

## Practice Participation Group

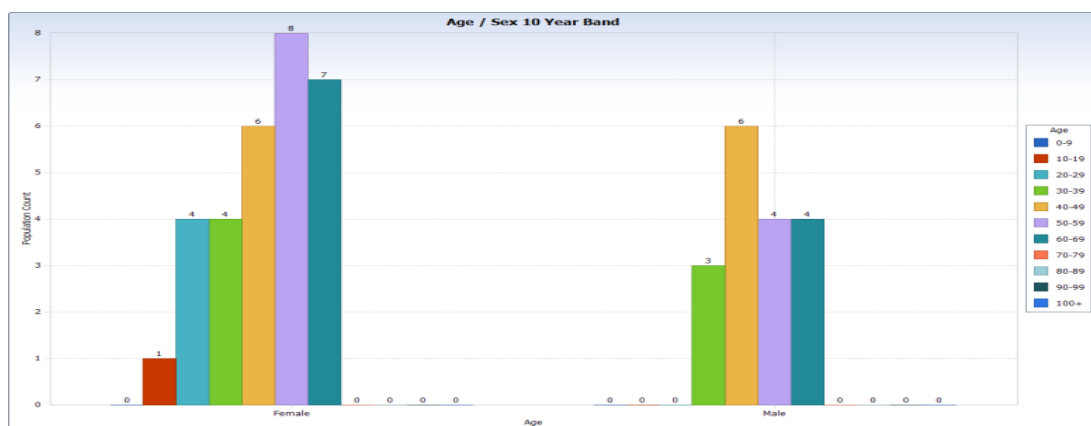
### Final Report 2014/2015

#### **Component 1**

Our PPG is made up of 47 patients from a mixture of age groups and ethnicities. When registering, new patients are asked to join the PPG to ensure we give all patients the option of signing up. When seen in surgery the GP/health professional will offer the sign up details to patients that want to have a say in the way the surgery is run.

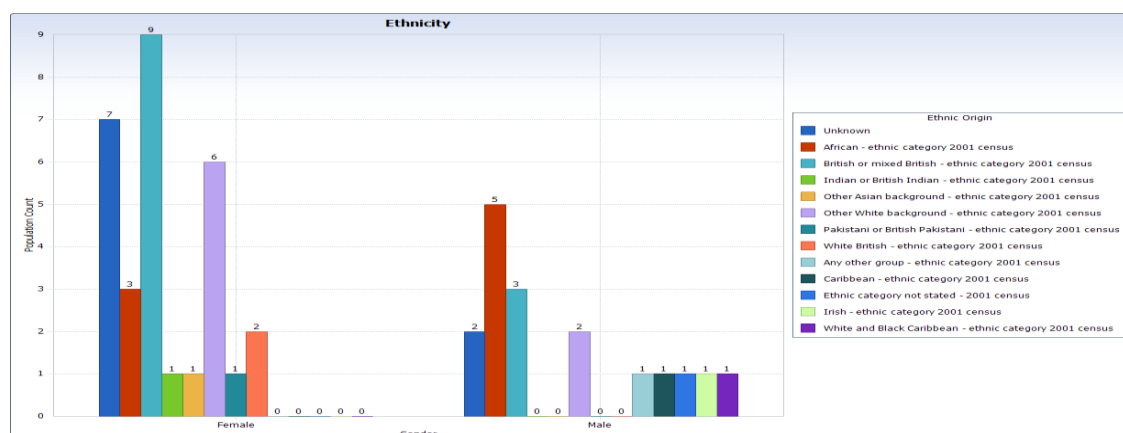
As with previous years we have found it difficult to get people from the 70 + age group to sign up to the PPG. The main reason for this has been access to the internet at home and computer literacy.

In future years we have decided that we should look into having telephone or face to face contact with patients that do not have access to the internet if over 75. This will enable us to have contact with the entire patient demographic.



(Graph 1)

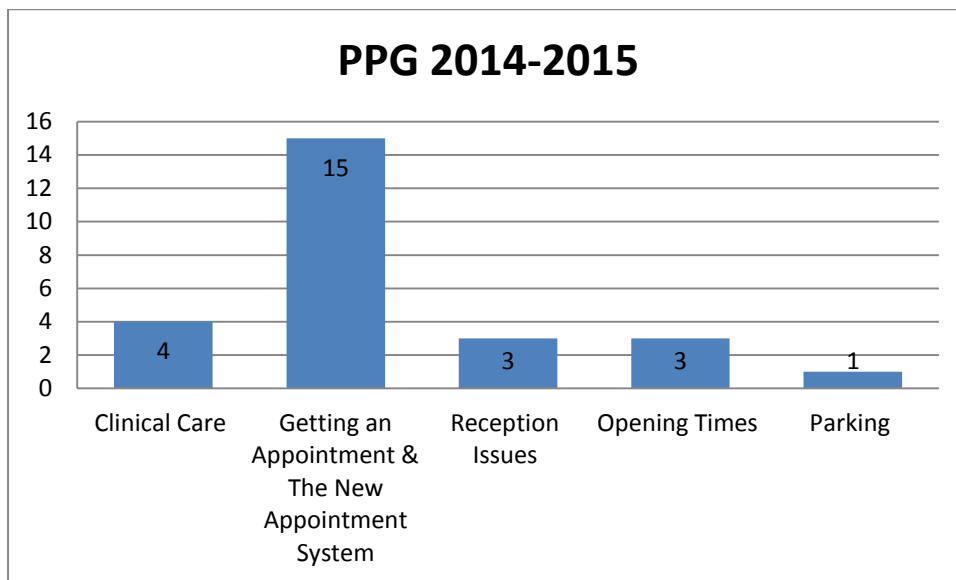
As you can see from graph 2 we have managed to get a mixture of ethnicities which matches our demographic patient population, which has a large African and other white people.



