

New Silksworth Medical Practice

How are things going since the merger?

1 Year on

Patient feedback

October/November 2018



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1. Executive Summary

The Healthwatch Sunderland engagement team and representatives from the Practice's Patient Participation Group (PPG) spoke to 133 patients during the visits. General feedback highlighted that of those who took part in the survey 33% of patients found things at the practice to be just the same since the merger had taken place, closely followed by 31% of patients who stated that things aren't as good as they were prior to the merger taking place.

Patients gave positive comments about the practice since the merger, which were grouped under 4 main themes 47% complimented practice staff, 29% complimented service delivery, 23% spoke positively about their access to appointments and 7% informed us that the prescription process was good.

The negative feedback mirrored the positive themes but also included continuity. 45% of patients feedback negative comments regarding the waiting times for appointments to see their GP, 18% gave negative feedback about service delivery, 17% informed us that there was no continuity when trying to see the same GP at the practice, 12% stated that they have had issues when ordering prescriptions and 9% gave negative feedback about the staff at the surgery.

During Healthwatch Sunderland engagement with GP practice patients across the city we have found that the majority of patients on average are waiting two weeks to see a GP and many are sharing concerns about continuity when trying to see the same GP at their practice.



2. Introduction

What is Healthwatch Sunderland?

Healthwatch Sunderland is the independent local champion for people who use health and social care services. We're here to make sure that those running services put people at the heart of care.

By speaking to Sunderland residents we aim to understand their needs, experiences and concerns of accessing and using local health and social care services. We can then speak out on their behalf to local service providers, focusing on people's concerns about current services and ensuring they are listened to and addressed by those who are running services.

We encourage and work with local services to involve Sunderland residents in the changes to health and social care provision. The ultimate aim is to get things right for the future, with health and social care services which meet the needs of the local community.



*We champion what matters to you and
work with others
to find ideas that work.*

*We are independent and committed to
making the
biggest difference to you.*



3. Background

In July 2017, Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group, wrote to all patients of Colliery Medical Group (5100 patients) and Church View Medical Centre (5900 patients) as the existing provider of these GP practices would no longer continue to provide these services after the 30th September 2017. Patients were informed that there would be a new provider, the Sunderland GP Alliance Limited, who would join these two GP services. Sunderland GP Alliance are a Sunderland based group of 42 GP practices who have come together to work in collaboration with their member practices and deliver healthcare to the people of Sunderland.

Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group advised patients:

- Access would be the same for Colliery Medical Group patients, with the location of their practice remaining within Silksworth Health Centre. Patients of Church View Medical Centre would also now be located in the Health Centre, which is a few metres away from their old practice building
- There would be no gap in provision of services from the transition of the services to the new provider
- No action would be required from patients as there would be automatic registration with the new provider (patients would still be free to register with alternative practices if they wished)

In April and May 2018, Healthwatch Sunderland gathered feedback from 126 patients from the newly formed New Silksworth Medical Practice to provide the practice with focussed feedback on how patients felt about the new practice and how it was working for them. This feedback was presented to the New Silksworth Medical Practice Patients Participation Group (PPG), where the group requested a follow-up report one year post merger. Healthwatch Sunderland agreed to undertake a further feedback exercise to find out how things were going from the patients perspective one year after the new practice was created. On this occasion the engagement with patients was undertaken with the support of two members of the practice's PPG, who volunteered to support the work.

This report details the feedback from the 133 patients collected during four separate visits to the practice.

4. Methodology

Members of the Healthwatch engagement team and volunteers from the surgery's Patient Participation Group visited the surgery on four separate occasions to speak to patients using a questionnaire specifically designed to find out how the service was working one year post-merger.

