

GP communication report



Introduction

The delivery of primary care in Wolverhampton is undergoing change as Wolverhampton CCG respond to the requirements of the NHS England Five Year Forward View. Wolverhampton CCG published its Primary Care Strategy in 2016 and as part of the strategy it detailed how it would ensure that the people of Wolverhampton receive the right treatment, at the right time in the right place.

They are going to do this through new models of care where four groups of practices working together. Primary Care Networks will be achieved by community neighbourhood teams being wrapped around local practices. Access to primary care services is between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday and same day weekend appointments that are provided from a hub or nominated practice within the particular GP practice group.

The principle method of engagement for the changes is through the GP practices Patient Participation Groups as well as communication directly from the GP practices.

Healthwatch Wolverhampton have therefore, undertaken a project to understand how much communication patients receive from their GP practice and what levels of awareness and involvement there are with PPGs. This is in order to understand the potential effectiveness of the public engagement around the changes to primary care delivery in Wolverhampton.

This report has been shared with Wolverhampton City Clinical Commissioning Group prior to publication. Some amendments have been made as a result of their comments on the way that the practices are working together and providing access to appointments.

Methodology

This project made use of a survey that consisted of mainly quantitative questions. There was one open ended question used in the survey.



This method of collecting data was chosen as it was an easy method to reach a relatively high number of respondents. The survey was supported on-line and the web link to the surveys was shared with the Healthwatch Wolverhampton network. In addition to this paper surveys were completed with patients at GP practices in Wolverhampton and members of the public at events that Healthwatch Wolverhampton attended over the summer months.

One small focus group was also undertaken with **5** participants whose first language was not English. Their views have been included in the results under the relevant sections of the results.



Key findings

There were **506** respondents to the survey in total spread across most of the GP practices in Wolverhampton.

Only 27% of respondents said that they received regular communication from their GP practice.

Communication was mainly appointment or prescription reminders.

Some said they were told about changes in the practice such as booking appointments.

17% of respondents who received communication from their GP practice did so on a monthly basis, **12%** said they had communication quarterly; **9%** every six months and **9%** annually.

18% of respondents said that they received newsletters by post from their practice and **14%** said that they received emails from their practice. A large number of respondents indicated that they receive communication from their practice by text message.

There were a number of respondents who said that they did not want to have any communication from their practice on any subject.

Others wanted to only receive communication if it related directly to their own health, such as test results and prescription or appointment reminders.

Some wanted to receive communication about changes in their practice including staff changes, opening times and accessing appointments.

Health promotion information was also pinpointed by some respondents as being important to them including condition specific communication.

The preferred methods of receiving information from their practice were, text message, email and posted newsletter.

Only 24% of respondents said that they knew about their practice patient participation group. **Only 30%** of the respondents who had heard of their PPG said that they received communication from the PPG.

When asked if they would be interested in receiving information from their **PPG 51%** of respondents said



that they would whereas **49%** said that they would not.

From the results of the survey it is clear that using the PPGs and the GP practices to involve and communicate with patients about the changes that are being made to the delivery of primary care in Wolverhampton means that there were large numbers of patients who are not being reached. However, it is also apparent that the information that patients want to receive is generally only that which directly impacts on them as a patient in terms of accessing appointments, being able to see the doctors that they want and reminders about appointments and prescriptions.

Results

There were **506** responses to the survey overall. Not all respondents answered all of the questions either because they were not relevant to them or because they chose to skip the questions.

The first question asked for the name of the GP practice that the respondent was registered with. 488 respondents answered the question and there was a spread across the practices of numbers of respondents with only one practice having no respondents at all. The chart below (figure 1) shows the spread of respondents across the practices.

The principle method of engagement for the changes is through the GP practices Patient Participation Groups as well as communication directly from the GP practices.

