



Annual patient survey and action plan

The results of the latest Pinn Medical Centre patients' survey are now out and available on the practice web site *writes Lis Warren*. They show that although most people are happy about the quality of care they receive, there are two major irritations: the sheer size of our patient register and the fact that, despite long opening hours, it is now very difficult to see your GP within a week or two (if, indeed, you can *get* an appointment with the doctor that you prefer to see).

Although our practice is far bigger than most following the unplanned merger with the Village Surgery, quick access to GP appointments is a *national* problem that is not unique to Pinner! A survey has found that four in ten GPs predict the average appointment waiting time will exceed two weeks from April 2015, as they struggle to cope with unprecedented levels of work. Plus an analysis by Deloitte's Centre for Health Solutions says demand for GP consultations is likely to double over the next two decades and they must now work differently to manage rising demands. Many Pinn patients wrote in the survey that continuity of care is suffering and the much-valued 'personal touch' is disappearing. Sadly, there is no easy solution to this as demand for appointments continues to rise.

The survey revealed to those of us involved in the Pinn Patients' Association, that there are many misunderstandings about how services are organised at The Pinn, so we are taking the opportunity to answer some common questions and complaints on the next page. We hope that this will correct misunderstandings and debunk myths that seem to have taken root.

The Pinn has put an action plan together to address the survey findings. It has been circulated to patients who've signed up for practice newsletters and it is also on the web site. (If you'd like to receive these newsletter emails, visit thepinn.co.uk and click on 'Subscribe Here' to add your email address.) Getting an appointment more easily and seeing the GP of your choice will be the focus of a thorough 'access review' and expert advice has now been sought to help with this.

Other priority areas for action are: telephone access including speaking with a nurse or GP; waiting times; continuity of care; the diabetes clinics; and a review of the walk in service for unregistered patients. A cross section of patients has

been invited to take part in independently run focus groups and the Pinn Patients' Association will review progress on the action plan regularly and report back via the *Pinn Piper*. We would like to thank those that have volunteered to help and also those who have recently responded to a call to widen the profile of the Patients' Association's Management Committee. Come to our annual meeting to find out more.

For any GP practice to work efficiently it should be properly funded. The *Put Patients First* campaign organised by the Royal College of GPs is trying to increase general practice funding from 8.39% to 11% of the UK NHS budget. Over 90% of NHS contact with patients is via GPs so should they not receive a bigger share of the cake? See rcgp.org.uk/campaign-home.aspx and join the campaign for fairer funding.

Pinn Patients' Association Quiz

The winning team at this year's fun annual quiz!



Pinn Patients' Association Annual Meeting

Want to know what's happening at The Pinn?
What does the Patients' Association do?
Come to our AGM and let us know your views
8pm Tuesday 2nd September 2014
Pinner Village Hall (PADCA)

staff news

No sooner did I inform you of two impending births in the last staff news article than I received the wonderful news that **Dr Hannah Bundock** and **Nurse Mubina Panju** both gave birth to healthy babies very soon after they started their maternity leave: a baby girl for Dr Bundock and a baby boy for Mubina. There seems to be a pattern forming here, I am just waiting for someone to go into labour whilst still at work! As many of you will have already heard, **Dr Melissa Holz** is also due to go on maternity leave in the summer so fingers crossed it's not a practice delivery! We would like to send our sincere congratulations to all of them.

We are very pleased to welcome new GPs **Dr Kiruthika Selvam** and **Dr Diane Silla**, who joined the practice team at the end of March. We wish them all the very best in their new roles.

Our congratulations to **Dr Anokhee Shah** who got married on a rather rainy day in May but I understand the weather did not put a dampener on the celebrations! Lets hope for a slightly drier and brighter summer.

Finally, it is just over one year since **Dr Shashi Shah** sadly passed away and the surgery is hoping to hold a dedication ceremony for Dr Shah with his wife and daughter, staff and local GPs. A brass plaque and framed photo will be placed in our Conference Room.

Hilary Scott
Practice Manager

The Dr Shashi Shah Conference Room

This facility is dedicated in loving memory of Dr Shashikant Shah, who worked at the Pinn Medical Centre for forty years, from 1973 To 2013.

His insatiable appetite for learning and education have been a great inspiration to us all.
His wisdom, passion for medicine, and dedication to his patients will never be forgotten.

an appointment with...



Joanna Wan, Administrative Officer

How long have you worked at The Pinn and what did you do before?

