

# Holbrook Surgery Patient Participation Group [PPG] Holbrook Surgery Newsletter

Winter

January 2025



## HAPPY NEW YEAR

The Doctors and all the staff at the Surgery, and your PPG Committee wish all Holbrook patients a very happy and healthy New Year. In this Newsletter we concentrate on the new Appointments System which has been our main focus over recent months. We hope you will find this interesting and relevant.

### NEW APPOINTMENTS SYSTEM – THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR FEEDBACK

The PPG was consulted about the new Appointments System before its implementation and was involved in two information sessions arranged by the Surgery for patients. It was agreed that there would be a review after six months for which we would obtain feedback from patients on our mailing list. We asked patients to provide their age group, gender, whether or not they had used the new system, and for their general comments about using the new system.

We heard back from 62 patients - a response rate of approximately 15% which is regarded as a reasonable response for this kind of survey. 43.5% of those who responders were in the 51 – 75 age group, 48% were over 75. 60% were female and 40% were male. 90% had used the new system. Patients made a wide range of comments. We gave every comment a star rating of five to one stars – five stars indicating a high level of satisfaction ranging to one star indicating a high level of dissatisfaction. The results were as follows: -

★★★★★	<b>Highly satisfied</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>50%</b>
★★★★	<b>Quite satisfied</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17.9%</b>
★★★	<b>Reasonably satisfied</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10.7%</b>
★★	<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7.1%</b>
★	<b>Very dissatisfied</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14.3%</b>

Whilst this was small scale and heavily biased towards the older age group the feedback, we received about the new system was overall very positive and most saw this an improvement on what was in place before.

At the end of November, we met with Dr Woods, Dr Woolley, Lisa Jelley, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, and Lisa Ellis, Practice Manager to review the new system. Prior to the meeting we provided them with the feedback including all your comments [anonymised] as we felt there was much to learn from reading the comments. This was a very positive meeting, and we came away feeling that the Surgery team had genuinely listened to all our feedback. As a result, the Surgery's phone message has been updated, some minor changes have already been made to the website, and work has started on an information leaflet for patients. We will continue to work with the Surgery to make sure that the new system best meets the needs of patients.

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## **NEW APPOINTMENTS SYSTEM – SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

The following questions and answers might help to clarify some of the issues that arose from the review.

### ***WHY DID THE SURGERY CHANGE THEIR SYSTEM?***

There are several reasons for the changes. The surgery was overwhelmed by patient demand and therefore needed to fine tune the way things were done in order to provide a better system of responsiveness to patients. The surgery had many patients who didn't show up for their appointment, wasting doctors' time. The phone system got clogged up with people wanting appointments and patients didn't like ringing in and then waiting in long phone queues to get an appointment or having to be told to ring another day.

Importantly, patients who had the most urgent needs were not able to be prioritised as they are under the new system.

There was a lot of time wasted by patients who were very vague about their illnesses or gave no information about their problem.

We are pleased to see that other surgeries are now in the process of running a similar system to cut down the waiting times for appointments. Riverside is shortly starting to use this system.

### ***WHAT IS TRIAGE?***

Holbrook, like any GP Surgery, manages a wide range of patient requests every day. The Practice must evaluate what help is needed and ensure that each patient receives the right services and sees the right health professional. This process is called **Triage** and ensures that services are allocated according to the individual needs of the patient.

Previously, patient requests came in via a variety of routes, telephone, visit to the surgery and on-line services. By introducing a single point at which patient requests are received each request can be put through the triage process. This makes sure that the patient receives the best service to meet their requirements, while at the same time making the most efficient use of the available resources.

### ***WHO LOOKS AT THE FORMS?***

The forms are analysed every day by the duty GP or the Advanced Nurse Practitioner who prioritises them in order of need and arranges the next steps. Usually, the forms are cleared each day with some sort of action. This ensures that those in the greatest need get the best attention. A large number of patients are seen the same day.

### ***CAN I HAVE A FACE TO FACE MEETING WITH A DOCTOR?***

Yes, of course. Holbrook has always prided itself on being able to provide a face to face service if this is requested. You need to enter on your form that this is your preferred route to see the doctor rather than a telephone call. Many people are happy to have a telephone call for many things, so it entirely depends on your request.