The visits were held at the following times:

Tuesday 30th October 2018 from 9am - 11am

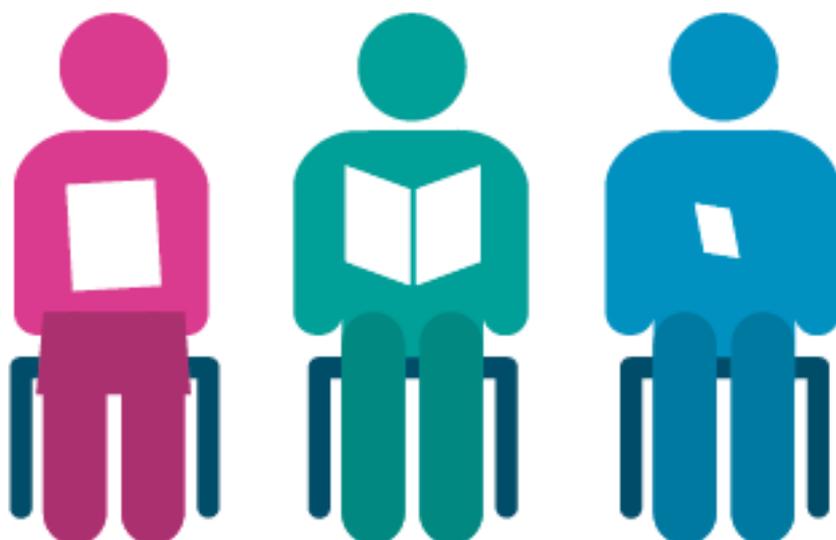
Thursday 1st November 2018 from 4pm - 6pm

Wednesday 7th November 2018 from 3pm - 5pm

Friday 9th November 2018 from 9am - 11am

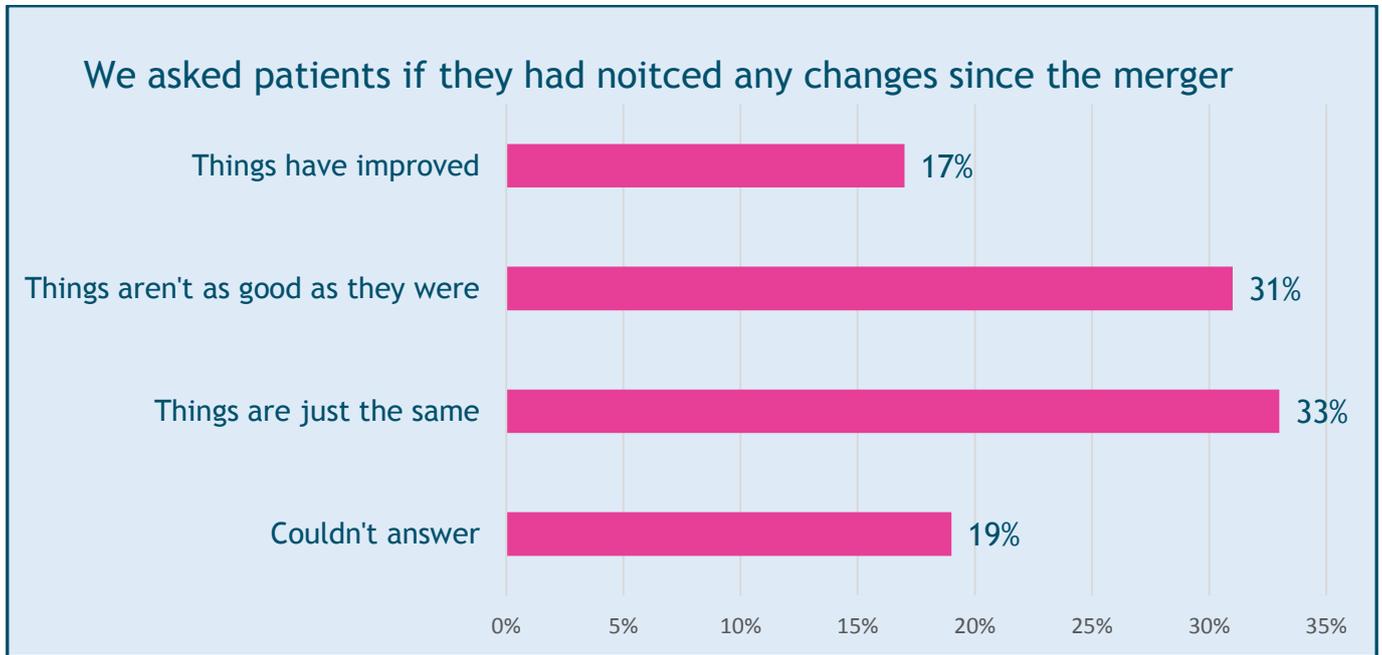
The survey we used can be found on page 26.