(Graph 2)

#### **Component 2**

The PPG was asked to identify the main areas they felt were in need of improvement and what the practice should focus on as our main priority for this year. The areas they suggested were used to compile a survey which was sent to the PPG to complete. The responses from the PPG are illustrated in graph 3. The majority of response chose to focus on the appointment system. This is an area which has been under a lot of change this year as the practice has been trying to improve access and it was not a surprise that patients wanted this to be the main focus.



(Graph 3)

Previously the appointment system consisted of half pre-bookable appointments and the remaining were book on the day appointments with a duty doctor in the morning and afternoon to manage with medical emergencies, visits and telephone advice.

This has been changed to all telephone appointments, the aim is to take the burden and responsibility of triaging patient health issues off the receptionists who are non clinical. The reception team felt they were making clinical decisions about whether one problem was more serious than others when booking appointments without having the clinical knowledge or training, which could impact on patient safety.

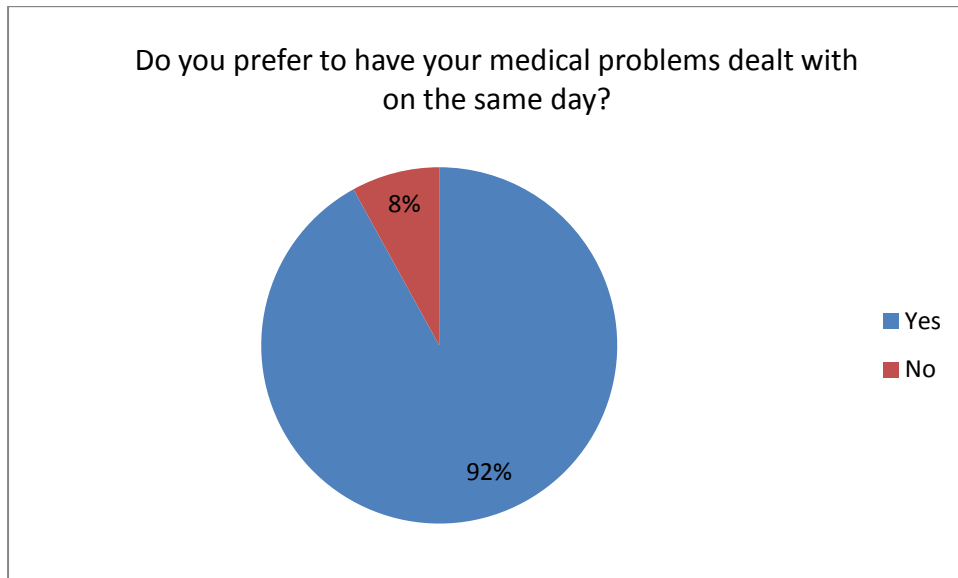
The new appointment system enables GP's to triage their own patients and decide whether they are in need of a face to face appointment or whether they can be dealt with over the phone. This has had mixed reviews from the patients, some patients felt that this decision should be left to the patient; other patients did not feel comfortable speaking about medical problems over the phone and felt it lacked the personal touch. The patients in the practice that have benefitted from this change are patients in full time employment as it has enabled them to have direct access to the GP easily. The GP's can also offer Saturday morning appointments where appropriate.

### Component 3

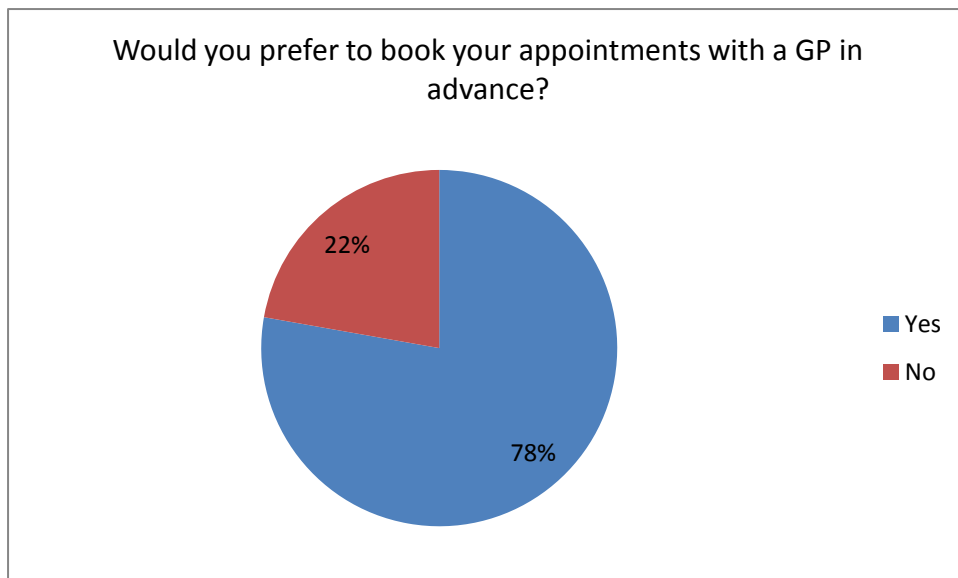
The survey was completed by patients in the surgery over a 2 week period between 3/11/2014 and 17/11/2014.

