



# UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTRE

Welfare W  tch

Medical Centre Health Check

Patient Participation

# THE RESPONSE.

# INTRODUCTION

The University Medical Centre is a GP Practice on the campus of the University Medical Centre and our practice population is made up of approximately 75% 16-24 year olds.

The Medical Centre staff meet regularly with the Student Welfare Officers at the University of Kent and during these meetings it was decided that a survey of the Medical Centre's services should be carried out to determine awareness of services on campus and ensure these services are delivered efficiently and effectively to our patients.

With a high percentage of our patient list being students studying at the University a virtual group was felt to be the best way to engage with as many of our patients as possible. Patients who express an interest to join our Virtual Patient Participation Group (PRG) are contacted electronically for engagement/feedback/suggestions. Joining the group is made easy by submitting form on website or in paper form at the Medical Centre. There is also a Comments/Feedback Box available at Reception Desk for all to be able to comment without signing up to the group. The Vice-President (Welfare) for University of Kent's Student Union aimed to develop a 'Welfare Watch' campaign to look at different relevant welfare issues throughout the year and the first was to consult on the experience of using the Medical Centre which was felt useful by all PRG members.

The survey (results of which are attached) was developed by Kent Union's full and part-time officers, Kent Union's marketing department, current students, doctors, nurses, staff at the Medical Centre and input from our virtual PRG members at that time. It was discussed by the group that areas of importance were:

- ❖ Awareness of Medical Centre and health services on campus
- ❖ Experience and awareness of Triage System
- ❖ Experience of making an appointment
- ❖ Experience of Consultation at Medical Centre
- ❖ Usage of the Medical Centre – services used
- ❖ University Medical Centre's website – awareness and usefulness
- ❖ Future engagement with patients

# WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

**An on-line survey was developed and was open for two weeks at the beginning of November 2011. A link was sent to students via e-mail and social network websites and also to all patients via University Medical Centre's own website and social networking sites. Paper copies were also available to be completed at the Medical Centre and at big events on campus during that time.**

**The Medical Centre also actively sought engagement by:**

- ❖ Displaying a message on the LED screen in the Waiting Area**
- ❖ Poster is permanently on display in the Medical Centre's foyer to encourage enrolment as a virtual patient participation group member.**
- ❖ Feedback and Comments Box is prominently displayed in reception area for continued patient feedback.**
- ❖ University Medical Centre's website ([www.kent.ac.uk/medical](http://www.kent.ac.uk/medical)) has an invitation for patient participation and at the time of the survey a direct link was added for ease of completion by visitors to the website.**

For those patients who were already members of the virtual PRG, the Medical Centre wrote to them and asked them for feedback and enclosed a copy of the survey in paper form or e-mailed them the link for them to complete and return.

# THE RESULTS

The survey was predominantly completed by students and therefore the term 'students' is used in the survey result.

The survey received 349 responses.

The survey results are attached and following discussions with the Welfare Officers, virtual PRG members and the Medical Centre the following recommendations from the group survey were prioritised into three areas according to responses (also to be found on last page of survey results) :

- ❖ Short Term
- ❖ Medium Term
- ❖ Long Term



# SHORT TERM

Have the Medical Centre website listed under the 'Quick Links' of the University's homepage and include pharmacy information on the site:

*The Medical Centre are liaising with University on having the Medical Centre listed under Quick Links. A list of all pharmacies in the area, along with contact details is now available on the Medical Centre website.*

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Fix the change/update address system on the website:

*Create a clearer direct link to the change of address facility on our home page (currently located under Hot Topics on home page). Medical Centre have tested the change of address function on the website and it is fully working. If any patient does encounter a problem with this or anything else, do please contact the Medical Centre.*

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Address the issue of advance appointments and why students are often unable to book them :

*Pre-bookable/advance appointments are available - usually those at the start of surgeries and in our term-time evening clinics. It can be difficult to get the balance right - our experience is that most people want to be seen on the day they phone. We do find that there is a high level of DNAs ("did not attends") with pre-booked clinics thus wasting an appointment and the further ahead these are booked, the greater the likelihood of this happening, in spite of us introducing text appointment reminders recently.*

## SHORT TERM continued...

Pass the comments of this report about the eating disorder clinic, along with the student petition calling for its reinstatement, to the commissioning board and release a statement of the new procedures that are currently in place for patients affected.

