

Long Melford Practice Local Patient Participation Report 2012/13

1. INTRODUCTION

The Long Melford Practice's Patient Representative Group (PRG) was established in 2011. During the last twelve months we have welcomed several new members to the group, as the PRG grows in terms of membership as well as becoming an increasing influence on the development of the practice.

With the transfer of responsibilities from the Suffolk Primary Care Trust to the new governing bodies (National Commissioning Board, West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group, Suffolk County Council) due to come into effect from April 2013, primary health care is going through a period of extreme change. The support and contribution from the PRG is an integral part of our ongoing focus to ensure that our patients are more involved in decisions relating to both the quality and range of services provided by the Long Melford Practice to the local community.

2. PROFILE

2.1 PRACTICE PROFILE

Long Melford Practice is a rural practice encompassing the following 16 parishes as well as bordering areas of Sudbury:

Long Melford	Lavenham	Alpheton
Boxted	Little Waldingfield	Lawshall
Hartest	Great Waldingfield	Acton
Glemsford	Thorpe Morieux	Cockfield
Stanstead	Preston St Mary	Brent Eleigh
Shimpling		

Our main surgery is in Long Melford and our branch surgery is in Lavenham. The clinical team which covers both sites is made up of 5 GP partners, 2 Associate GP's, 2 Nurse Practitioners, 4 Practice Nurses and 2 HCA's. We have a dispensary at our main surgery and are also a training practice and can have up to 2 Registrars at any one time. Our patient list size is currently just over 9,500 and continues to grow steadily. Details of the current patient age/gender demographic is summarised below:

	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Under 25	10.6%	11.3%	21.9%
25 – 44	9.8%	9.5%	19.3%
45 – 64	16.1%	14.5%	30.6%
65 and over	14.7%	13.5%	28.2%

In terms of ethnicity, of the 73.3% of our patients that we have ethnicity details for, 96.5% are White British, 1.9% are British/Mixed British and 1.6% are Other.

2.2 PRG Profile

As of March 2013, our PRG has 22 members with the following profile:

	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Under 25	5%	0%	5%
25 – 44	9%	9%	18%
45 – 64	18%	14%	32%
65 and over	18%	27%	45%

While membership has increased by 50% in the last year, we are continuing to encourage new members via several different means:

- Staff and GP's are encouraged to bring to the attention of patients where appropriate/suitable.
- Notices at both receptions
- Practice website
- Parish magazine articles
- New Patient packs
- Word of mouth (current members)

Specific effort is going to be made in the coming year to try and increase the number of younger members. Also, while we already have 2 carers in our PRG, we would like to look at involving individuals from other groups, e.g. disabled, supported etc in order to ensure that we have as broad a representation as possible in order to ensure all aspects of our patient profile are suitably represented.

3. LOCAL PRACTICE SURVEY

In mid 2012, all members of the PRG were contacted and asked to provide a prioritised list of what they saw as being the main issues for our survey. Due to the wide and varied response, it was agreed that our 2012/13 survey would be very general and cover the following main aspects:

- Receptionists/Appointments
- GP access
- Consultation (GP's, Nurses)
- Surgery Access
- Level of Care

In addition to highlighting any areas that would require action, it was also agreed that the results from this survey would be used to highlight any specific matters that would need further investigation, with these being the future focus of a more targeted/in-depth survey the following year.

There was concern over the length of the questionnaire (40 questions), i.e. that some may be discouraged from completing such a long form, but it was felt that we would

need to have this initial long survey in order to cover several aspects all at the same time.

The patient survey was promoted via articles in 11 parish magazines, via the practice website and posters at both surgeries. The reception team also regularly asked patients if they would like to fill in the survey when attending the surgery. Patients had the option to complete the questionnaire on line via the practice's website. We also provided printed copies to patients at both surgeries:

- On a clip board with a pen and a blank envelope. Patients had the choice to hand just their completed questionnaire back to a member of the reception team for placing in a collection box, or to place it in a sealed envelope before handing in.
- With a stamped addressed envelope for the patient to take the questionnaire away with them, complete at home and post back their completed questionnaire at a later date.