Appendix 1 shows the first survey given to patients to determine the likes and dislikes of the appointment system between the dates above. The survey provided patients with the opportunity to comment on the service, highlights, low lights and suggestions.

The results from the survey were made available to the PPG online along with an explanation about the assessment process. This was sent to the PPG through emails to remind them to comment on the survey.



(Chart 1)



(Chart 2)

The main views we received from the first survey were that patients were dissatisfied with the new appointment system and wanted to have more choice in the appointments they received. As you can see from chart 1 and 2 patients want to be able to speak to a doctor on the same day but also have the option of booking in advance.

From the comments below it is apparent that patients like to see GP's face to face and dislike the long wait on the phone to speak to a GP.

*I personally do not like waiting at the other end of the phone. Will prefer to wait among people. I do not want to feel alone particularly when im unwell.*

*Im not really comfortable with the fact that when on the phone with the dr you explain whats wrong the dr can then prescribe you medicine without seeing you.*

*Currently finding the new system confusing. the new system makes me feel detached from the surgery. I feel it complicates what is supposed to be a simple procedure. There are far too many steps needed to take before someone can see a doctor not even there preferred doctors.*

*There is nothing to like about the new system. I prefer the old system better and more efficient. Seeing your dr for prescription is more than just that. It is like therapy if i may say. 100% dislike*

The positive side of the comments we received is that patients like to be seen quickly and appreciate when staff work together to ensure their problem is dealt with efficiently.

*If you only need appointment for medication review this can be done over the phone. I like that you know what number you are in the queue*

*Its fairly easy as everything can be done on the phone*

*I think the appointment system is good, seem its same day service and you are able to see the dr*

*Telling you where you are in the queue is essential. Staff who answer are doing very well and Doctor gets back asap. An excellent system.*

The full results from the first survey can be found in appendix 2.

## **Component 4**

The PRG was given the opportunity to discuss and help formulate an action plan. This was achieved through an exchange of emails to help decide on a future appointment system that will include all aspects that patient likes about the service.

The proposed action plan was drawn up by the practice manager/lead receptionist and lead GP and this was given to the PPG to discuss.

### Action plan proposed changes;

- Allow patients to have a choice on the type of appointment they want. The choices are a telephone consultation/face to face or book in advance, which would be decided by the patient upon calling
- Ensure calls are answered promptly by receptionists; ensuring staff are available at peak times

This was put online and made available for comments from 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2015 to 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015 and emails were sent to the PPG asking for a response. We received 8 responses to the action plan from the PPG and all were in agreement hence it was implemented on 21/01/2015.

This comment sums up the response from other PPG members. Patients like that they will be given a choice of appointment whether it be face to face, book in advance or telephone

appointment. They want to speak to the same GP (which is the main aim at this surgery) to keep continuity.

### *Comments*

*I like the new system as I have used it and it worked well for me. There are times when a face-to-face is necessary when physical contact is required. That may be to have a dressing changed, a blood pressure reading and vaccinations that can usually be undertaken by a nurse. Then there are the times when you may feel really ill and a GP wishes to see you to do a bit of poking about to try and narrow down the number of possibilities that may be causing the problem. On the other hand, who really wants to make their way to the surgery when feeling really bad. A quick chat with a GP means that you do not need to leave home, it is more convenient and, let's face it, if you are going to catch something or pass something on the surgery is a good starting point as may be public transport, if you have to use it, to get there! It's a case of horses for courses and I think everyone at the practice does their best to offer the best solution whether that is a face-to-face or phone consultation. I have not found booking appointments in advance to be a problem and that only seems to apply when a GP wants to see you again as a follow-up.*

*One further point to consider is to try and see/speak with the same GP. I have been fortunate to have that happen to me and, apart from something new occurring, the "usual" GP has a good idea what my on-going problems are and does not have to waste as much time reading notes from previous visits – especially with a follow-up.'*

The practice therefore did not need to obtain agreement from NHS England as all were in agreement and there was no impact on contractual arrangements.

## **Component 5**

### **Action Plan**

1. Allow patients to have a choice on the type of appointment they want. The choices are a telephone consultation/face to face or book in advance, which would be decided by the patient upon calling
2. Ensure calls are answered promptly by receptionists; ensuring staff are available at peak times

### **Implementation of action plan**

1. Advertise new appointment system on the Thamesmead Medical Associates website
2. Inform all staff and clinicians of action plan
3. Instruct staff to ask the patient what type of appointment they require.
4. Ensure adequate reception staff are available at peak times to answer incoming calls

### **Timelines**

Action (priority Areas)	Dates
Initial Survey (PPG)	3/11/2015 to 17/11/2015
Practice Survey (All Patients)	24/11/2015 to 01/01/2015
Action Plan	2/01/2015 to 21/01/2015
Implementation	21/01/2015 to present

Access Team Meetings	Monthly
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### **Action plan agreed – 21/01/2015**

As the PPG was in agreement with the proposed action plan the appointment system was changed from 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015 to include book in advance appointments/ face to face appointments and telephone appointments. The majority of the appointments were left to book on the day to allow patients quick access to clinical care.

