



Peartree Medical Centre: Annual Complaints Report

February 2014

1. Purpose of this report

- To set out the number and nature of complaints made to the Practice Manager during the year to 31 January 2014.
- To inform the Practice Team and the Patient Reference Group.
- To determine any new learning outcomes.

2. Background

This is the second formal annual report prepared by the Practice on complaints made directly to the Practice Manager. This covers any written complaints; complaints made over the internet, by telephone or in person in the surgery.

The Practice has a formal complaints procedure which is available from display units in the surgery waiting room or on the website. The Practice Leaflet also explains the Complaints Procedure. All staff receive formal training in the handling of complaints and as part of wider annual Customer Care training.

All complaints are recorded in the Register by the Practice Manager as they occur. Every six months – or more frequently if the issue were to warrant it – a summary of all the complaints are presented to the monthly Clinical Meeting for discussion and action by all Clinical Staff. If as a result of this discussion, there are learning outcomes for administrative staff, the Practice Manager will raise these in the subsequent monthly Reception meeting.

The Practice has self assessed its processes for the purpose of registration with the Care Quality Commission and has declared itself compliant with those outcomes directly or indirectly related to complaints and patient

feedback.

By the nature of the services that are delivered by the Practice, some of the complaints relate to confidential patient sensitive issues and therefore, the report anonymises these accordingly.

The appointment system was changed in August 2012 and previous patient surveys indicate that, whilst not universally popular, it has been generally well received. There is no doubt that it has improved GP access by reducing the number of Did Not Attends.

The telephone system which has also been the cause of much patient frustration was upgraded and changed on February 12 2014. Whilst this did not occur during the time period covered by this report, it is expected that the provision of new facilities such as phone queuing, voice mail and patient education messages will address some of this frustration.

3. Number of Complaints

The number of individual complaints recorded by the Practice Manager in the year to 31 January 2014 is as follows:-

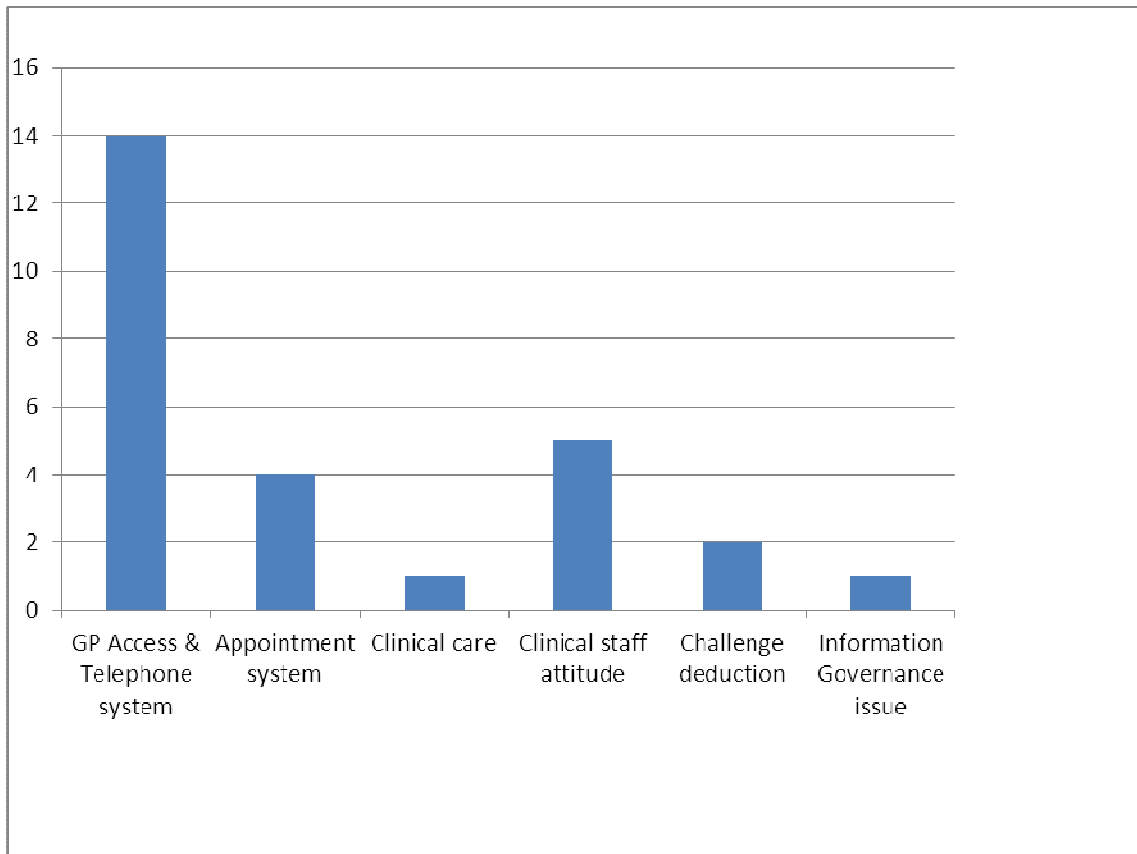
Time Period	Number
Year to 31 January 2013	37
Year to 31 January 2014	23
Percentage reduction	38%