RECEPTION



5. Feedback

During the Healthwatch Sunderland visits to the practice we spoke to 133 patients from the practice.

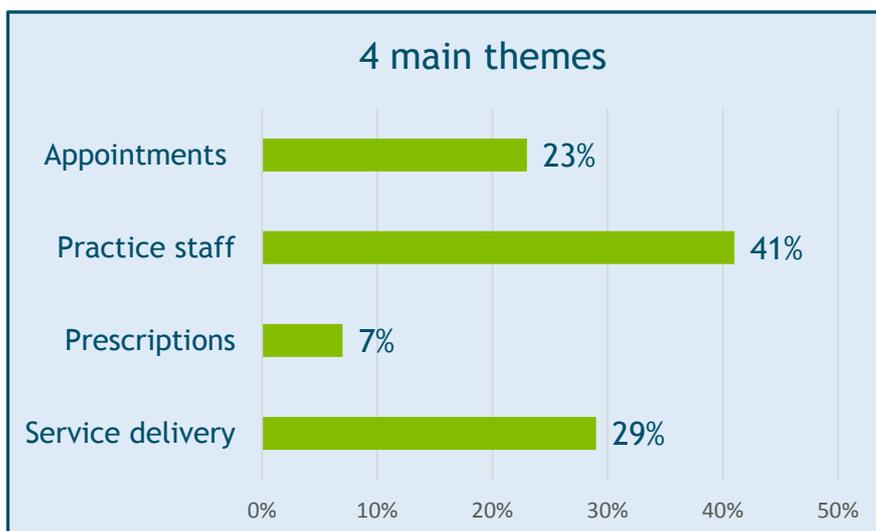


We went on to ask patients to explain their response and they gave us the following feedback.

Positive feedback received

Patients gave us examples of 87 pieces of positive feedback during our visits, we were able to group their responses into 4 main themes.

These were: appointments, practice staff, prescriptions and service delivery.



Appointments

The positive feedback we received on appointments is given below:

- There is more appointment availability
- I got my appointment OK
- I get appointments for regular check-ups fine
- You can get an appointment here OK
- Can always get an appointment. There are plenty of doctors now - things have definitely improved
- You can get an appointment quicker
- They seem to be a bit more on the ball now. You can get an appointment if required in 2 weeks, but you can get an urgent appointment -they try their best to fit you in
- I can see a GP quicker now and if it's not necessary to see a GP, I can see Rachel the Advanced Nurse Practitioner -she's great!
- I don't visit very often - this is my first visit in years. I got an urgent appointment OK today
- Don't wait so long for an appointment and you don't wait as long when you get to the surgery
- Good timescale for seeing a doctor for my asthma - always get to see a GP when I ring. Ring in the morning and see the GP in the afternoon - good service
- No problems getting an appointment
- The appointment system is OK. You have to ring on a Friday for an appointment for the following 2 weeks
- It's easy to get an appointment - I just come down and make one
- Always get an appointment with the GP I want to see

"I needed an urgent appointment today and got one, no problem"

"You can get an appointment quicker now"

"Getting an appointment with the doctor and the practice nurse seemed a little easier than in the past"

"Appointments are given to meet my needs - good!"