*The comments in the Survey and the petition have been passed to the Commissioners within the PCT and the Local Commissioning Group. The Medical Centre continue to work with the Commissioners on being able to provide the service for all patients in the area within the next few months. Any patients affected by the withdrawal of the service that was offered at the Medical Centre are encouraged to see their G.P. for appropriate support/referral.*

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When calling patients back have doctors and nurses ask if they are in a comfortable and appropriate place to talk.

*We are aware that we sometimes call back when the patient could be overheard and are happy to call back the patient when they have time to get to somewhere more private.*

# MEDIUM TERM

Set up a system for students to be able to give feedback about their experience of the Medical Centre and use appointments to tell them how they can do it::

*Feedback and Comments Box is in prominent position on front reception desk. Medical Centre will use their social networking sites (facebook and twitter) to encourage feedback and there is a link on website to facilitate patient engagement . Ongoing surveys for our Physiotherapy and Sexual Health services are available via our website for patients using these services. A patient feedback touch screen will be available in the reception area in the next few months.*

Look at embedding across the entire Medical Centre the message of taking students and their medical records seriously, as well as valuing their confidentiality.

- ❖ *The Medical Centre will increase patient awareness of data protection/confidentiality policy. A notice is currently on display in foyer, but a notice will also be displayed within main seating area. Website also has confidentiality statement. There are patient leaflets in waiting room and available in downloadable format from our website.*
- ❖ *We take confidentiality extremely seriously. All communication with us is treated the same way. We do not pass on any information to third parties without your express permission whether they are family and friends or the University. We take all our patients seriously and try to identify their underlying concerns as well as making a diagnosis and treatment plan in a consultation. We are aware that we sometimes call back when you could be overheard and are happy to call back when you have time to get to somewhere more private. All patient contact is totally confidential whether you are speaking to the receptionist, admin staff, secretary, nurse or doctor. All staff are required to undertake Information Governance (Confidentiality) training regularly.*

Make doctors, nurses and other staff appear more approachable by having their pictures and names in the reception area and on the website.

*Names of GP's are in foyer of reception area and names are listed on the website with relevant qualifications. GP names are on room doors and it is Medical Centre policy that all staff wear a name badge. We are looking to introduce doctors pictures in the waiting area.*

## MEDIUM TERM continued...

Consider opening the phone lines at 8am, giving a full hour before lectures and seminars start for people to try and book appointments.

*The Medical Centre is investing in a new telephone system which is being installed in April 2012 which aims to improve answering time of calls and therefore aims to improve efficiency of answering calls, especially during busy periods i.e. 8.30. We will keep this under review.*

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Look at how reception and phone staff can appear friendlier and more supportive.

*GP receptionists have one of the toughest roles and have to put up with a lot of stereotyping. They work under pressured circumstances and we are very proud of them as we are all our staff and think they do a great job. We are upset if patients don't feel that this is the case. Receptionists are on the front line with nowhere to hide (and no one to hide behind) and have to deal with all sorts of requests and demands from both sides of the reception desk. They do try to be as accommodating as possible and, especially if treated courteously and politely, always do their best to help.*

- ❖ *A recent article in the Daily Mail may explain some of the pressures doctors receptionists are under*

*<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2081457/There-good-reason-GP-receptionists-grumpy.html>*

- ❖ *Increased support for our reception staff in-house to enable receptionists to deal with the pressures and demands of the role.*

# LONGER TERM

Liaise with the University on how students can become more aware of the process of using the Medical Centre to gain concessions should they be ill.

*The Medical Centre have revised their medical letter application system which all Faculties and Tutors are aware of and this will be kept under review. Students should communicate with their department to see if a medical letter is needed for their concessions request.*

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Investigate how wait times for appointments and call backs on triage can be reduced.

