



# Ball Tree Surgery

## Patient Voice – The Building and Services March 2014

### We surveyed our patients in the surgery and online during February 2014

Here you will find some of the comments and ideas voiced by our respondents. We are grateful to our Patient Participation Group who asked us to survey our patients about our Waiting Areas. As only a small percentage of all our patients responded to the survey, we cannot say that these are fully representative – however they are perhaps indicative of how we are doing...

We have tried to show where there are themes from the responses with some examples.

We have also added in some responses either in reply or just as a comment. We hope that these will help explain some of our constraints or just provide a little about our perspective! We have marked these with a little tree.

We want to be open so we have included a full mix of responses – some good and some less good. We welcome constructive feedback.

### We Asked About our Waiting Areas

#### Reading

- Many comments requesting current magazines / newspapers with a range of topics / areas



*We will look into this further. We have received mixed messages from the NHS about whether we are able to have magazines. There is some concern that magazines could be a source of infection. Many patients bring books or magazines or mobile technology with them.*

#### Look and Feel

- Brighter Waiting Room - Colourful pictures
- Bigger, nicer, more open
- Waiting room generally uninviting and cold
- Not enough foliage
- Need better brighter lighting – too dark and miserable
- Bright and smelling clean



*We agree that the building is looking a bit tired! We are aiming to start a redecoration programme in the next few weeks. We will begin with the Waiting Room and reception area. We have installed air fresheners in the waiting area and the room is cleaned daily. We are restricted about foliage real or artificial as it is viewed as a dust trap – otherwise we would have some little trees!*

#### Practicalities

- There are several requests for additional waiting areas / enlargements of the current waiting areas
  - Reasons included – for those who are immunosuppressed
  - For noise – those patients with small children
  - To reduce crowding in corridor waiting areas
- There are several requests for the Call Board position to be moved or for additional call boards to be installed
- There were comments regarding the heating and ventilation, thought to be:
  - Too hot
  - Too cold
  - Too dry
  - Too stuffy

- Requests for higher seating to help those with difficulty standing
  - Request for a cold water dispenser
  - Request to improve the door between the reception and the corridor downstairs – to help those with pushchairs / wheelchairs
- Request to put the BP machine in a more private area  
Request for an interactive information booth



*We would love to be able to give our patients and staff a new building with bigger rooms and ultra-modern facilities. Unfortunately, there are no resources available to us to do this.*

*Until resources become available we will not be able to provide additional rooms or waiting areas for our patients – we are sorry.*

*If the waiting area is too hot or cold please let our reception team know and they will be happy to adjust the air conditioning / ventilation.*

*We will see if we are able to provide extra cushions or a high level chair to help with those who would find this useful.*

*If you need assistance with any of the doors, please let our reception team know and they will be happy to help. We cannot remove the door between reception and the corridor as it is a Fire Door and this means that it has to close and have a certain weight to it.*

*We agree that it would be better to have the BP machine in a more private area – we are not sure where to put it though due to our lack of space.*

*We agree that the placement of the call board is not ideal. Unfortunately there is no space to install it over the door to the waiting area which would be the best location for all patients to see it. Call boards are many thousands of pounds. If we had the resources, we would like to put additional boards up in the waiting room and in the other waiting areas.*

## Music

- General requests for soft non-vocal easy listening
- Some requests for no music
- Requests for us to check the volume of the music
- Requests not to have radio with adverts



*If the music is ever too loud please let us know – our system can be a little erratic!  
From the number of comments we receive we have learned that there is no right answer to this – music is a very individual preference!*

## TV

- Several requests for TV Information Screens



*We hope to invest in new and additional TV Information Screens during 2014*

## Information

- Perhaps make the more infirm/unstable patients aware of those doctors available on the ground floor
- Stop using patients middle names on the screen
- Waiting for the nurse, there never seems to be enough chairs. The area for waiting is quite cramped



*If patients would prefer a GP working on the ground floor, they can talk with one of our receptionists. We have a stair lift available for access to the first floor. GPs will move between rooms and so it may not be possible for patients to just see GPs on the first floor. If patients are unable to use the stair lift then this is likely to present difficulties. Please let us know when booking and we will see what we can do to accommodate and support.*

## What information should be in the waiting areas?

- Which GPs are working and their usual days
- Information for the LGBT Community
- Ensuring leaflets are up-to-date
- Delay times
- PPG Noticeboard
- Wider variety of medical leaflets
- Complaint forms
- Magazines
- Local news
- How to improve fitness (for all ages and sex)
- Accessing local services/groups. Especially for our elderly patients, who need to get out and about more and meet people. Loneliness, as reported recently, being a real problem.
- Information about the Surgery Services
- Surgery statistics e.g.: number of appointments missed by patients that week, number of patients signed up with the surgery, number of patients seen that week, number of prescriptions written



*All ideas that we will explore – Thank you*

## If we could make One Change to the Surgery – what would you suggest?

- 2 receptionists at peak times



*When the front desk is busy we do try to open up the second reception desk. Often this may not be possible as reception staff are also covering our telephone lines, arranging for repeat medications, assisting with the stair-lift, scanning and coding hospital results for the GPs to see, summarising the notes for new patients on the system, planning the surgery appointments etc. We only have very limited resources and our reception team works incredibly hard to provide the best service they can. Much of their work is invisible to our patients. We would love to have more staff available to support you, especially if we have staff away for holiday or if they are unwell. Unless our funding is radically improved we will not be able to do this. We are working to make our systems as efficient as possible to free up as much patient facing time as we can.*