"I have 2 children and always get appointments quickly when I need them. My children are young"

Practice staff

The positive feedback we received about practice staff is given below:

Doctors

- The GPs here are very nice
- Since I had my baby, access to GPs has improved
- I always get to see Dr Parera, but the odd time I have seen the other GPs they have been OK
- There seems to be more doctors and the waiting times have shortened
- The GPs are fine
- Dr Malyk is really good, she has knowledge of my circumstances before I enter her room
- After my first appointment I rang my mam to tell her how good it is here. I usually see 1 or 2 GPs when I come - my meds were changed which I desperately needed
- GPs are really good
- The GPs are great
- Better choice of GPs
- Good, there is more access to doctors
- The GPs give a good service
- Happy with alternative doctors
- Much more choice of doctors
- It's easier to get an appointment with the same GP, but I don't know the GPs now
- I like Dr Hussein - he is lovely. I always see the same GP
- The GPs are nice

“I don't come to the surgery much but, the GPs are fab!”

“The doctors are all better, much nicer and have more time for you”

“GPs take me seriously, listen to me and I don't feel I'm being fobbed off”

“I have managed to see the same GP who is very thorough and I'm happy”

“I always see Dr Hussein and I have total confidence in him”

Nurses/Advanced Nurse Practitioner

- They have a Nurse Practitioner now. She can prescribe and it is a quicker service - I am very happy with this service
- There are more nurses now
- The nursing staff are all OK
- The staff in the treatment room treated me very well, with empathy and gave a full explanation of what to do - excellent care

“Service from Nurse Practitioner was good - she followed up my test results and explained everything”

“The nurses here are nice”

Receptionists

- The staff are good, helpful and polite
- The people who work here seem very nice
- The staff are alright - in a good way
- Everyone is very helpful
- I didn't like it at first, but I'm used to it now. I'm getting to know the staff and the girls and it's really good now
- The new staff are better and reception staff are excellent now

“The staff are very good, they are helpful and I have no complaints”

“The girls are nice”



Prescriptions

The positive feedback we received on prescriptions is given below:

- Prescriptions are OK
- My prescriptions are fine
- I get my regular prescriptions OK
- My regular prescriptions are fine

“I get regular scripts and they are fine”

“Things seem to have settled down with prescriptions”

Service delivery

The positive feedback we received on service delivery is given below:

- They seem to be catching up with clinics now; spirometry etc
- I can now book appointments and order scripts online. The building is better, there is more space, which is better for my daughter who is autistic
- I needed a referral and it was done quickly to the appropriate service
- It's more efficient. Since having a baby I feel everything is easier now. I get good advice from staff
- My husband has cancer and they are spot on all of the time. They ring to make sure he is OK, ask if he needs pain relief or needs to see a GP. The care my husband receives is really good!
- My experience when calling the surgery has been fine. The instructions I was given were clear
- The telephone was answered straight way and an appointment made for me for the flu jab

“There have been some improvements - the check in system is good”

“More organised, more streamlined and now seems more straight forward”

“Once you get to know the systems it's OK”

General feedback

The positive general feedback we received is given below:

- I have been visiting the surgery a lot lately and have had no issues
- We get good attention and are well looked after. It is comforting to know help is there when you need it. They have been extra good recently when my wife hasn't been well
- Changed surgery and much improved from the last. I have a baby and happy with the service I get for her
- I have no problems
- It's a lot better here now
- It's more user friendly now

"It's always been good here and still is"

"The general service as a whole has improved"

Further positive comments

We asked patients if they would like to give us any further feedback about New Silksworth Medical Practice.

Here are the positive comments we received:

- It's OK - there is nothing at the minute to complain about
- Everything is absolutely fine
- Just the same as before. I'm happy with the service that is offered
- No trouble
- The parking here is better
- The service here is fine - I would have moved if it wasn't
- Generally, on the whole it is a good practice
- I know about the GP Extended Access Service, I have been offered it