Reception staff were instructed to ask the patient what type of appointment they required. Receptionists are available at peak times to answer incoming calls.

### **Component 6**

PPG report was published on the Thamesmead Medical Associates website ([www.thamesmeadmedical.org](http://www.thamesmeadmedical.org)) 09/03/2015

#### **Actions Taken by TMA as a consequence of PRG**

The appointment system will have an ongoing review by the patient access team within Thamesmead Medical Associates. This meeting is held once monthly and any problems arising from the new system will be dealt with by the management team. Since changing the appointment system feedback from patients has been very positive. The family and friends test has also helped provide patient feedback. The PPG stated 'the choice in appointment is what patients seem to appreciate the most.' The main issue so far is the amount of incoming calls and the reception staff available. With staff sickness and staff holidays it has become apparent that a minimum of 4 receptionists are needed at peak times to keep up with call rate.

#### **Action Plan 2013/2014**

***The survey indicated patients are not aware of the duty doctor system and the ability for doctors to triage patient's problems from 8:30am to 6:30pm and offer a face to face consultation when needed.***

***The practice will promote the Duty doctor system.***

- ***The practice will use posters/leaflets to enable accessibility.***
- ***Reception training - Patients will be given the option to speak to the duty doctor on the day of their appointment enquiry if their issue could be dealt with over the phone.***
- ***Leaflets will be given to newly registered patients explaining the duty doctor system.***
- ***Doctors will be encouraged to hand leaflets to current patients about the duty doctor system.***

### **13/14 Action Plan Summary**

Last year, the PPG focused on patient access to the duty doctor system with an interest in patient access and knowledge of what is available to them. With the change in appointment system we are unable to comment on how this is going as we are providing access to the duty doctors in a different way through the new system. With the quick access to patients preferred General Practitioner the duty doctor is only used as an emergency extra service. The Duty Doctor will be present through the am and pm clinics but are mainly used when all other appointments have been filled or in an emergency or when a patient needs immediate access to a GP. This is constantly being reviewed by the patient access team which as explained above consists of the practice manager/lead GP (Dr N Patel) and lead receptionists in response to comments from patients received via the suggestion box and FFT test.

Changes to the services we provide are communicated to the entire practice population through the website/telephone/leaflets and face to face when patients come to the clinic. We use the comments from the family and friends test to improve our service provided.

There has been no disagreement with the PPG on the proposed actions and they have supported this concept of ongoing review looking at patient feedback as described above.

Thamesmead Medical Associates is open from 8:00am to 6:30pm Monday to Friday at Gallions Reach Health Centre. It is also open at the branch surgery from 8:00am to 12:00pm then 1:45pm to 6:00pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at Heronsgate medical centre

With the new appointment system we have changed the telephone number to 02083335000 (for Gallions Reach Health Centre) and 02083335050 (for Heronsgate Medical Centre) then an automated system will direct the caller to different departments as required. Wednesday Heronsgate is closed from 12:30pm.

We have a Saturday extended hour's clinic at Heronsgate Medical Centre from 8:00am to 1:00pm.

## Appendix 1

## Patient Survey 2014/2015

**1. Are you male or female ?**

Male	0
Female	0

## 2. How old are you ?

Under 18	O	55 - 64	O
18 – 24	O	65 - 74	O
25 – 34	O	75 - 84	O
35 – 44	O	85 and over	O
45 – 54	O		

3. Which of these best describes what you are doing at present ? *If more than one of these applies to you, please tick the main one ONLY*

Full-time paid work (30 hrs or more per week)	O
Part-time paid work (under 30 hrs per week)	O
Full-time education (school, college, university)	O
Unemployed	O
Permanently sick or disabled	O
Fully retired from work	O
Looking after the home	O
Doing something else	O

4. In the past 3 months how easy have you found the following ? Please put a tick in one circle for each row

	Haven't tried	Very Easy	Fairly easy	Difficult	Very Difficult	Don't know
Getting through on the phone	0	0	0	0	0	0
Speaking to a Doctor on the phone	0	0	0	0	0	0
Speaking to a Nurse on the phone	0	0	0	0	0	0
Obtaining test results by phone	0	0	0	0	0	0



**5. Is there a particular Dr you prefer to see at the GP Surgery or Health Centre ?**

Yes	<input type="radio"/>
No	<input type="radio"/>

**6. How often do you see the Dr you prefer ?**

Always or most of the time	<input type="radio"/>
A lot of the time	<input type="radio"/>
Some of the time	<input type="radio"/>
Never or almost never	<input type="radio"/>
Not tried at this GP Surgery or Health Centre	<input type="radio"/>

**7. Do you prefer to have your medical problems dealt with on the same day?**

Yes	<input type="radio"/>
No	<input type="radio"/>

**8. Would you prefer to book your appointments with a GP in advance?**

Yes	<input type="radio"/>
No	<input type="radio"/>

**9. The surgery has a new appointment system, this is designed to help patients to gain access to their GP quickly and easily. How do you find this new system?**