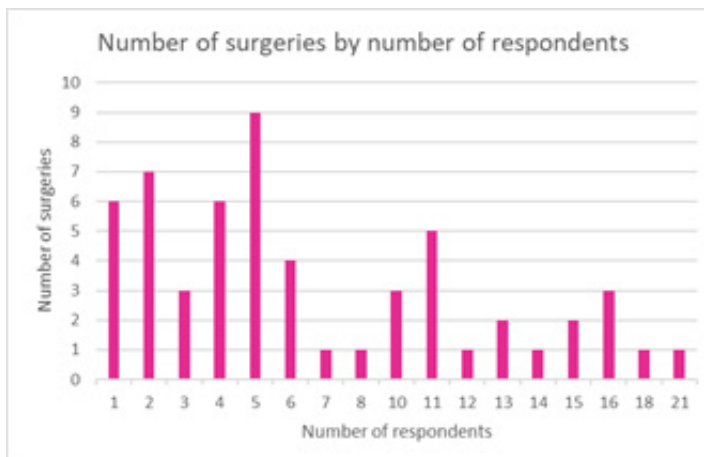


Figure 1

Communication with GP practices

There were 501 responses to the question about whether they receive any communication from their GP practice. Figure 2 shows the percentage breakdown between those that do receive communication from their practices and those that do not and only 27 % said that they did receive communication from their GP practice and 73% said that they did not.

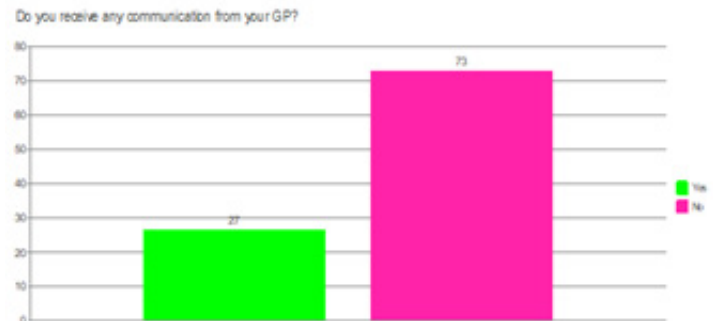
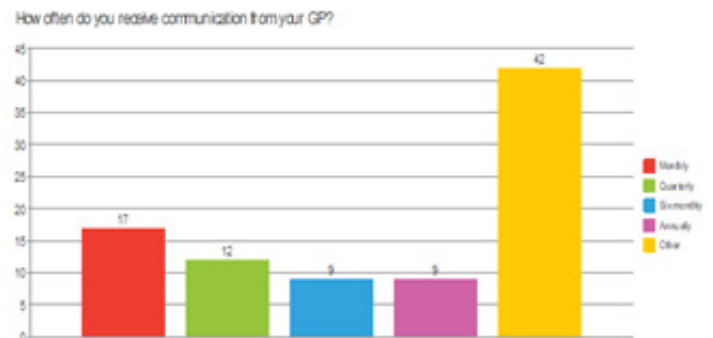


Figure 2

Those that said that they did have communication from their GP practice were asked how often they receive that communication. **89** respondents answered the question. Figure 3 shows the responses by percentage. The highest percentage of responses was other in terms of frequency of communication with responses ranging between frequently to never. However, most commonly the communication that they indicated was 'as and when' required, or when changes occurred such as to on-line booking systems. Many of the respondents also indicated that their communication with their GP practice related to the confirmation of appointments rather than the receipt of practice information.

17% said that they had monthly communication from their practice; **12%** said quarterly; **9%** said they had communication six monthly and **9%** annually.

Figure 3



The types of communication that respondents were receiving is detailed in **figure 4**. There were **98** responses to this question.

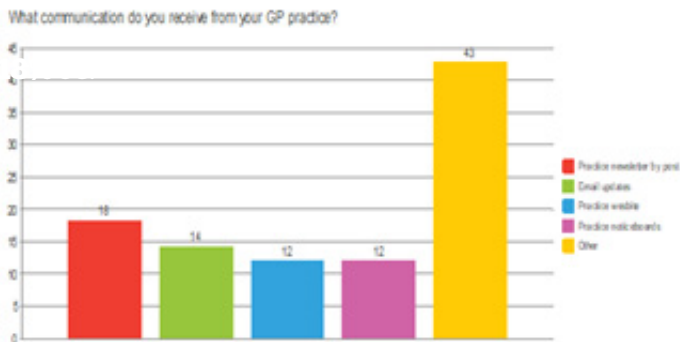


Figure 4

Again, the highest percentage of respondents were those that said other at **43%**. The next highest number was for practice newsletters by post (**18%**); **14%** said that they get email updates; **12%** said that they got updates through the practice website and another **12%** through practice noticeboards.