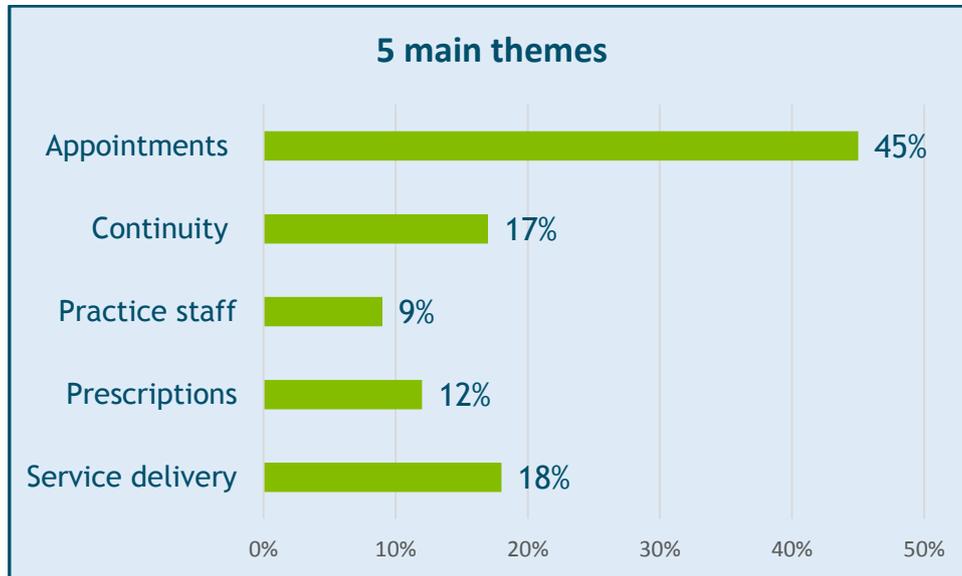
"There are more services available since the merger"

"I'm satisfied - it's good!"

Negative feedback received

Patients gave us examples of 105 pieces of negative feedback during our visits, we were able to group their responses into 5 main themes.

These were appointments, continuity, practice staff, prescriptions and service delivery.



Appointments

The negative feedback we received on appointments is given below:

- I don't come much, but still waiting a while for an appointment
- It's been alright. You wait for weeks for an appointment which is a little worse than before the merger
- Too long to wait for an urgent appointment, even after notifying how ill he was. Not offered an appointment until 2 weeks
- The waiting time for a general appointment is too long
- Not being offered an appointment soon enough
- Appointments are too long when ringing up
- They are always fully booked. It feels too big
- The appointment system has not improved. I needed to see someone quickly, but not necessarily today and was offered this afternoon, which did not fit in with work, or the 15th November 2018, which is two weeks away

"I sometimes wait longer to get an appointment"

"Got to wait 2-3 weeks for an appointment and be prepared to wait when you get here too"

- You can only book appointments 2 weeks in advance and if the doctor wants to review you in say 3 weeks, you have to firstly remember to call and there often is no appointments left
- It's still 2-3 weeks to get to see a doctor
- Now I have to wait 2 weeks for an appointment
- You wait longer for an appointment
- I have needed 2 appointments over the past 3 weeks and ended up going to Houghton Primary Care Centre, who were brilliant twice, as it was too long to wait to get an appointment - I don't come here very often
- More difficult to get an appointment
- If I need to see a doctor, but not ill enough to stay off work, I have to wait for 2 weeks to get an appointment because it is not classed as urgent
- Getting an appointment is very difficult within the 2 week time frame. I had to ring back to get an appointment for my son and was put on hold for quite a while, second in the queue
- Even though there are more doctors and nurses, it stills seems like a long wait to see someone - I thought it might improve
- The waiting times for appointments is 2 weeks, which is worse than before
- Waiting 2 weeks for an appointment
- Failure to get an appointment - Was offered to see the practice Nurse who was unable to help. So booked an appointment next day for doctor. This cost me £20 to attend the surgery over the 2 days
- Wait too long for appointments
- Waiting time for appointments is too long
- Appointments worse to get
- Child is 2 years old and there were no appointments available for 2 weeks, he was really poorly. I called 111 who attended to his medical problem
- Too long to get an appointment. I waited for 2 weeks for this appointment for my 6 year old son

"I came in today to book an appointment and have to ring back tomorrow to book in for 2 weeks' time"

"Taken me three days running to get an appointment for 2 weeks in advance - still didn't manage to get one. I only want a referral"

