

Danetre Medical Practice

Patient Survey Report

1. Introduction

In October 2014 Healthwatch Northamptonshire visited Danetre Medical Practice in Daventry as part of a county-wide survey of GP practices. The survey aimed to find out about access to services, the patient experience, good practice and what pressures there are within the practice. A summary report of the findings from the county-wide survey, including good practice and recommendations, is available on our website¹.

We spoke to **five** patients at Danetre Medical Practice about their views, experiences and satisfaction. By speaking to patients face to face we could add depth to the findings of the National GP Patient Survey². We also spoke to the practice manager to find out about services currently being provided, how they are accessed, what they felt worked well and what pressures there were. The questions used are in Appendix 1 and 2.

All information and figures quoted below were correct at the time of the site visit. This report does not reflect any changes or improvements to procedures since that date.

2. Practice information

2.1 Practice size and staffing

Danetre Medical Practice is a medium-sized practice (approximately 12,750 patients) with ten doctors (seven full-time partners, one part-time partner, one salaried GP, plus one registrar), seven practice nurses (including three nurse practitioners), a research nurse, a specialist dementia nurse, three health care assistants, and a prescribing support technician.

2.2 Services provided

The practice provides a wide range of services, including minor operations, minor illnesses and ailments, and counselling. District nurses, health visitors and midwives are also based at the surgery.

Specialists: The practice employs a specialist dementia nurse.

Shared services: Danetre hosts cryotherapy and vasectomy for other surgeries.

¹ www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/about/docs

² <http://gp-patient.co.uk>

Extended opening: The practice opens from 7.30 to 8am four days per week and from 7 to 8am one day per week (GPs and phlebotomy), plus the diabetes nurse is available from 7 to 8am one day per week. Evening opening was trialled but was not utilised.

Home visits: Home visits are made every day by a doctor, a registrar and nurse practitioners. There is a briefing and debriefing before and after visits.

2.3 Appointment booking system

Appointments are released at 8am each day. All telephone calls go through the call centre and personal callers via reception. Routine appointments are bookable in advance and about 5,000 patients have signed up for the online system. A doctor is on duty for same day emergencies and everyone will be seen as needed.

Missed appointments

Text message reminders for patients are used for appointments. Do-not-attend appointments are still a problem but the number of these is declining.

2.4 Patient Participation Group (PPG)

The PPG meets quarterly and has an annual general meeting, with minutes are published online. The virtual group contribute to surveys about the surgery.

2.5 Complaints system

Complaints and comments leaflets are available from the surgery and are downloadable from the website, and the Complaints Policy is published online.

2.6 Equality and Diversity

We asked the practice about their equality and diversity policy and how the practice met additional needs of patients. The following were mentioned:

- a hearing loop and training for staff in its use
- recently improved access to the building
- a private room for patient enquiries
- PEARL Linguistics interpreter system

3. Patient experience

3.1 Appointment system

Most patients we spoke to (four) thought it was easy (one) or very easy (three) to get an appointment when they needed one. One person found it difficult.

Two positive experiences of getting an appointment mentioned the online booking system. For example:

- One patient said it was “just easy” to book an appointment.
- Two patients said that it can be difficult making an appointment with their preferred doctor.

3.2 Choice of doctor

Most patients (three) said they usually did see the GP of their choice. One person did not and said they would like to choose the gender of doctor they saw.

3.3 Treatment and quality of care and service

All of the patients we spoke to (five) were usually satisfied with the treatment and service they receive. When asked to tell us more:

- One person said they were listened to and described the practice as “Brilliant!”.
- We asked people what they thought could improve the quality of care. One person commented that everything was ‘OK’ and that they had no complaints.

3.4 Communication and additional needs

None of the patients had any problems communicating with the doctors or other practice staff. Two people had previously experienced difficulties but these had been satisfactorily resolved. When asked to explain further:

- One person commented that they had to phone the surgery to find out test results.
- One person said that the surgery phoned them about their treatment.

We also asked if any of the patients had any additional needs that required support (such as hearing or visual impairment, learning or physical disabilities, English as a second language) and whether their needs were met. Three of the patients we spoke to had additional needs. One said that the practice understood about their hearing impairment and that their needs were being met, and the other two did not comment.

3.5 Additional comments

We asked patients if they had any other comments to make about the practice. There was one additional positive comment and no additional negative comments.

Positive:

One person said that the practice was a good family doctor and that they had no complaints.

We also asked the Practice Manager if they were any more issues, pressures or examples of good practice that they wanted to tell us about:

Issues/pressures

- The reduction or ‘hole’ in mental health services is increasing pressure on the practice, with no solution in sight.
- Care in the community.
- Local ultrasound and pacemaker checking equipment would be useful - currently in NGH, not in Danetre Hospital.

What works well?

- The practice has won an award for demonstrating how research can improve patient care.
- Closer working with 14 other practices in the locality.

4. Highlights

According to the results of both our patient survey and the National GP Patient Survey the practice's booking system appears to be working efficiently and the majority of patients can get appointments when they need them. All patients were happy with the treatment and service they received and there seemed to be no problems with communication between patients and doctors.