In an average week, it is estimated that there are approximately 660 direct patient contacts with clinicians in the surgery (face to face & telephone) as well as an indeterminate number of contacts with administrative staff at the Reception counter or over the phone.

For a year, therefore, there would be conservatively 34,320 individual patient contacts. Complaints made to the Practice Manager, therefore, represent 0.06% of total contacts.

4. Nature of Complaints

Complaints can relate to a single specific issue but more frequently, a complainant may raise a number of inter-related issues. Where this is the case, the multiple nature of these complaints are included in the data below.



The six categories shown are as follows:-

GP Access & Telephone system: complaints about telephone access or access to GPs.

Appointment system: these relate to how & when the surgery allocates GP appointments.

Clinical care: Self-explanatory.

Clinical staff attitude: this largely relates to the interaction of patients with locums during the year.

Challenge deduction: this relates to two patients who were deducted from the list due to poor attendance who then challenged and complained about the decision.

Information Governance issue: a consent form for a medical report was held but this stated that the report should be seen by the patient before release. It was erroneously released to his employer before the patient had seen it.

5. Learning outcomes

Comparing these outcomes with earlier years, there are some familiar themes but also themes that have dwindled.

Attitude of Reception staff

In previous years, a number of patients complained about the attitude of Receptionists. No such complaints were received in the 12 months to 31 January 2014. This is a welcome development and possible reasons include:-

- Impact of Customer Care training
- A more flexible appointment system which means the Receptionists meet patient need more regularly
- A robust management response in previous years to patient abuse
- A turnover of staff

Access to GPs & telephone access

Practice staff and members of the Patient Reference Group will not be surprised to read that during the twelve month period, complaints about access still represent the most numerous complaints.

There is little doubt that appropriate access to medical services remains a challenge for both the Practice and its patient community through education, communication and the best use of scarce resources. A diagrammatic discussion document of the current status of all actions related to Access is shown in the Appendix. This was discussed with the Patient Group on 27 February 2014.

It is hoped that the revised appointment system (August 2012) coupled with the new telephone system (February 2014) will start to address some of these frustrations.

The Practice Manager has written to all patients who have previously

complained about telephone access to inform them about the new system and to invite feedback.

Clinical staff attitude

Practice complaint systems and procedures identified this trend in patient dissatisfaction at an early point. Senior GPs discussed patient interaction with locums and this trend has been arrested.

Information Governance

This was a minor though regrettable lapse which fortunately did not cause the patient any major concern. Staff were reminded of the need to check the provisions of the consent form carefully.

The issue was formally reviewed and discussed in the Clinical meeting.

It is estimated that over 200 similar requests for reports and notes are made each year.

Patient abuse

Regrettably 4 of the complaints in this report were raised in an abusive and threatening manner, usually over the telephone. The new phone system has been designed to enable all future calls to be recorded to provide some staff protection. All patients are warned that calls can be recorded.

Clinical care

Where clinical lessons can be learned, these have been shared with the Clinical Team.

Mike Newbold, Practice Manager

February 2014