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### ***CAN I HAVE CONTINUITY WITH MY OWN DOCTOR?***

Yes, of course you can see your own doctor and you need to request this on the form, but you may have to wait a bit longer for an appointment than seeing another doctor you don't normally see.

### ***WHY DO I HAVE TO WRITE DOWN ALL MY ISSUES ON A FORM RATHER THAN SPEAK TO SOMEONE?***

The benefits of using a form are that it:

- crystallises your own thoughts by writing them down.
- helps the doctor have more accurate information about your problem before they see you. This helps in the diagnosis as the form asks for more things than you might mention otherwise.
- reduces time wasted on getting information accurately for the problem.
- ensures that those with the greatest need are prioritised.

### ***WHAT HELP CAN I GET IF I CAN'T MANAGE THE FORM OR GET INTO A MESS?***

The receptionists will always help you to fill out the form or do it for you so that it gets looked at that day by one of the doctors. The receptionist will not be able to give you an appointment.

### ***WHY CAN'T I LOOK AT AN ONLINE APPOINTMENT SYSTEM AND THEN SELF-BOOK?***

The disadvantage of a self-booking system is that patients who have more urgent needs may not be able to be seen because patients with less urgent needs have booked up all appointments!

### ***CAN I PUT DOWN ON THE FORM HOW I WOULD LIKE TO BE CONTACTED?***

Yes, you should stipulate how you want to be contacted if you have strong preferences.

### ***WHY DO I HAVE TO RE-ENTER INFORMATION THAT THE SURGERY ALREADY HAS ABOUT ME?***

If you register for SYSTMONLINE, which you can do by visiting the surgery and speaking to the receptionist, you will be able to log on to this at the top of the form and many of the fields will be completed for you. This will also be of help if you are requesting a repeat prescription using the form. **We strongly recommend that you do this.**

If you have any other questions, please let us know and we will do best to provide answers.

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### **MEETING WITH LOCAL MP**

The Chairs of the five Horsham surgery PPGs have just had a meeting with our new MP, John Milne. He is very interested in local health matters. He was keen to hear about the PPGs and to have our perspective on what we felt were the key issues. We are going to meet with him on a regular basis.

### **CAN WE BE KIND TO OUR SURGERY STAFF**

Lisa Ellis, the Practice Manager has asked us if we could raise this issue again in our newsletter. She tells us that patients can be very demanding, rude, unpleasant, and sometimes can be really quite abusive. This happens regularly and is increasing. The receptionists bear the brunt of this and can find it really difficult. Your PPG Committee regards this as totally unacceptable. The Surgery staff have a difficult enough job without this. They do everything they can to provide us with the best possible service. We believe that we, as Holbrook patients, receive an excellent service. Can we please all show a little more kindness and respect for the staff.

Interestingly John Milne raised this at the meeting with PPG Chairs. He is aware of this and feels that this is an issue which really needs to be tackled at all levels.

### **PPG COFFEE MORNING - DATE TO BE ARRANGED IN THE SPRING**

Orchard, the Park, and Riverside PPGs have all recently had successful well attended coffee mornings all of which have been held on a Saturday morning. We have been to all of them not only to support the other PPGs but also to get an idea of what works best. They have all been very informal with information stalls run by local organisations such as the Olive Tree which offers cancer support services, Horsham District Council Wellbeing Team, Royal Voluntary Service, HILS Meals on Wheels Service, etc. We plan to do something similar in the Spring either at the Tithe Barn or the Millennium Hall. Hopefully you think this is a good idea and will come. If there are any organisations, you would like us to invite to provide information please let us know. We have met some of you, but it would be really good to meet others.

### **MAKE SURE YOU RECEIVE FUTURE NEWSLETTERS AND EMAIL UPDATES**

If this is the first time you have received our Newsletter this is produced by the PPG in conjunction with the Surgery. We are patients who care passionately about our NHS and want to support the Surgery in providing the best possible service. Our primary aim is to actively develop an ongoing and interactive relationship between the Surgery and patients. If you would like to receive future newsletters, email updates please email [holbrookppg@gmail.com](mailto:holbrookppg@gmail.com) For further information about the PPG <https://www.holbrooksurgery.com/patient-participation-group>

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