Those who said that the communication that they received was other, largely said that they received text messages indicating that a lot of the communication was in relation to appointments and reminders. Some of the respondents said that they only got information by accessing the practice website, or when they called or visited the practice with one saying that they got the newsletter from reception suggesting that it is not being sent to registered patients who have not visited the practice. Others received information from the practice by letter.

Preferences for communication from GPs

Respondents were asked what type of communication they would like to receive from their GP practice.

The responses from this open text question have been themed and there are a number of common themes. A large number of respondents did not want any communication from their GP practice and there were a number who said that they only wanted communication as it directly related to them and their health, such as reminders for appointments or notification of test results without them having to contact the GP practice first.

A number said that they would like to be communicated with about changes that were going on with their practice, although only one specifically mentioned wanting information about how their practice was working with other practices as part of the clinical networks. Others were more concerned with issues such as the changes to opening times at their practices and changes to the ways that they make appointments.

A number mentioned wanting to know about changes to staffing and also about the availability of doctors. This was specifically what days particular doctors were available so that they could make appointments with a preferred doctor more easily.

Others mentioned wanting to know more about the services that their practice offered and being kept informed of changes to these, particularly in relation to health screening and checks.

Information that can be classed as health promotion was also a strong theme throughout the feedback with requests for information on groups that can be accessed for healthy living support and keeping well in the winter. Some of the participants indicated that they wanted information specifically about their own health conditions such as diabetes from their practice.

Respondents were also asked how frequently they wanted to receive communication from their GP practice. There were **330** responses to this question. (**Figure 5**). The highest number of respondents said that they would like quarterly communication (**44%**); with **27%** saying they would like monthly communication; **13%** saying six monthly and **7%** annually. **9%** of the respondents gave the response other.

Figure 5



For those that answered other gave a variety of answers, however, many said that they wanted communication when there are changes that they need to be made aware of, so on an as and when necessary basis. One respondent commented that practices should ensure that they communicate changes with those who are not regular users of the practice because if they 'become ill, they do not know what the new procedures are.' Others gave a range of frequency, such as quarterly or 6-monthly but not expressing a preference for either.

When asked what method they would like to be communicated through **349** respondents answered the question. **58%** said that they would like to be communicated with by email; **33%** by post; **only 2%** through the practice website and **7%** said they would prefer other methods of communication. **(Figure 6)**

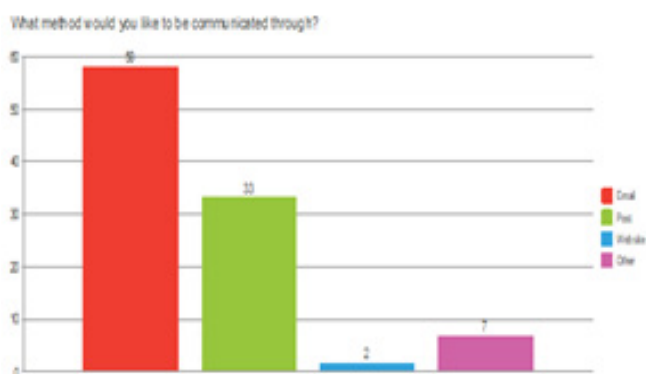


Figure 6

Of those that answered 'other' around half said that they would like to have communication from their practice by text message. Other respondents gave more than one preferred option such as email and post. One respondent said that they would prefer the method to be tailored to the individual patient, with them being able to give a preferred option. Another commented that practices should use 'text phones for those who are deaf.'

