

GP ACCESS (and more) at MILLBROOK SURGERY, CASTLE CARY

What we did

In February 2017 we introduced a new appointment system. We did this because it was becoming increasingly difficult to manage rising patient demand using the old system. Previously, most patients who called were booked in to see our GPs within short appointments irrespective of their needs and did not fully consider other support available from the team or from outside of the practice. Our new approach involves 3 simple steps:

- Patients phone the surgery
- Our GPs call the patient back, usually within one hour or at a time that suits the patient (See graph)
- Following the call, if issues cannot be resolved on the telephone, our GPs book patients into appointments there and then and these can be as long as the patient needs. For example half hour appointments or longer.

There are essentially no bookable appointments by patients with a GP. We do however promise on our website and patient information that any patient who needs to see a GP that day will be.

We have made a number of major changes to how the practice works around this. For example:

- The calls made back to patients by our GPs are made in our large staff room behind the reception desk. This is open plan and we've been surprised by how much important informal information the team now share
- We have trained and empowered our receptionists to ask patients a wider range of questions, to answer queries directly or direct patients to staff other than the GPs including, practice nurses, health care assistants and health coaches
- We hold 'huddles' on 2 days per week at which all staff attend and are encouraged to share their thoughts, concerns and ideas. The huddles are led by any member of the team and everyone's views are welcome and wanted. We keep a running log of all patients who have been admitted or discharged from hospital, A&E and talk about anything we could have done differently or should do differently in future to avoid admissions. The log also includes patients that any member of the team is worried about. Patients are only removed from the log if the whole team is in agreement. Others any member of team is worried about. Once per week members of the Symphony Complex Care Team also attend
- Our health coaches are running a range of support, awareness raising and drop-in sessions. These include: health walks, healthy-weight weigh-ins, basic health checks and lifestyle advice.

Key points that have made it possible

Team ethos, huddles, empowering the whole team, managing a change in appointments completely from a given day, engaging with patients well in advance of the change, utilising health coaches, learning and adapting as we go.

Who to contact to find out more: Dr Steve Edgar, Steven Edgar Steven.Edgar@castle Carysurgery.nhs.uk



Main outcomes so far

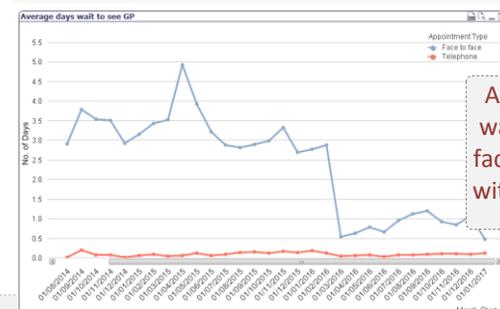
- We promised that any of our patients who need to be seen that day by a GP will be seen that day. So far we have achieved this.
- We have measured the changes and it's now much easier for patients to get through on the phone.
- It has shortened times to see the GP and resulted in fewer wasted journeys by patients.
- We have noticed an improved in team morale.
- The schedule is flexible and if a GP is needed to spend more time with a complex patient this can happen easily
- Joint consultations with health coaches.
- If a team member is off sick we can flex and cover easily.
- GPs go home at the time they are supposed to.



Consultations by Face to Face (Blue) and Telephone (red)



Time in minutes GP to call back patients



Average days wait to see GP face to face (All within one day)