I've worked at The Pinn for over 3 years. It's my first job after getting my master's graduation from the University of Southampton. Prior to that, I studied my BSc degree in Business Management at Queen Mary University.

What do you like and dislike about working at The Pinn?

I enjoy office work. I mostly deal with the Walk In reports and insurance queries within the admin team. I enjoy speaking to patients, especially being able to help them out on urgent insurance queries, some of you might even recognise my voice. I also help the volunteers of the Pinn Patients' Association design the *Pinn Piper*. However, I dislike receiving death notification documents. It's really disheartening.

What makes you laugh?

Pretty much everything. I'm known as a very cheerful person.

How do you relax after work?

I enjoy going out, shopping, catching up with friends and Zumba classes.

What is your favourite food?

Italian! I Love every type of pasta.

If stranded on a desert island, what three items would you want with you?

My iphone, iphone charger, and my boyfriend BBJ.

What's your favourite film or TV programme?

Titanic! Even though it's three hours long and I've watched it a million times, I never get bored. It's definitely my favourite film of all time.

What was the last book you read?

The LA and Vegas Travel Guide, as I've just come back from a lovely holiday on the West Coast.

If you could have dinner with any 3 people, living or dead, who would they be?

My Mum (first choice at any time), Leonardo di Caprio and my Dad, who works in Hong Kong. I miss him!

What would you do if you were Health Minister for a week?

I would make sure supply meets demand, so there are enough appointments for all patients without a long wait.

Interested in the NHS and concerned about local health facilities and services?

Then why not attend one of our monthly meetings in the Postgraduate Centre, Mount Vernon Hospital?

Thurs, 3 July 2014 from 7.30pm

Guest speakers: **Pippa Nightingale** (Imperial College Healthcare) **Vicky Cook** (Hillingdon Hospital)
Maternity changes in 'Shaping a Healthier Future'

Thurs, 4 Sept 2014 from 7.30pm

Guest speakers: **Nick Carver** (Chief Executive East & North Herts NHS Trust) **Shane DeGaris** (Chief Executive Hillingdon Hospitals NHS FT)
Plans for Mount Vernon Cancer Centre
& Mount Vernon Hospital site



Contact joandavis@onetel.com for info about free parking

Q&A

The practice is far too large. It has lost the 'personal touch'. Can't you stop taking new patients?

We would never turn patients in need of medical attention away. We have recruited additional doctors and the ratio of patients to doctors is above average. The RCGP recommends 70 appointments per week per 1,000 patients, which we exceed. We agree it's important to try and maintain continuity and the 'personal touch' but this is sometimes difficult to achieve in a practice that offers an 8am-8pm, 7-day week service. Whilst access and continuity are cornerstones of primary care, it's difficult to achieve either one in isolation, and almost impossible to achieve both!

Making an appointment is a nightmare. What are you doing to improve access?

This is the *main priority* in our Action Plan. In collaboration with experts, we are undertaking a full review of our appointment systems, including the use of telephone consultations. We will review the patient numbers for some GPs; audit daily/weekly patterns; measure the 'did not attend' rate to see if improvements can be made; talk to other busy practices; review our mix of healthcare professionals; and hold Focus Groups to test out possible solutions. The results and any subsequent changes will then be communicated to patients via the web site, the *Pinn Piper* and notices in the surgery.

It's no good being offered an appointment in two weeks' time if I have an urgent problem!

Patients with an urgent medical need will be seen on the day by the on-call doctor or Nurse Practitioner if they arrive before 7.30pm. At the end of the day we occasionally have to divert patients to the Urgent Care Centre at Northwick Park Hospital if we have reached capacity.

Children go crazy waiting. Can't you ensure they are seen quickly?

Sick children are prioritised on clinical need. If we prioritised *all* children then seriously ill adults may wait too long. If a child is distressed and cannot be calmed the receptionist will bring it to the doctor's attention.

The surgery deals with members of the public who walk in, which is not fair to those who are registered and have to wait up to 3 weeks for an appointment.

The unregistered Walk In service is funded separately so we have extra capacity to meet this demand. This funding helped to provide treatment evenings and weekends for our own patients. Unregistered patients only have access to a GP in an emergency and do not have access to the additional services such as weekday nursing care and blood tests.

Why doesn't The Pinn have an email facility for simple, straightforward queries?

We are concerned that it may be used inappropriately by some patients. It is being considered by the Harrow-wide network of GPs but we first need to ensure that it's secure and can be managed effectively. It's possible to phone and leave a message for a doctor to call you back within 48 hours to deal with straightforward queries.