Excellent	<input type="radio"/>
Very good	<input type="radio"/>
Good	<input type="radio"/>
Fair	<input type="radio"/>
Poor	<input type="radio"/>
Don't know	<input type="radio"/>

**10. Please use the space below to provide any extra information that you like about the new appointment system**

**11. Please use the space below to provide any extra information that you dislike about the new appointment system**

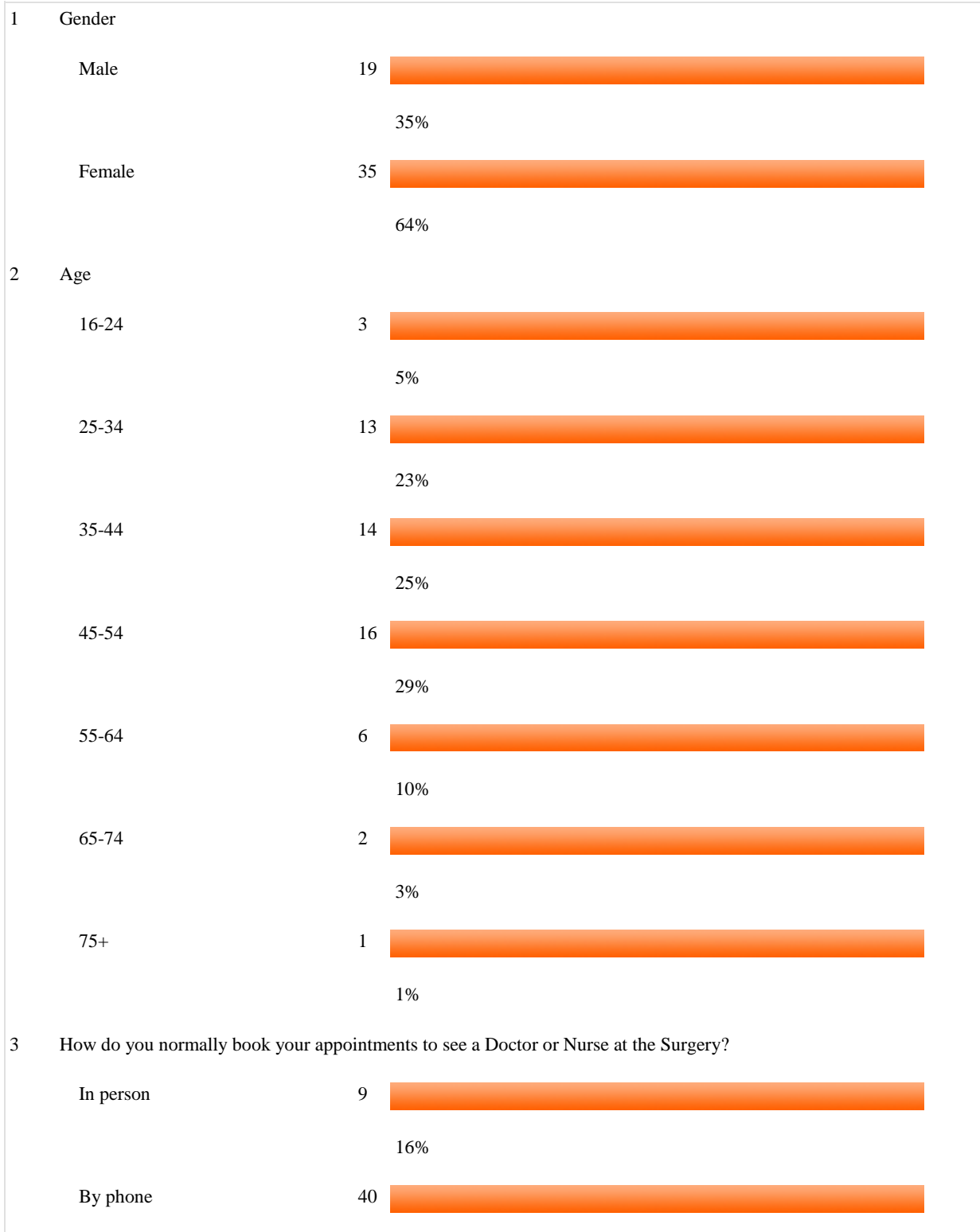
**12. In general, how satisfied are you with the care you get at the Surgery ?**