The members of the focus group said that they wanted to be communicated with about changes that were planned and that they wanted to be consulted about changes not just informed of changes. They suggested that there were opportunities for staff to consult them whilst they are sitting in the waiting room. They also suggested that newsletters should be posted to postal addresses so that whole families can access them.

Patient Participation Groups

491 respondents answered the question about whether they knew about their practice patient participation group. Only **24%** of the respondents said that they had heard of their PPG and **73%** said that they had not. **(Figure 7).**

Figure 7



Those that had heard of their PPG were then asked if they were involved with their PPG. **113** respondents answered the question. **(Figure 8).** **24%** of the respondents said that they were involved with their PPG and **76%** said that they were not. One member of the focus group was a member of their PPG and regularly attends meetings.

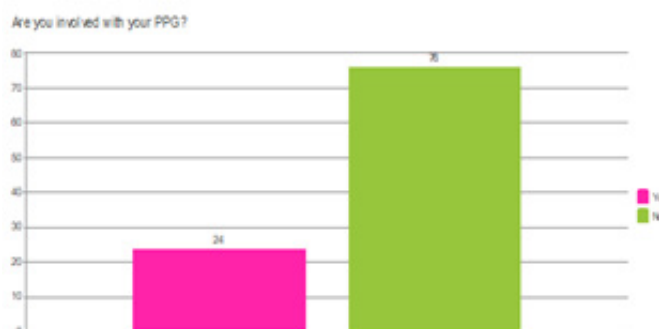


Figure 8

83 respondents who had heard of their PPG and were not involved with it answered the question about their reasons for not being involved. The reasons given for not being involved with their PPG were given as follows:

23% said that they were not interested in being part of their PPG; **39%** said that they were unable to get to meetings; **21%** said that they did not have enough information to be able to get involved and **18%** gave other as a reason. **(Figure 9).**

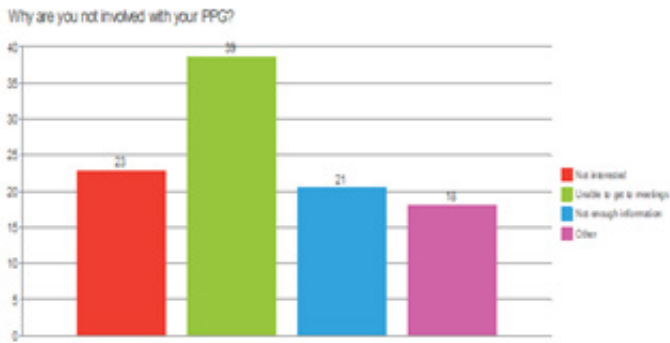


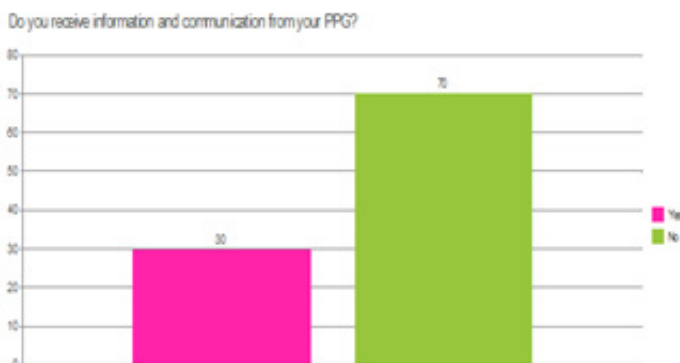
Figure 9

Those that gave other as an answer cited a lack of time or other commitments, such as being in full time work, as the main reasons why they were not involved with their PPG. However, there were three of the respondents who said that they had volunteered for the PPG but that they were 'never contacted.' One of them went on to say that 'you lose interest in volunteering if there is no response.' Two other respondents commented that they had tried to be involved with their PPG but one commented that it was a 'waste of time' and another saying that they had found the PPG was 'not flexible enough, nor engaged with younger or minority groups.'

The focus group members said that they were concerned that there were no translators available to assist them at PPG meetings, but also that there was no information available to them in other languages to enable them to find out about their PPG.