The survey was available for a period of 2 months, during which we had a total of 133 replies.

The results were summarised and emailed to all members of the PRG asking for their general comments, and based on the results, areas where they felt we should take action or look into in more detail. While it was agreed that the overall response to the survey was very favourable, the PRG was very keen to ensure that this did not lead to any form of complacency, and that efforts would continue to be made, even for areas where the practice scored highly, in order to ensure that the practice seeks to improve in all areas of its service and standard of care at every opportunity.

The following were the main areas where it was felt that the practice had scored less favourably:

3.1 SPEAKING TO A DOCTOR OR A NURSE ON THE PHONE:

If a patient needs to talk to a member of the clinical team about an urgent matter, then this will either be dealt with immediately (dependent on the seriousness of the circumstances) or the patient will be called back by either the Duty Doctor or Nurse Practitioner. For non-urgent matters or for when a patient wants to speak to specific person, their details will be passed on to the relevant doctor or nurse who will call them back, usually within 48 hours.

3.2 URGENT APPOINTMENTS:

Every weekday, we have a Duty Doctor and Nurse Practitioner who are available to handle emergencies/urgent appointments in order to ensure that anyone who needs to be seen will be seen that day. Emergencies are always prioritised, but it is vital for all of our patients that only those with actual urgent health issues are seen by the Duty Doctor and that this critical resource is not inappropriately used.

3.3 HOW QUICKLY DO YOU GET SEEN:

While we will always endeavour to provide the maximum possible number of appointments at all times, we are subject to fluctuating demands, which at times can be extreme. In times of high demand, the practice will always look

to secure the services of locum GP's and nurses. It is always going to be more difficult to obtain an appointment with a specific GP or nurse, so the more flexible you are, the greater the chance that the receptionist will be able to accommodate you.

3.4 OPENING TIMES:

As detailed later in this report, we do currently offer the following appointments at Long Melford surgery outside of normal opening hours

Monday	18.30 – 19.00
Tuesday	18.30 – 19.00
Friday	07.00 – 08.00

As part of the Practice's overall service provision, our opening times are reviewed regularly, but other than the above, cover outside of these times will continue to be provided by the NHS's Out of Hours service provider, Harmoni.

In addition to the specific survey questions, participants were also asked to provide any general comments. It was encouraging to see that of all the open comments made, just over 40% of these were extremely positive and in praise of the care and service that they had received. However, issues were raised, with the main areas of concern being:

- Appointments
- Dispensary/Medication
- Long Melford Reception Area

4. ACTIONS

4.1 APPOINTMENTS

In September 2012, the Practice employed a new Associate GP, Dr Jenny Schram, who does six half day surgeries per week. This has provided the practice with an additional 80 appointments per week. We are also currently undertaking a review of the role of the Health Care Assistants with the intention of this role being further developed, thereby allowing provision of a more widespread support to the Practice Nurses.

4.1.1 Booking Ahead

Historically, most appointments for clinical staff were being put on 3 weeks ahead. We have recently changed the process, and are now putting appointments on 4 weeks in advance, so all patients who need to, should now be able to book an appointment with a GP, Nurse or Health Care Assistant four weeks in advance.

4.1.2 Method of Booking Appointments:

There are currently three ways of booking appointments; telephone, in person or via the internet. Based on the results of our survey, there is a growing interest in being able to book via the internet. Currently we have a very limited number of appointments that are available to book this way and it is also restricted to Long Melford. In May 2013, the practice is upgrading its clinical computer system, which will allow us

to include Lavenham for future internet bookings. With the help of the PRG, we will be carrying out a review of our internet booking policy later this year.