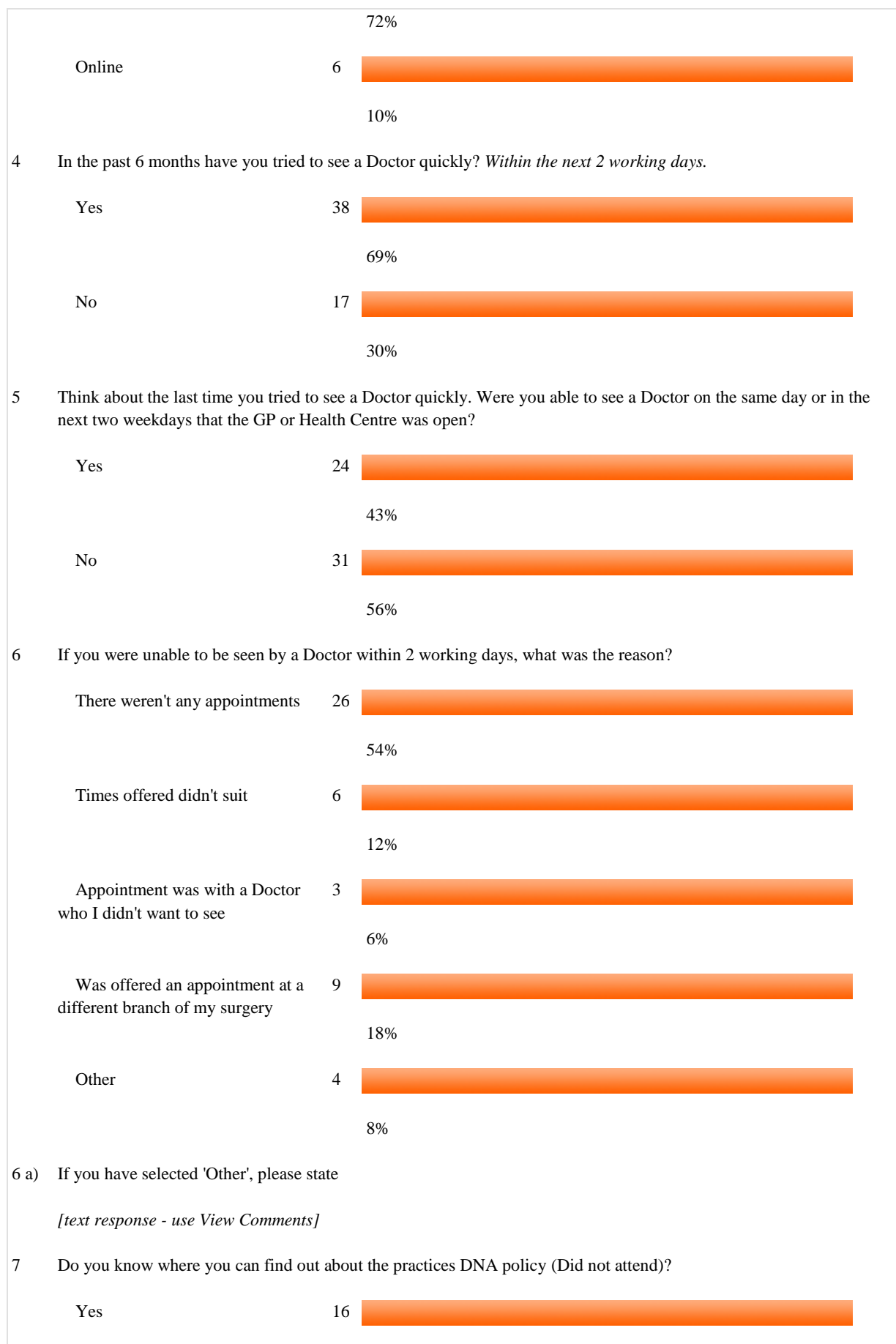
Very	<input type="radio"/>
Fairly	<input type="radio"/>
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	<input type="radio"/>
Quite dissatisfied	<input type="radio"/>
Very dissatisfied	<input type="radio"/>