*The new telephone system aims to improve answering time which will aid the effectiveness of communication with patients, especially in the busy mornings. Waiting for appointments and being taken seriously go hand in hand. We try to give each patient the time they need when sitting in front of us - some will need more time than others. Patients can ask for a double appointment if they have a list of ailments as it is unlikely these can all be dealt with in a single appointment and some issues will always take more than one appointment to unravel. Education for patients on website and notices that appointments are only 10 minutes and for one problem. Medical Centre will continue to communicate with patients when surgeries are running late.*

*We aim to provide a system that is fair to all and to do "today's work today". We know it is not perfect but feel it does satisfy the needs of the majority. Demand for appointments is always high and we have a skill mix within the Practice. The purpose of the triage system is to identify the degree of urgency of the appointment request as well as the nature of the problem so that the patient can be given an appointment with the person best able to help them and to provide continuity of care with the same health professional when necessary, avoiding the need for unnecessary follow up appointments. Some problems can also be dealt with over the phone without the need for face-to-face consultations thus freeing up slots and at less inconvenience to the patient.*

## LONGER TERM continued...

Consider whether an online booking system could work for the Medical Centre.

*On-line appointments are available to book and access to these is at the request of patients. The triage system does enable the patient to receive the most appropriate appointments and keeps DNA's to a minimum to ensure maximum number of appointments are available on the day.*

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Investigate whether students could on occasion be able to have a continuing relationship with one GP.

*We strive to offer patients continuity of care and do this wherever possible and the triage system facilitates this. It can be difficult when GP's are on leave or are part-time as appointments on offer are therefore limited and patients may be directed to another GP.*

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Consider how over time the Medical Centre can develop a system that is not overly reliant on calling first thing to gain an appointment.

*Pre-bookable/advance appointments are available - usually those at the start of surgeries and in our term-time evening clinics. We also release appointments appropriately later in the afternoon to meet the demand of students telephoning late morning or in the afternoon. It can be difficult to get the balance right - our experience is that most people want to be seen on the day they phone. We do find that there is a high level of DNAs ("did not attends") with pre-booked clinics thus wasting an appointment and the further ahead these are booked, the greater the likelihood of this happening.*

# LAST COMMENTS – Welfare Watch, The Report

*Under the Last Comments heading in the survey results (Welfare Watch, The Report), it is commented about the removal of the Medical Centre's in-house eating disorder clinic. The Medical Centre have also been in receipt of a patient petition for raising concerns on the withdrawal of this clinic. The Medical Centre are currently in liaison with the Commissioners of this service and will advise further as soon as we have any further news.*



# PATIENT FEEDBACK BOX

*Below are some of the comments received via our patient feedback box which is located in prominent position in the waiting area.*

*I want to thank the medical centre team very much for their help and quick response to my query and to have been able to see Dr X within clinic time/between appointments..*

*I was late for my appointment and thought I would not be seen but the receptionist was so nice and spoke to the nurse who still saw me, I was ever so grateful to reception and the nurse.*

*May I suggest.  
More signs from street entrance necessary. Mr X.*

*My husband and I would like to express our gratitude for all the help and kindness shown to us and other family members by all staff and doctors at the medical centre for the last 30 years. We have always been able to get help and advice when most needed. Many thanks to all concerned. Mrs X.*

*Dear Dr X  
Thank you so much for your kindness to give me an appointment today even at the last hour.*

*Just to say thank you to the nice ladies on the front desk for being so helpful.*

*I would just like to say how great this surgery is, especially in comparison to the previous one I attended in Essex. The reception is really polite and organised and the doctors understanding of mental health is first class. The latter has benefited me enormously over the last 7 to 8 months so I would just like to say thank you.*

*Mr X thinks the whole team upstairs and downstairs are brilliant and helpful.*

*Cut my finger badly, was so pleased with the service given by receptionist. Excellent service.*

## REMINDER...

*Practice Opening Hours Monday to Friday are:  
8.30am to 6.00pm*

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*Tuesday and Thursday evening opening hours (term  
time only plus Easter vacation) for GP and Nurse  
Services:  
6.30pm to 9.00pm*

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*Contact Telephone Number during these opening  
times is:  
01227 469333*

Thank you for your feedback on the medical services at the University of Kent. This enables us to continually improve our services and your engagement is much appreciated. We will continue on a regular basis to ask for feedback and review the improvements we have and will be making as a result of this successful report and subsequent surveys.

Thank you to Colum McGuire, Welfare Officer at the University of Kent for his continued involvement and input to aid this and benefit the students and patients at the University Medical Centre.