- Early or Later Appointments



*The Surgery has appointments available on Monday evenings and on Saturday mornings at Old Shoreham Road Surgery.*

*We would like to be able to open earlier and later, but this is not possible within the resources provided by the NHS. It is usual for a GP to work 12-14 hours on each working day. The GPs are already working 8am-8pm at minimum. If the surgery were to open for extended hours it would in effect be open from 6am to 10pm and this would require additional GPs, Nurses, Secretaries and Receptionists to be recruited. This is simply not possible within our existing funding.*

- Move the check-in screen to inside the waiting room away from the desk



*We will explore whether this is technically and financially possible.*

- Recognising the LGBT Community



*The Surgery embraces diversity. We will explore providing dedicated information in the surgery and online.*

- Provide a Car Park - but I am not sure that is possible



*Sadly, this is not something that we can improve. There is usually plenty of free parking nearby.*

- Let me see / have a specific GP rather than pooled



*All patients are allocated a 'Usual GP'. We encourage patients to see the same GP for ongoing problems.*

- Doctors Rota for Out of Hours / Weekends



*When we are closed, a GP service is provided by another independent company. The surgery is not funded to open in the evenings and weekends. If patients need access to a GP at weekends or in the evenings they can call NHS 111.*

As a new patient it would have been useful to meet my doctor early on



*We are currently working on a new patient pack and service. We encourage new patients to come for a health check during which we can talk about the services at the surgery.*

- Book appointment online you can look at options of doctors availability if not urgent



*We currently offer limited online booking of GP appointments. We will be gradually increasing these services as more patients register for online access;*

- An option to wait outside to keep away from germs.



*We currently have no plans for an external call board.*

- Easier to get same day appointments



*We regularly monitor availability for urgent appointments. We will always provide a same day service if a patient is very unwell.*

- Pharmacy on site - better parking - all on one level



*There is a pharmacy within 2 minutes of the surgery. We are unable to improve the parking. We agree it would be great if we were on one floor. Until and unless significant resources are made available we are restricted to our current building*

- Keep phone lines open at all times when surgery is open It's frustrating knowing that the surgery is open but cannot get through at lunchtime or early evening



*We would like to be able to keep the phone line open during the lunch hour. Unfortunately, at the moment we do not have sufficient resource to allow us to do this. We are required to have a minimum number of receptionists on duty when fully open. Even though we have recently invested in new members of our reception team, our current staffing level does not allow us enough capacity to have the desk open and the phones on during lunch. We are hoping to review this, but it will depend on whether more resources are made available from the NHS.*

- Longer appointment times,



*We already have longer appointment times than many surgeries in the UK*

- Shorter appointment waiting times. While emergency appointments are available if it's not an emergency it can be many days. I've just phoned today (12 February 2014, 14:30) and get voicemail saying surgery is closed for training, so can't make an appointment until tomorrow. Could reception still be available to answer calls?



*Very occasionally the surgery closes for training. This is crucial for all our staff as it is a rare chance for us all to be together to train and develop services for our patients.*

*We do our best to provide access to routine appointments within a few days. Sometimes this is not possible due to staff sickness or spikes in demand. We are always closely monitoring our access and are always working to make sure we are providing the best access we can within the resources and capacity that we have.*

- To make sure prescriptions ready on time i have been told to come back a couple of times.



*We have a guide on our website and in the surgery for when we aim to have prescriptions ready. We note in the guide that there will be times when we are unable to meet our aims. For this reason, we encourage patients to allow for this when they put their prescriptions in.*

- The waiting time; yes we know that sometimes it can't be helped but it would be nice if doctors started on time.



*Often the reason that a GP may not be able to start on time is due to an emergency referral to a hospital, a complicated home visit, a complicated medication review, a meeting with our community nursing team and social care colleagues to support patients in difficulty etc.*

*We don't want to run late. The GPs work without any breaks during the day at all and within each day they complete a huge number of tasks and activities that are often invisible to the patients.*

*We can never know quite what each day will bring to each GP and so it is impossible for us to plan each day precisely. We always work hard to keep as close to time as we can and when running late, we will transfer urgent appointments between GPs to help patients to be seen as soon as they can.*

*We do our best to update our waiting room screen to keep patients informed of running times.*

- Availability of appointments for those of us who work - priority for those morning/evening appointments could be given to people who find it difficult to get away from work during the day (and not to anyone else who COULD be available later on in the day). My boss is much easier going if I arrange appointments at the start or end of the day, thus disrupting my (paid) duties as little as possible.



*We sympathise with your position. We are not able to prioritise any patient group over any other patient group by the terms of our contract with the NHS.*

- Have a regular Saturday morning surgery



*We provide a regular pre-bookable Saturday Morning Surgery at Old Shoreham Road Surgery*

- Update web site more quickly



*We have completely re-written our surgery over the past year. We are continuing to develop this and are actively seeking patient suggestions for content. We do not have any additional resources to work on the website and so time spent on this will affect other more pressing duties which our patients require.*

- Website to hold medication details so you do not have to keep re typing repeat prescription items



*Our new online service provides this service*