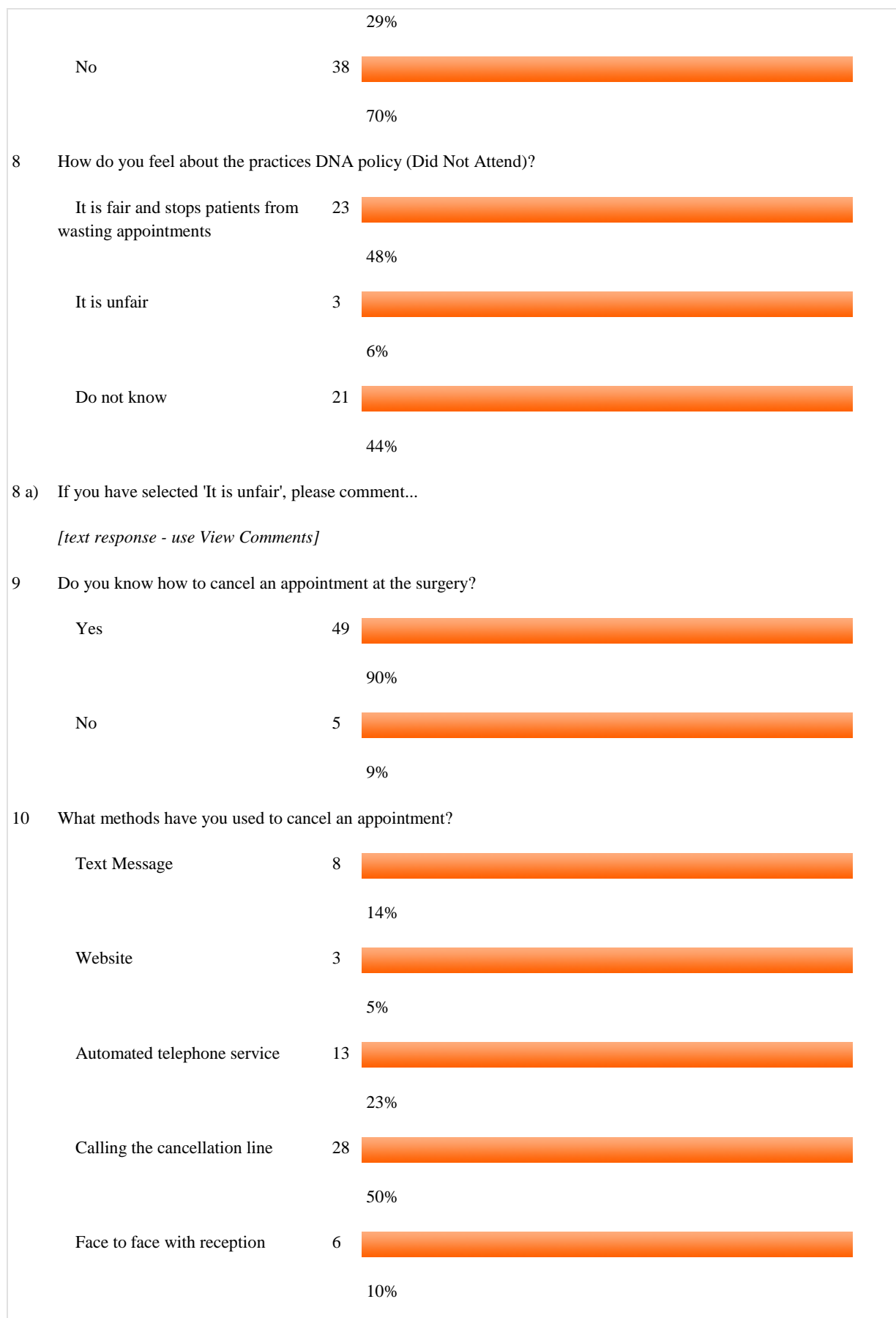
## Appendix 2










# Analysis of Survey6

Total responses: 55







	Other	0	0%
	N/A	5	
			9%
10 a)	If you have selected 'Other', please state		
	<i>[text response - use View Comments]</i>		
11	Would you prefer to be assessed by a Doctor over the phone to determine whether you need an appointment or your issue can be dealt with over the phone?		
	Yes	33	
			61%
	No	21	
			38%
12	Have you used the current Duty Doctor System?		
	Yes	34	
			61%
	No	21	
			38%
12 a)	If yes, did you find this service...		
	Helpful and accessible	20	
			51%
	Ok	5	
			12%
	Ok but prefer a face to face consultation	11	
			28%
	Unhappy with telephone consultation	3	
			7%
13	Please use the space below to provide any extra information that you like/dislike about care you received from a Doctor or Nurse...		
	<i>[text response - use View Comments]</i>		

## 10: Please use the space below to provide any extra information on what you like about the new appointment system

19 Comments listed below in date order

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Submitted 22/10/14 10:51

If you only need appointment for medication review this can be done over the phone. I like that you know what number you are in the queue

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Submitted 22/10/14 10:53

I dont sorry

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Submitted 22/10/14 10:56

Have tried only once for blood test results, lovely response. Drs will respond as quickly as possible without anxious waiting.

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Submitted 22/10/14 11:49

Its fairly easy as everything can be done on the phone

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Submitted 22/10/14 12:02

This idea of seeing the doctor day to day is very good. New appt system is very good

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Submitted 22/10/14 12:06

Nothing.

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Submitted 22/10/14 12:53

It is fair for patients to see a doctor when they wish to see one. Mostly those that hardly visit the surgery

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Submitted 22/10/14 12:56

This is only my third appointment under the new system - my first for over two years and all subsequent appointments have, so far, been made as a followup/booked at the current appointment - so too soon to say

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Submitted 22/10/14 12:59

Pleased with the help I get from the reception team

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Submitted 22/10/14 14:00

I think the appointment system is good, seem its same day service and you are able to see the dr

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Submitted 22/10/14 14:44

If I was paying by the minute for calls it would be an issue, as long as it stays 020 fine. Telling you where you are in the queue is essential. Staff who answer are doing very well and Doctor gets back asap. An excellent system.

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Submitted 22/10/14 14:54

Sign in ok, like this system the surgery provided.

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Submitted 22/10/14 16:47

The old system of going to Health Centre any time of the day to see your GP when you are sick like it is the practice in some other centres to me is the best. The idea of phoning which in most cases are not promptly answered when you fall sick is frustrating. You may wish to review this system with a view to improving on it.

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Submitted 23/10/14 08:24

Everything is dealt with quickly

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Submitted 6/11/14 22:15

Nothing. Its a joke

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Submitted 10/11/14 19:15

It's so easy to talk to a doctor and the majority of the time I don't need to see them, which is great as I have a 1 year old and it tricky bringing him.

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Submitted 2/01/15 09:49

What i like is if it is urgent you will definitely at least speak to someone.

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Submitted 7/01/15 19:24

I have used it a couple of times and have not had any problem with it hence the "excellent" response.

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Submitted 16/01/15 17:41

Stops no shows

## 11: Please use the space below to provide any extra information on what you dislike about the new appointment system

30 Comments listed below in date order

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Submitted 22/10/14 10:51

Cant actually make an appointment in advance. Seems waste of resources. i.e If you know what you need.

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Submitted 22/10/14 10:53

I can never get in touch takes me atleast 3 attempts. Get asked if my problem can wait. Rude staff sometimes. Not as good as it used to be.