5. Recommendations

1. The practice may want to consider using methods to reduce the number of 'Do Not Attend' (DNA) appointments if they are not already, such as sending letters to patients who recurrently miss appointments. *(The practice informs us that they are already sending letters to patients who repeatedly miss appointments).*
2. We carried out deaf access mystery shopping at 5 of the 25 practices we visited across the county and have found the access and provisions for deaf and hard of hearing patients could be improved. Whilst we did not specifically assess this practice for deaf awareness and access we recommend that the practice carries out a self-assessment of their deaf access and shares the findings with Healthwatch Northamptonshire and Deafconnect with a view to improving deaf access and awareness.

6. Response from the practice

"Thank you for allowing us to comment on the report. We were disappointed to see that the report was very generic and felt that it was not a true reflection of services at Danetre Medical Practice.

There was concern too that service was being assessed on just the 5 patients' comments when in fact we have practice population of 13,000. In connection with the recommendations it has been reported in the past by Nene Clinical Commissioning Group that Danetre Medical Practice are the best performing practice in the locality for managing their DNA's and in fact we are already undertaking the recommendation you suggest and send letters to patients who recurrently miss appointments as per our DNA policy.

Regarding the deaf recommendation we do actually have a hearing loop and training is undertaken by practice staff to enable them to help our vulnerable patients."

7. Thanks and acknowledgements

Healthwatch Northamptonshire would like to thank the Practice Manager and Operations Manager of Danetre Medical Practice for taking the time to talk to us and facilitate our visit, all the patients who were willing to take part in our survey and the Healthwatch Northamptonshire volunteers who visited the practice.

Appendix 1 - Patient survey questions

Q1: How easy is it to get an appointment when you need it? (Please tick one) Very easy Easy OK Difficult Very difficult <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>				
Q2: Please tell us more about your experiences of getting an appointment, including how it is easy or difficult, how long you have to wait to get an appointment, and whether the system works well for you:				
Q3: Do you usually get to see the doctor/nurse/health professional of your choice? Yes No, but I'd like to No, but it doesn't matter to me <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>				
Please tell us more about how this is important to you or not:				
Q4: Are there any problems when communicating with staff or doctors? Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>				
Please tell us more:				
Q5: Are you satisfied with the treatment and service you receive here? Yes, always Yes, usually No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>				
Please tell us more:				
Q6: What do you think could improve the patient experience at your GP practice and what do you think works particularly well? Improvements: Works well:				
Q7: Do you have any additional needs that require support? Such as hearing or visual impairment, learning or physical disabilities, English as a second language, etc. Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>				
If so, are they met? Yes No Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>				
Please tell us more:				
Q8: Is there anything else you would like to tell us?				

Appendix 2 - Practice Manager survey questions

<p>Q1: What is the staff makeup of the surgery (+ see briefing)? Do you have any nurse practitioners / prescribers and do you provide a mental health service? E.g. Have there been any changes to the surgery staff since the briefing? What are they? E.g. Which staff provide mental health care and advice?</p>
<p>Q2: Have you any GP or staff vacancies? How long have these posts been vacant?</p>
<p>Q3: How does your appointment booking system work? (only need to ask about what is different to the briefing) <i>E.g. the role of the receptionist, whether there is online booking, how far in advance patients can book appointments, how much choice patients have over time and GP, whether they use an 0845 number, how many phone lines they have, telephone triage? What do you do with temporary or unregistered patients?</i> Have any significant patient criticisms of the appointment system been reported by the PPG and how have these been addressed?</p>
<p>Q4: Does the practice conduct home visits? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> How are these organised?</p>
<p>Q5: What additional facilities does the practice have? (only need to ask about what is different to the briefing) (E.g. specialist clinics, counsellors, blood tests, specialist doctors, dressing changing facilities, drop in sessions) Do you share facilities with any other GP practices in your locality? Or does your practice or GP cluster have any specialisms/clinics or specialist doctors? If so, what and is this working? Would you like to see any more? Is there anything else working well in your locality? Are there any plans for further sharing of resources?</p>
<p>Q6: Does your practice have any extended opening hours or do you plan to (if not mentioned in briefing)? Has this been requested by your PPG?</p>
<p>Q7: Is the 111 Service prominently advertised by the Practice and does the service provide adequately for your patients and for their out of hours requirements? (Also see PPG and Patient Surveys and Reports)</p>
<p>Q8: Do you have an active patient engagement group? How is advertised and how can people join? Is it funded by the practice and how often do they meet? (Other than what is mentioned in the briefing)</p>
<p>Q9: Where is your complaints system publically displayed? <i>E.g. Is it in the patient information leaflet, noticeboard, reception desk?</i> How are complaints dealt with?</p>
<p>Q10. How else do you communicate with patients? <i>E.g. noticeboards, leaflets, website, guidelines about best times to call</i></p>
<p>Q11: What is your equality and diversity policy? How is it implemented? E.g. How provide access for those with physical, visual, hearing, and/or learning disabilities and autism and non-English speakers. BSL/interpreters? Is there staff training or understanding of obligations?</p>
<p>Q12: What other staff training does your practice have? <i>What decision aids/training are receptionists given?</i></p>
<p>Q13. Are there more patients attending your practice than there used to be? Have you any thoughts on why that is or why there is pressure on GP practices?</p>
<p>Q14: Is there anything else you would like to tell us about? E.g. things that are working well, challenges the practice faces, additional support needs they have, thoughts about A&E attendance, etc.</p>