4.2 DISPENSARY/MEDICATION

Primarily for patient safety and in order to reduce the potential for errors when dealing with repeat prescription information via the telephone and voicemail, this option was removed in March 2013. Patients are now able to order their repeat prescriptions via the following methods:

- Internet
- Post
- Personally attending the surgery
- Via your respective pharmacy who will manage your repeat prescriptions on your behalf

4.3 LONG MELFORD RECEPTION AREA

Funding has been secured to allow for the replacement of the current seating at the Long Melford Surgery. Benches will be replaced with individual chairs (some with arms). The works will also require relocation of heating currently situated under the benches.

A slideable glass screen has also recently been fitted across the front of the reception at Long Melford, allowing improved confidentiality for staff when handling patient telephone calls.

4.4 CLINICAL SYSTEM

The Practice is due to upgrade its computer system in May 2013. It is envisaged that this will provide associated benefits across various aspects of the practice as the, e.g. development of booking appointments via the internet, text messaging to patients, data analysis etc. Any related improvements or additions to our service will be communicated accordingly.

5. IMPROVEMENTS (FUTURE PROJECTS)

The PRG highlighted the following two areas as needing further investigation:

5.1 UNDERSTANDING & HELPING WITH HEALTH PROBLEMS

5.2 GP INVOLVING PATIENT IN DISCUSSION

In order to clarify patient concerns and identify ways that the practice can improve its service in relation to these two areas, the PRG will be asked to assist with the creation of a targeted survey which will be carried out during 2013.

6. ACCESS

6.1 LONG MELFORD

The surgery is open Monday – Friday from 08.00 – 19.00. During these times, the following clinical appointments are available:

6.1.1 GP's

From 08.30 – 10.50 Monday to Friday

From 14.30 – 17.20 Monday to Friday

6.1.2 Nurse Practitioners

From 08.20 to 17.50 Monday to Friday (except between 13.00 to 14.00 on Wednesday and Friday)

6.1.3 Practice Nurses

From 08.40 – 12.20 & 14.30 – 17.50 Monday to Friday

6.1.4 Health Care Assistants

From 14.00 – 18.00 Tuesday

From 08.40 – 12.30 Wednesday & Friday

From 14.40 – 18.00 Thursday

Extended Hours appointments are offered by our GP's specifically for those patients who are unable to attend the surgery during the normal working hours and these are available on:

Monday 18.30 – 19.00

Tuesday 18.30 – 19.00

Friday 07.00 – 08.00

Dispensary opening hours are:

From 08.30 – 13.00 & 14.00 – 18.30 Monday to Thursday

From 08.00 – 13.00 & 14.00 – 18.30 Friday

6.2 LAVENHAM

The surgery is open Monday – Friday from 08.00 – 13.00 & 14.00 – 18.30.

During these times, the following clinical appointments are available:

6.1.1 GP's

From 08.30 – 10.50 Monday to Friday

From 14.30 – 17.20 Monday to Friday

6.1.2 Nurse Practitioners

From 08.20 to 11.20 Monday

6.1.3 Practice Nurses

From 08.40 – 12.30 Monday to Friday

From 14.30 – 15.40 Thursday

6.1.4 Health Care Assistants

From 08.40 – 12.30 Tuesday

From 08.40 – 12.00 Wednesday

Outside of our above detailed normal surgery opening hours, any emergency is handled by NHS Suffolk's out of hours provider, Harmoni. If you telephone the normal surgery number outside of our standard opening hours, your call will be

automatically rerouted, or alternatively, you can call Harmoni directly on 0300 130 3066.

In Suffolk, patients now also have access to the recent newly launched NHS 111 helpline for non-emergency advice. This service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

We would very much welcome new members to the PRG (particularly those that can represent any specific or minority group). You can either register your interest on the practice website:

www.longmelfordpractice.org.uk

or email me directly:

steve.bloomfield@gp-d83014.nhs.uk

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