time, even if they sometimes still have to telephone us for more complex queries or urgent appointments.
- **Looked at all aspects of how we work** to try to be as efficient as possible and not to encourage patients to ring to check whether we have responded to an enquiry too early in the process.

We plan to:-

- **Review the numbers** of calls coming into the system, and obtain reports from our IT colleagues to analyse what further improvements we might be able to make.

How easy it is to make an appointment

We have:-

- **Appointed a further full-time salaried GP** in addition to our 10 partners, and 2 existing salaried GPs. We also use the services of regular locum doctors when there is a shortfall in the numbers of appointment that we are able to provide.
- **Appointed two clinical pharmacists** who deal with prescription queries, medication reviews and some clinical aspects of patient care.
- **Appointed two Advanced Nurse Practitioners** to see patients with uncomplicated medical symptoms.
- **Appointed an additional Triage Nurse** who is able to give clinical advice where appropriate and organise home visits where necessary.
- **Trained our staff to help guide patients** to the correct service for them. Not everyone needs to see a GP, and our staff can suggest the most appropriate service when patients ring us or call into the surgery. This process is called “Care Navigation”.
- **Routinely sent texts to remind patients of appointments** so that we minimise wasted appointments. The text also include a facility to cancel the appointments by return of text.
- **Provided** early morning appointments a couple of times a week, as well as on one Saturday a month. We hope that these will be more convenient for people who work usual “office hours”. These early appointments are in addition to our late Monday evening appointments with doctors and Practice Nurses.
- **Provided a cancellation voicemail** that helps us to make the best use of our appointments as well as freeing up the telephone line: the easier it is to cancel the appointment, the more likely it is to be available for someone else.

We plan to:-

- **Continue to review** our processes to improve efficiency and reduce wasted and unnecessary appointments.
- **Maintain training of our “Care Navigators”.**

The length of time patients are kept waiting after their appointment

We have:-

- **Introduced “catch-up” time** for some doctors so that they can minimise the amount of time that patients are kept waiting.
- **Changed the way that morning “on-call” surgeries** are organised so that urgent matters that need the attention of the doctor “on call” are more likely to be dealt with without inconveniencing waiting patients.

This is a difficult area to tackle as, although our appointments are timed at 10 minute intervals, doctors will never know whether a medical problem will be something straightforward that can be dealt with fairly quickly, or whether the patient’s needs are much more complex and may take longer.

Conclusion

We here at Millcroft Medical Centre strive to give a safe, caring and effective service to all our patients in a time of increasing demand and challenges within GP services. We can’t provide a service that will please everyone all of the time with the resources at our disposal, but we do listen to our patients’ concerns, and work within the practice and with our Patient Group to try to improve things where we can.

We are aware that levels of patient satisfaction are down, in line with the national trend, but responses seem to compare favourably with our neighbouring practices in Crewe. This does not mean that we should be complacent. We have faced particular challenges following the merger between Millcroft and Delamere in the autumn of 2017, and we continue to strive to improve patients’ experience when they need to contact us.