"Appointment delays and I wasn't advised about after hours appointments when I called after 4.30pm"

"I'm disappointed as I am unable to get a suitable appointment"

- Electronic service - appointments are not adequate
- Appointments - too long to wait
- Have to wait too long for appointments
- There were teething problems at first and there is a struggle to get an appointment
- I had to complain last week and I have never had to complain before - waited 2 weeks to see a GP
- Wait longer for appointments - at least 2 weeks
- It takes a long time to get an appointment
- It's not easy to make an appointment
- Still bad waiting times for an appointment
- Came to see the nurse last week as I have COPD and asked if I could see the GP at the same time. But got to see the practice nurse - gave me antibiotics. I rang yesterday as they are not working and the only appointment I can get is 21st November and I don't like going out in the dark. I am going to ask if I can change my appointment

“Appointment system is not efficient, especially follow-up, when the doctor advises you to come back in a week”

“It's difficult to get an appointment, unless you get through at 8am. This is difficult due to work”

“Lack of appointments on the electronic system”



Continuity

The negative feedback we received on continuity is given below:

- I don't seem to get to see the same GP twice
- There is no continuity - my husband requires palliative care and I feel there is no personal support and we are sick of being passed from pillar to post
- There is a lack of continuity. You have to explain to different doctors. It's too stressful
- All the doctors have changed - you don't know your GP anymore. I hope the GPs remain with the practice so we can build a relationship with them. That's important to me
- There was a lot of locums before and there still is now
- No continuity of service now
- Fewer permanent doctors available at the practice
- It's not the same doctors as before - I don't know where they have gone
- Can't get an appointment with my regular GP - I like to see him wherever possible, but it's not always possible. Having a relationship with one doctor is always better
- Lack of continuity and I suffer a few health problems
- No continuity if seeing different doctors all of the time
- No continuity so repeating illnesses to different doctors
- Dr Stephenson has left and I couldn't tell you who my GP is now. I always see different GPs
- The service is OK, but continuity is non-existent. I have Alzheimer's and struggle to keep up with change. Therefore all the new changes are unhelpful

“There's no continuity with the Drs, which can be stressful having to repeat the same problem over and over to different doctors”

“It seems difficult to get to see the same GP twice”

“I have a mental health problem and I did get to see the same GP at first, but she has left now”

Practice staff

The negative feedback we received about the practice staff is given below:

GPs

- I have had issues with one GP who didn't give any eye contact during my consultation and I found him to be rude

“GPs don't have time for you like they did at Colliery”

Receptionists

- The changeover of receptionists has been a little awkward
- The reception staff are not as nice
- Receptionists are unhelpful and only offered an appointment with the Nurse Practitioner, who won't see patients with excessive medical problems
- The receptionists are hitty missy if you get the correct information and attitude more or less (that's the way it is)
- Reception were unaware of what a rescue pack is. I am on a lot of medication and the reception does know how important this was. Was told to ring back in 48 hours and I said no this is important. I ended up paying £8 for a chamber

“Different information given by different receptionist”

“There is a lack of understanding by reception”

Prescription

The negative feedback we received on prescriptions is given below:

- It takes a bit longer to get scripts - takes about 4 days to get to pharmacy, used to be 1-2 days
- 1 year down the line and they are still making changes to prescriptions and not telling patients
- They have now changed scripts and only get meds for mental health for 1 month instead of 2 months. I went back to the pharmacy and they told me about the change
- The prescription system it not as easy as it was. Had a problem, with getting prescriptions over the phone - doctor made a prescription but the next one was refused
- Problems with prescription issuing - not checking PTO pages - staff should check items on each prescriptions

“Surgery send prescriptions to the chemist, but they all run at different times, so I'm never away from the chemist”