It's almost impossible to speak to a human being when I call. Why are there only two receptionists answering the phones?

The phones are manned upstairs and in the office behind reception - there are normally **5 staff** answering phones. At weekends there are 2-3, but they also have to cover reception. We therefore ask patients to make routine calls on weekdays between 8.15am -6pm.

It's difficult to speak to a doctor on the phone to get some advice. Why is this?

Doctors will always try to return routine telephone calls within 48 hours but many of our GPs work part-time so this is sometimes difficult to achieve. Our on-call doctor will take same day emergency calls if a patient's usual GP isn't available. It's very difficult for GPs to run surgeries, see patients face to face, deal with emergencies, home visits, prescriptions, paperwork, and then be able to return *all* calls on the same day.

Some of the receptionists are very helpful but others are not.

We hope that our staff treat patients with the dignity and respect that they deserve. We hold regular training sessions and work with them on a one-to-one basis to improve communication skills. We are currently looking at external training programmes to help with customer service skills. However, staff have to deal with some very challenging patients and situations on a daily basis and they also deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

I don't like being asked at reception about the 'nature of my problem' in front of a queue of other patients – it's very personal.

If you'd rather not discuss this, that's fine - but we ask so that receptionists and GPs can prioritise appointments. It also helps us to put you with the most appropriate healthcare professional.

Every time I see a doctor I have to explain my problem again. There is a lack of continuity – I never see the same doctor twice, which is bad for me and for the doctor.

Unfortunately, at our busy practice, it will not always be possible to see the doctor of your choice, particularly for urgent appointments. We are aware of the continuity issues, which is why we've set up clinical teams that meet on a monthly basis to discuss patients with more complex needs. This way when a patient's usual GP is away, their colleagues are more likely to be aware of their needs. Booking online may help you see when your chosen doctor is available and improve your chance of seeing them.

It's a real nuisance if you need blood tests prior to visiting hospital – one minute it's too early to make an appointment and the next, they've all gone.

We have 2 Healthcare Assistants and 1 Phlebotomist providing nearly 300 appointments pw (more than we're funded to provide). These can usually be booked up to 3 weeks in advance. We are considering extending it to 4 weeks but we've found that booking far in advance causes many wasted appointments as people forget to attend. We always have appointments available for those requiring urgent tests if requested by the GP.

volunteers needed for research and clinical trials



You might imagine that taking part in research or clinical trials has benefits only for drug companies - wrong! I have recently been privileged to take part in a clinical research project and to advise on others. This has proved to be a thoroughly fascinating and worthwhile experience, *writes Lis Warren.*

When I discovered that researchers sought people who'd had Type 1 diabetes (the insulin dependent auto immune type) for 50+ years for a study of ophthalmic markers for diabetic neuropathy, I quickly realised this offered me the opportunity for an in depth 'once over' that's not routinely available via GPs or hospital clinics. It was fascinating to talk with many different specialists about their work and I was able to donate two small tissue samples to be used in this and other diabetes research projects in the future. I was not paid for taking part, just left with a warm glow, knowing that I'd done something worthwhile and, hopefully, helpful to other diabetics in future years. The researchers hope that they will

eventually be able to spot people who are likely to get nerve damage very early on via eye tests and take action to prevent disabling nerve damage later on. I am now helping with three other research projects and it's been great fun!

Research and clinical trials are essential if scientists are to effectively tackle debilitating and life-threatening diseases, including cancer. With some of the best life sciences research in the world and a large and diverse population, London is well-placed to be at the forefront of major treatment breakthroughs. Taking part does not always require participants to try new drugs; there are many studies where healthy volunteers can help. The London Health Board is now working to bring together more university researchers with NHS clinicians to boost patient participation, which could ultimately benefit us all. If you'd like to see what trials you could take part in or if you'd be willing to be a 'healthy volunteer', more information is available at imperial.crf.nihr.ac.uk Current projects include asthma, obesity, fertility & early pregnancy, and alcoholic hepatitis.



radiologists' selfies

Radiology nurse technician
WW1, France 1918



Three radiologists at a hospital
near you, 2014



The Pinn Piper is edited for
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Pinner Arts Week



26 Sept 2014 – 5 Oct 2014

Music and the arts have the potential to affect lives profoundly for the better, enhancing wellbeing and health! Pinner Arts Week will provide a wide variety of events and activities to suit all tastes.

Further info: pinnerartsweek.com

In Pinner, by Pinner, for everyone!