114 respondents answered the question about whether they received information from their PPG. **Only 30%** said that they did receive information and **70%** said that they did not receive information from their practice PPG. (**Figure 10**)

Figure 10



However, the final question that was answered by **460** respondents was whether they would like to receive information from their PPG. There was a relatively even split between those that wanted information (**51%**) and those who did not (**49%**). (**Figure 11**)



Figure 11



Recommendations

1. The findings of this project suggest that there is a gap in communication between GP practices and their patients as well as a lack of knowledge of and communication from patient participation groups. As these are the preferred ways of the CCG communicating changes about the delivery of primary care there are concerns about how many patients are missing out on communication about the changes to primary care delivery.

Therefore, we recommend that the CCG consider what other methods of communication they can utilise to communicate and engage a wider cohort of patients than simply using GPs and PPGs.

2. From the feedback that we have received it is apparent that patients want to be communicated with by their practice in a range of ways and would like that to be tailored to their preferences. We recommend that GP practices collect from their patients' preferences for communication methods in relation to updates on practice news, including an opt out.

3. When considering what communication patients want to receive, although this project was designed to consider communication in relation to change, there was feedback that patients wished to receive communication about the availability of particular staff members, and health promotion information. Therefore, we recommend that GP practices consider providing such information on a regular basis to patients.

4. It was apparent from the findings of the project that there is limited knowledge of and communication with patient participation groups for most respondents. It is recommended that practices look at how they can better inform patients of the existence of PPG's but that PPG's themselves give consideration as to how they communicate with the wider patient cohort in order to ensure that they are able to be representatives of the patients.

5. Comment was made about some respondents having expressed an interest in joining their PPGs but having had no further contact from the practice or PPG. Healthwatch Wolverhampton have collected details of people who wanted more information on this occasion and passed them to relevant practices. We recommend that these are followed up and practices look at ways that they can ensure that expressions of interest are followed up.

6. The final recommendation concerns the flexibility of the PPGs in relation to meetings and ways that they can ensure that they are representative of the community that they represent. PPGs are asked to consider other ways that they can encourage participation from a wide range of people from different backgrounds.



Appendix 1 - GP practices where responses were received

Practice name	Number of Responses
Alfred Squire Road	10
All Saints Surgery	3
Ashfield Road Surgery	6
Ashmore Park Health Centre	4
Bilston Health Centre- Mudigonda & Mudigonda	4
Bilston Health Centre- Pahwa & Pahwa	1
Bilston Health Centre- Sharma, Walker & Mason	13
Bilston Urban Village Medical Centre	5
Bradley Health Centre- Bagary, Bagary and Manda	2
Bradley Medical Centre- Lal & New	5
Caerleon Surgery	2
Cannock Road	7
Castlecroft Medical Practice	23
Church Street Surgery	5
Coalway Road Surgery	15
Cromwell Road Surgery	1
Duncan Street Primary Care Centre	12
East Park Medical Practice	23
Ednam Road Surgery	11
Ettingshall Medical Centre	5
Grove Medical Centre	6
Heath Town Medical Centre	6
Keats Grove Surgery	25
Lea Road Medical Practice	13
Leicester Street Medical Centre	14
Lower Green Health Centre	16
Low Hill Medical Centre	5
Marsh Lane	5
Mayfield Medical Centre	10
Owen Road Surgery	10

Oxley	4
Parkfield Medical Centre	11
Park Street	2
Pendeford Health Centre- Dhillon & Raza	1
Pendeford Health Centre- Kharwadkar	4
Pendeford Health Centre- Vij, Vij, Mohindroo & Hamdy	5
Pennfields Medical Centre	5
Penn Manor Medical Centre	18
Penn Surgery	2
Poplars Medical Practice	1
Prestbury Medical Practice- 41 Dunkley Raod	0
Prestbury Medical Practice- Hellier Road	16
Prestbury Medical Practice- 81 Prestwood Road West	15
Primrose Lane Clinic	1
Probert Road Surgery	11
Ruskin Road Surgery	2
Shale Street	3
Showell Park Health & Walk- in Centre	21
Tettenhall Road Surgery	4
The Newbridge Surgery	5
The Surgery- Hill Street	1
The Surgery - 199 Tettenhall Road	2
The Surgery- 40 Thornley Street	16
The Surgery- Woden Road	8
Tudor Medical Practice	11
Warstones Health Centre	26
Wednesfield	3
Wellington Road Surgery	2
Whitmore Reams Health Centre	4
Woodcross Health Centre	6
Wood Road Clinic	11