- Electronic services - prescriptions online often malfunctioning as part of the prescription is rejected. Also prescriptions should fall on same date to save putting in repeats 2-3 times per week
- Electronic on line repeat prescriptions malfunction all of the time. There is no one to contact about this. Prescriptions often rejected with no cause or information on screen. Have to make numerous journeys to the surgery to correct this
- Electronic prescriptions keep being rejected for no reason. 3 times this week and today is was corrected. There should be more information given if the operator is to reject (reason and action to be taken should show)
- I had to complain last week and I have never had to complain before. I waited 2 weeks to see a GP for a script review and the GP said the script was fine. Got a call the next morning from the pharmacy - stopped the item immediately. Pharmacy said they were not prescribing this anymore. I rang the surgery, who put me through to the pharmacy. The Practice Manager rang the pharmacy and went to collect the Nomad Strip for 2 weeks. When I went back to the pharmacy there was no script

“There are still some issues with scripts”

“Changes in prescription 'rules' are a little confusing and not sure the system will be any easier”



Service delivery

The negative feedback we received on service delivery is given below:

- I've been on the phone for half an hour today trying to get an appointment
- In a queue on the phone for a while to get to the front of the queue
- She had a blood test and was advised she was not a diabetic. Later she found out she was, after requesting a printout
- No Practice Manager presently and PPG meetings have been cancelled due to this. I feel there is no top management to approach to air comments
- Can no longer call to speak to a GP
- It would help if the nurse's appointments could be made via the Patient Access App - at present only doctors' appointments can be made
- Booked in to see the Nurse Practitioner for 3.45pm. Notes say it's not for her, so have to sit here another half an hour as they have booked me in for the asthma nurse
- My husband's records were mixed up with someone else of the same name and he was fined £300 for prescriptions which were not his. I have complained to the NHS and waiting for money back. He also got a letter for check-up for hypertension and when he got here it was for the person of the same name - hopefully this issue has now been rectified
- I had a phone call yesterday telling me to what to do. I had to tell them that I already had an appointment. They said you need to make a routine appointment to see a GP and I already had one
- Prior to the merger when I came in for my Depo injection I would then be given my next appointment. Now I have to ring up when injection is needed - it was much easier before
- I was told to ask for Ann (nurse) when my husband comes in for flu jab and she would also dress his legs. Receptionist wouldn't do this when I got here and didn't offer an alternative. He is getting his legs dressed today and I am going to ask for the district nurses to visit him at home as he has cancer
- Not a personal service like Church View. You could call and speak to a GP who then decided if you needed an appointment

"I know about Extended Access, but it wasn't offered to me at my appointment request time when I rang"

"It wasn't good before, but it's just the same now"

"I have noticed that the GP room numbers have changed - this gets confusing"

"I think it was better before, there is less familiarity now"

"Things have changed. The parking is not as good"

- There are problems with the computer system leading to test results not being available for doctors' appointments. Still waiting for results - three weeks after tests, so doctors unable to discuss the outcomes

Further negative comments

We asked patients if they would like to give us any further feedback about New Silksworth Medical Practice.

Here are the negative comments we received:

- The personal service has gone
- Still room for improvement
- Whenever I come to collect a prescription the waiting room is nearly empty, so why can't more appointments be available?
- Is there a late night surgery? If so it needs to be advertised, as I am unaware if there is. Late nights/Saturdays would help people who work - not everybody can see the doctor during the day - thank you!

“Church View was a more personal service they had more time for you”

Mixed feedback received

Patients gave us examples of 12 pieces of mixed feedback during our visits, these were around appointments, practice staff, prescriptions and service delivery.

Appointments

- If you ring for a child you get an appointment quickly on the whole. Although I called a couple of days ago and was offered 2 weeks' time. I called back today and got an urgent appointment for this afternoon
- Waiting times for appointments are very long, but at least you can see the Nurse Practitioner. Two weeks wait to see a GP is useless - that could be better
- It takes too long to see a GP, but you can see a nurse. The GP tells you to book an appointment in 4 weeks and you can't make an appointment that far in advance
- Wait 2 weeks for an appointment. If you want an early appointment you ring early on a morning and can possibly get one in 1-2 days. I like to see the same GP, so this may be a factor

“It's not as good. It's a 2 week wait for an appointment, but if you need an urgent appointment it's OK”