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Submitted 22/10/14 10:56

I personally do not like waiting at the other end of the phone. Will prefer to wait among people. I do not want to feel alone particularly when im unwell.

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Submitted 22/10/14 10:58

Tend to wait on phone for long time and then unexplainably get cut off is annoying and costly. Dont get to see Dr as often as would like.

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Submitted 22/10/14 11:49

Im not really comfortable with the fact that when on the phone with the dr you explain whats wrong the dr can then prescribe you medicine without seeing you.

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Submitted 22/10/14 11:53

Currently finding the new system confusing. the new system makes me feel detached from the surgery. I feel it complicates what is supposed to be a simple procedure. There are far too many steps needed to take before someone can see a doctor not even there preferred doctors.

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Submitted 22/10/14 11:59

Dont like the new system at all lik to be able to see a doctor and not over the phone, Dont like the new system it is rubbish

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Submitted 22/10/14 12:06

Amount of time waiting on the phone. After an average of 30 mins plus waiting to be told to ring back after 13.30 as the doctors is full and then to restart the process all over again at the patients cost. As everything is done on the phone you never actually get to see the GP who is dealing with your problem to be examined. You should be able to request your annual review of repeat prescription through the receptionist without having to wait for the GP to call just to say you need blood test. What a waste of their time.

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Submitted 22/10/14 12:49

It would be good if there was more telephone appointments and more doctors

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Submitted 22/10/14 12:50

Still unable to decide whether the system is better for the patients. I think I would prefer to see a doctor face to face when i needed to.

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Submitted 22/10/14 12:53

It is very distressing waiting for someone to pick the phone up when a patient is very unwell.

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Submitted 22/10/14 12:54

Fairly longwinded

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Submitted 22/10/14 14:00

The waiting time on the phone to get an appointment

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Submitted 22/10/14 14:01

Difficultly in getting appointment the phone rings but noone picks up quickly

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Submitted 22/10/14 14:14

My office is far from the surgery and having appointments will be good for me

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Submitted 22/10/14 14:15



There is always a long queue on the phone. When you even get an appointment you have to wait for too long to see the dr. Always running behind schedule.

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Submitted 22/10/14 14:44

If you have to go pick a prescription or blood test form up from Reception you are back to queuing. Is there any other way of doing it? Separate window?

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Submitted 22/10/14 14:48

Unable to book appointments and see dr on time, prevents patients from coming and seeing the dr. instead they will ask you to speak to them on the phone, even if you are told it is an emergency. It would be nice if you could book appointments in advance, as they often tell you it is fully booked, call the next day or the dr will call you back. this is not very helpful, most especially for people who work

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Submitted 22/10/14 14:53

There is nothing to like about the new system. I prefer the old system better and more efficient. Seeing your dr for prescription is more than just that. It is like therapy if i may say. 100% dislike

---

Submitted 22/10/14 14:54

Wait for a doctor to call back in an hour not so good

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Submitted 22/10/14 15:02

bit of a wait on phone to speak (was no.9 in queue today) but at least i get to speak, even if calls costing more. Then u have to wait for a doctor to call, if your in big pain, not good. Lucky today was a walk in, so hubby got a appointment for 1hr later

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Submitted 22/10/14 19:37

Waiting too long to find you are 18th in the queue, to find out the doctor isn't available.

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Submitted 27/10/14 15:14

Go back to original system

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Submitted 6/11/14 22:15

Everything. Its a nightmare getting through, the length of time waiting is too long. Its running up my bill. After waiting ages to get through im told my doctor is not there, call back at 1.30pm. Or the next day. So you repeat the exercise again. If my doctor isnt in on the day i call, why cant i be put on to his or her call list for the next day? Just to get a form for a blood test, you have to go through the same procedure again. Nobody i have spoken to has anything positive to say about the new system.

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Submitted 10/11/14 19:15

I would also like the option of booking an appointment in advance too.

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Submitted 2/01/15 09:49

I hate waiting on the phone for a long time in a queue only to be told someone will call me back. Sometimes i want to see my gp face to face and book in advance so i can rearrange work etc to attend the appointment but this is no longer an option. I hate that i can no longer book online outside normal opening hours. Usually i cannot call because i am working. I work in a primary school so i can't use my phone while in class. My lunch hour does not tie in with the time frames we can call meaning i can't get anyone to talk to. I am told to call back at 1.30 but i am working again at that time. My lunch break is often 11.45 till 12.15. Im not allowed to make an appointment at that time. It's ridiculous.

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Submitted 6/01/15 10:57

complicated and time consuming for those of us working

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Submitted 7/01/15 19:24

Nothing to dislike as I have not had a problem with the system.

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Submitted 14/01/15 18:57

Usually it is difficult to get through on the phone. You could be number 2 in the queue and still have to wait for 10+ minutes or number 8 in the queue in which case you 'hang up'. When you finally get through, there is no flexibility - receptionists 'stick to the script'. Booking an appointment with a GP in advance is fine but other slots to see a GP 'on the day' should also be available; sickness is not planned in advance. Ideally there should be an appointment system and also a 'walking in' option for, say 20 patients both am and pm.

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Submitted 16/01/15 17:41

Always good to be face to face with GP