Appendix 2 - Survey Questions

1. What is the name of your GP practice?

- » Alfred Squire Road
- » All Saints Surgery
- » Ashfield Road Surgery
- » Ashmore Park Health Centre
- » Bilston - Mudigonda & Mudigonda
- » Bilston Health Centre- Pahwa & Pahwa
- » Bilston Centre- Sharma, Walker & Mason
- » Bilston Urban Village Medical Centre
- » Bradley Centre- Bagary, Bagary & Manda
- » Bradley Medical Centre- Lal & New
- » Caerleon Surgery
- » Cannock Road
- » Castlecroft Medical Practice
- » Church Street Surgery
- » Coalway Road Surgery
- » Cromwell Road Surgery
- » Duncan Street Primary Care Centre
- » East Park Medical Practice
- » Ednam Road Surgery
- » Ettingshall Medical Centre
- » Grove Medical Centre
- » Heath Town Medical Centre
- » Keats Grove Surgery
- » Lea Road Medical Practice
- » Leicester Street Medical Centre
- » Lower Green Health Centre
- » Low Hill Medical Centre
- » Marsh Lane
- » Mayfield Medical Centre
- » Owen Road Surgery
- » Oxley
- » Parkfield Medical Centre
- » Park Street
- » Pendeford Health Centre- Dhillon & Raza
- » Pendeford Health Centre- Kharwadkar
- » PendefordCentre- Vij, Mohindroo & Hamdy
- » Pennfields Medical Centre
- » Penn Manor Medial Centre
- » Penn Surgery
- » Poplars Medical Practice
- » Prestbury Medical Practice- Dunkley Road
- » Prestbury Medical Practice- Hellier Road
- » Prestbury Medical Practice- 81 Prestwood
- » Primrose Lane Clinic
- » Probert Road Surgery
- » Ruskin Road Surgery
- » Shale Street
- » Showell Park Health & Walk-in Centre
- » Tettenhall Road Surgery
- » The Newbridge Surgery
- » The Surgery- Hill Street
- » The Surgery- 199 Tettenhall Road
- » The Surgery- 40 Thornley Street
- » The Surgery- Woden Road
- » Tudor Medical Practice
- » Warstones Health Centre
- » Wednesfield
- » Wellington Road Surgery
- » Whitmore Reams Health Centre
- » Woodcross Health Centre
- » Wood Road Clinic

Appendix 2 - Survey Questions

2. Do you receive any communication from your GP?

- a. Yes
- b. No

3. How often do you receive communication from your GP?

- a. Monthly
- b. Quarterly
- c. Six Monthly
- d. Annually
- e. Other (please specify)

4. What communication do you receive from your GP practice?

- a. Practice newsletter by post
- b. Email updates
- c. Practice website
- d. Practice noticeboards
- e. Other (please specify)

5. What communication would you like to receive from your practice?

6. How often would you like to receive communication from your GP practice?

- a. Monthly
- b. Quarterly
- c. Six monthly
- d. Annually
- e. Other (please specify)

7. What method would you like to be communicated through?

- a. Email
- b. Post
- c. Website
- d. Other (please specify)

8. Do you know about your Practice's Patient Participation Group (PPG)?

- a. Yes
- b. No

9. Are you involved with your PPG?

- a. Yes
- b. No

10. Why are you not involved with your PPG?

- a. Not interested
- b. Unable to get to meetings
- c. Not enough information
- d. Other (please specify)

11. Do you receive information and communication from your PPG?

- a. Yes
- b. No

12. Would you like to receive information from your PPG?

- a. Yes
- b. No

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