

Hampton Wick Surgery News

Your practice newsletter from the Patient Participation Group



Newsletter No 15

Spring 2025

Why it is important to fill out our annual patient survey....

Each year we ask our patients to complete a Hampton Wick Surgery patient survey based on our lowest scoring questions from the national NHS GP Patient Survey.

The 2023/24 national survey highlighted the difficulties patients were experiencing when trying to contact the practice by telephone.

As a result, we invested in our telephone system by introducing a call waiting and ring back facility. In addition, for those patients wanting to make an urgent appointment, we have suggested specific times to call.

We would now like to find out if this has improved your experience of contacting us by telephone as well as asking a number of further questions about our services.

There are a number of ways to complete the survey:

- You may receive a message from the practice with a link to the survey
- You may be given a copy of the survey by a doctor or nurse to complete by hand
- A patient group member may approach you in a waiting area to be completed by hand

The closing date for completing the survey is Friday, 25th April. A big thank you to anyone who has already completed the survey.

GP Practices should not have to pay increased NI Employers' contribution says our Patient Group

Our Patient Participation Group (PPG) has written to local MP Munira Wilson voicing its concern over the recent government decision that GP practices should have to pay the increased Employer National Insurance contribution. Our PPG has joined forces with the other PPGs in our local patch.

The Government view is that because GP practices are privately owned partnerships they are not part of the public sector. This is in spite of the fact that all their activity is for and within the NHS. Our practice estimates that this NI rise will increase the tax bill by around £20,000pa and of course, it has no way of increasing income by raising prices as traditional companies can.

Says the PPG in its letter, "GP practices have been clearly defined in law as 'public authorities' over the last 25 years and GP practices have been part of the NHS since its inception in 1948. We don't understand this decision and if it's not reversed it's likely to lead to staff cuts which in turn will impact on patient care and experience."

Although The House of Lords had voted down these proposals the House of Commons have voted against exempting GP practices from the NI contributions leaving all GP practices uncertain about their finances moving forwards.

If you still feel strongly about this, why not contact our local MP Munira Wilson or your local MP.

.....A huge thank you from us all.....

Bonnie Green our long-standing PPG chair has decided to step down from her role after more than 10 years.

We would like to thank Bonnie for her tireless contribution to improving and supporting the practice. Bonnie will remain a member of the PPG and we are forever grateful for her wise counsel and hard work.

If you would like to suggest a topic for our newsletter, find out more about our Patient Participation Group or consider joining the group, please go to our page on the website or email: ppghamptonwicksurgery@gmail.com

Making the most of your GP appointment

Our GP appointments are **15** minutes long. This can go very quickly so to try and to get the most of your appointment with the doctor, it's important to go prepared. Generally, the GP can only deal with one problem per appointment.

Here are some useful top tips from Patient Access and Healthwatch to make sure that you make the most of your appointment.

Be on time: being late risks you having less time with the doctor or you having to go to the back of the queue. It's also worth mentioning that in an average surgery of 20 patients, spending just two extra minutes with each person leaves you well over half an hour late by the time your last patient rolls in. So please try to remember this whilst you are gnashing your teeth in the waiting room.

Before your appointment: write down the details of your symptoms, including when they started, what makes them better or worse and any important questions you want to ask.

Generally, your consultation will follow this pattern:

1. You will be asked to explain what you are concerned about or your symptoms
2. The doctor asks you specific questions based on your concerns
3. Your doctor will examine you (although not always necessary).
4. Your doctor will discuss what they think might be going on and suggest treatment options or plans.
5. You ask questions and/or discuss 'the plan'.

When explaining how long you have had the symptoms, if you can, try to talk in terms of hours, days, months etc. It saves time if your story is as clear as possible.

Don't bring a list: it's not helpful to come to the appointment with a list of complaints that you feel need sorting on the day. It's not in your interest and the doctor will be faced with having to deal with each one superficially. The doctor will want to deal with the most pressing problem and give it the time it deserves. If you do have lots of problems to raise, try to book a double appointment.

If possible, leave the kids at home: it's easy to get distracted thus risking wasting time and not being fully focussed/engaged in the consultation.

During your appointment: don't be afraid to ask if you don't understand something. Write things down and you may think about bringing a family member or friend to help you remember the details.

If you're not clear on the treatment plan: ask again. Make sure you fully understand the next steps before you leave the room. If you aren't sure, then don't be afraid to ask the doctor to go through the plan again.

Could the practice nurse deal with your

problem: in many cases the practice nurse could deal with your concern, so consider this as an option when making the appointment or ask the receptionist.

Could your local pharmacist deal with your

problem: community pharmacists can offer advice and treatments for a range of illnesses, such as coughs, colds, sore throats, ear infections and aches and pains. They can also give advice about medicines. This includes how to use your medicine, worries about side effects or any other questions you have.

Most pharmacies now also offer prescription medicines for some conditions, with no need to see a GP or make an appointment. This is called Pharmacy First. For further information go to: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/primary-care/pharmacy/pharmacy-services/pharmacy-first/> .

There is more guidance here on getting the most of your GP appointment:

<https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/advice-and-information/2024-10-10/how-get-most-out-your-gp-appointment>