

## DORKING HEALTHCARE LTD ANNUAL NHS OUTPATIENTS SURVEY REPORT 2016



DHC runs an annual NHS survey across the whole outpatient department every year, as well as an ongoing programme of shorter questionnaires for individual consultants. The results help us to consider what improvements we can make to the running of the department and to individual clinics. The last full departmental survey was run in November 2016. We had 251 responses (84%) from the 300 questionnaires handed out to patients consecutively over a two-week period. All clinic specialties were sampled.

Several areas of improvement were evident when comparing the 2016 results to our results from the year before. The question showing the greatest improvement (up 17%) was; “whether the patients were given a choice of appointment times”. This is very important for our patients and we are proud to be able to provide the flexibility that our patients need. Understanding personal commitments and by providing a choice we maximise the use of all the clinic appointment times available allowing more patients access to our services, with one patient stating:

*“ Appointments are booked in a good time-scale and I'm seen on-time”*

A previous problem area that had scored low repeatedly was “whether the staff had explained about side effects of medicines”. A huge improvement (up 16%) was reported by our patients, indicating how feedback from last year’s results had led to improved communication between our staff and patients. The improved communication had also significantly increased the number of patients who knew what would happen in their appointment (up 15%) and who to contact when leaving the hospital (up 11%), with comments including:

*“Good communication skills with all staff and I felt listened to”*

A continuing problem area for us has been waiting for appointments, scoring consistently low over the years (38% in 2016, 53% in 2015, and 55% in 2014). This has been particularly apparent for patients attending ENT clinics, which often run late, usually caused by procedures that are done ad hoc in clinic. To address this, the appointments letter sent to patients has been recently updated stating; ‘Your appointment may take longer than expected as you may need a diagnostic procedure during your consultation’. Also by notifying our patients of delayed clinics at arrival has been made priority to our reception staff as we recognise the frustration that delays can cause.

Surprisingly, a question scoring lower this year (down 4%) was whether the staff had explained to patients what would happen after their test and/or treatment. We do not routinely give a point of contact when patients leave the hospital, but if a procedure had been performed we always do so along with a postoperative advice leaflet that includes all relevant contact numbers. We were reassured to find out that majority of our patients were kept informed as to who to contact if they have any queries, with one patient stating:

*“Always treated with courtesy. Always kept informed of treatment and blood tests”*

It was delightful to find out how the appointment length and the continuation of care that our clinicians provided were highly appreciated by our patients. Almost all patients felt that their

appointment time was long enough, the doctor listened to what they had got to say and they received answers and explanations to their queries, with comments including:

*“Didn't feel rushed and was examined thoroughly. This gave me a lot of reassurance”*

According to the survey, DHC clinicians and other staff members also enjoyed confidence and trust of our patients and 98% also felt that they were given enough privacy when discussing treatments.

The key question that asks about “overall satisfaction with the care received” - scored 92% in the last three years (80% for ESTH and 81% for SASH in 2011). This is a very pleasing result for DHC since we are committed to listening to the views that our patients have about the quality of the service that we provide. Four years ago we also introduced the “Friends & Family test” question, asking whether patients would recommend our services. 87.3% were either ‘likely’ or ‘extremely likely’ to recommend us to friends and family. We have never had a respondent who would be unlikely to recommend DHC. In addition, this year we had over 90 very gratifying comments overall about the running of the clinics, the calibre and friendliness of staff and the quality of care given. These results ensure us that DHC is providing excellent care to both local and wider community.