“It's alright sometimes. The last couple of weeks it's been OK to make an appointment”

- Wait a while for appointments, but if it's an emergency they are usually pretty good
- You wait longer to get an appointment, but that's most places now

Practice Staff

- My husband didn't get a satisfactory diagnosis for a knee problem and needed a private appointment. One doctor in particular has given a good service
- Care from GP is fantastic, although they were meant to get back to mobility services by writing but didn't, so I had to go for an assessment
- On my first visit I felt totally unsupported by the locum doctor and the staff. On my second visit, the GP (Dr Prince) listened and gave me excellent support and re-assurance. This helped me the most
- There are more receptionists so that is a bit better, but the small personal touches have gone
- Before you could just pop in to see a nurse, now I have to make an appointment. It's usually for a water infection and they get me in promptly
- I have only been here since the merger to see the midwife who is great. I would like the waiting area to be cooler though

“Commitment sometimes not as apparent as in locum doctors to permanent”

“It wasn't very nice at first, but I'm getting to know the staff here now”

“It's taken a year to settle, especially the scripts, but everything is OK now”

Prescriptions

- There was trouble with my husband's appointments and scripts, but things are settling now

Service delivery

- I was a patient at Church View and got the merger letter stating that I was now a patient at Colliery. When I needed an appointment they told me they had no record of me so I have had to re-register. The registration process was seamless, but did add to my existing anxiety
- There were slight hiccups at first which seems to have settled down now. There is a small lack of communication

“It takes a long time to get through on the phone, but I think this is improving”

Further mixed comments

We asked patients if they would like to give us any further feedback about New Silksworth Medical Practice.

Here are the mixed comments we received:

- I came here when Conishead Surgery closed - It's bigger and less personal but I have no complaints about the service
- I was unaware of the merger of the two surgeries. I'm quite happy with the service - it's here when I need it. There was a bit of uncertainty when getting blood test results. The person I spoke to was unaware of specific details of the test
- Things have got better over time since the merger, more organised and get appointments OK
- It was manic at first (after the merger) but is getting better now

“Things are definitely improving now - things were difficult straight after”

Neutral feedback received

Patients gave us examples of 6 pieces of neutral feedback during our visits, these were around appointments, practice staff and service delivery.

Here are the neutral comments we received:

Appointments

- There's not much change, it's still about 2 weeks for an appointment. If you ask for an urgent appointment, you get one

“There are delays to get an appointment, but that is no change”

Practice staff

- I try not to use the service too much, but I find it's not always easy to stick with the same doctor. This would save going through the same things again, which is time consuming for everyone. The service here is pretty good

“You can see they are busy”

Service delivery

- I haven't had an asthma review for 2 years - GP would normally contact me about it. I am waiting until December when they normally contact me and if they don't get in touch with me I will contact them myself

“There are no Colliery GPs here now - It's strange. But there are no family GPs now in the city”

Further neutral comments

We asked patients if they would like to give us any further feedback about New Silksworth Medical Practice.

Here are the neutral comments we received:

- I have only been here once before today. Everyone praised Church View as nothing seemed too much trouble
- We are worried about the impact the new housing in this area will have on already stretched services here and how that will affect us
- I left a while ago, because I couldn't get appointments, but came back as my parents are here

“They could possibly get a board with photos of GPs as I don't know one GP from another”

6. Information and signposting

During the Healthwatch Sunderland engagement sessions the team spoke to patients who had stated they find it difficult to get a GP appointment when they need one. To support them Healthwatch Sunderland felt it was important to inform and signpost these 39 patients to the GP Extended Access Service all of whom were unaware of the availability of this new service.

7. Appendices

Patient survey

The New Silksworth Medical Practice

How are things going since the merger?

Have you noticed any changes in the service you are now receiving at the GP practice since the merger a year ago?

The services have improved

The services is not as good as it was

I haven't noticed any changes

Please explain your answer:

PTO if necessary

Is there anything else you would like to say about the service you receive at the practice?

PTO if necessary

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