



2023 Patient Survey Report

The Patient Participation Group (PPG), on behalf of the Blackmore Vale Partnership holds a Patient Survey every two years. The first part asks the same questions each time about the appointments system and satisfaction with the process and outcome for patients. The second half seeks to find out what matters to patients, to offer assistance with accessing online information & support and asking about those who are carers.

The survey was made available on the Practice website, links were sent by text to around 16,000 patients and about 150 paper surveys were completed during the Covid & Flu clinics – in all there were **2575** responses. The majority were in the 55-74 age bracket, but there were a few aged 18 and over 85. 360 people identified as carers.

The Headlines

47% increase in the use of Klinik, (over eConsult in 2021)

55 % decrease in the use of the telephone.

We asked for comments about the process of contacting the Practice, the response and outcome for the individual. The majority were positive and appreciative - many mentioning the speed of response after making a Klinik (online) application. There was lots of praise for staff, particularly reception, or Patient Services staff.

Overall 73% were satisfied in the process of contacting the Practice and the outcome. (70% 2021)

17% were partly satisfied and of those, many were awaiting the next part of their treatment or consultation, but in quite a few cases, their issue was resolved, but not by a GP – so there's still the sense amongst quite a few that only GP's can advise and treat – which isn't the case.

Of the 10% who were not satisfied, it was clear that issues with Klinik, or perceived issues with Klinik, were the main reason. It's important to remember, Klinik is only one way of contacting the Practice. If you have the internet or a smartphone, then you might find it better.

If you don't wish to use Klinik and prefer to telephone or come into reception, then that is absolutely fine. In whatever way you contact the Practice, your request will be entered on the Klinik system to ensure a consistent approach for all patients and that you receive the right care, from the right person, at the right time. This is one reason for no longer being able to book an appointment directly online. This new system ensures that you will be responded to by an appropriate person in a timely way.

As the survey has highlighted, the increased use of Klinik has decreased the use of the telephone, which means that if you do 'phone, your call will be answered more quickly than before.

The Practice is contracted to provide a service between 8am and 18:30 Monday to Friday. This is why Klinik is not available outside these hours. The Practice is working with the suppliers of the Klinik software to provide a more informative message when the system is closed. As before any urgent out of hours issue should be addressed by contacting 111 either online or by 'phone, or if life threatening, then call 999.

Other comments were about not hearing back about **blood test results**. The Practice submits about 500 blood tests every week (there could be more than 5 samples as part of the blood test). If there are issues with a test result, the patient will be contacted with advice about what to do next.

Unfortunately, there simply isn't the staff capacity to contact every patient whose test is normal or normal for them.

Having access to your patient record, either through the website or on the NHS app, allows you to check these results. You can see the records of your appointments, including those at hospital and order your prescription medications. If you don't have this facility, contact the Practice and they can set it up SystemOnline for you. You can download and set up the NHS app yourself.

We also asked what concerns people had about their health and wellbeing – and what mattered to them. Here, the main topics were, having annual health checks and there were a great many who mentioned the menopause. Also continuity of care was a popular theme.

With regard to **health checks**, if you have a long term condition, this will be part of your care. For those who would just like to be reassured that all is well, it is completely understandable and a good idea. However, in common with the rest of GP Practices up and down the land, staffing issues and the pressure of work means that there simply isn't the capacity to do this, along with the extra blood tests etc that would be involved.

There are local organisations like LiveWell Dorset who carry out free health checks and if you are aged 40 to 74, have not had an NHS Health Check in the last 5 years and do not have a pre-existing condition such as heart disease, diabetes or kidney disease or had a stroke, you may be eligible to have a health check. Contact 0800 840 1628 or www.livewelldorset.co.uk/healthcare-professionals/nhs-health-checks/

There is a new local **menopause support** group offering support, guidance & education through perimenopause & menopause.

The website is <https://www.dorsetmenopausesupport.co.uk/>

Continuity of Care was also raised by many. Where possible the Practice tries to do this, particularly with non-urgent ongoing care, as it benefits both patients and clinicians. However with 26,600 patients and insufficient staff, it is not always feasible for every patient to see their clinician of choice.

Continuity of care is an approach to ensure that the patient centred care team is cooperatively involved in ongoing healthcare management towards a shared goal. This may mean that the Practice will work with other professionals to ensure your care is as smooth as possible and it might be that another person meets with you rather than your registered GP. This can have its benefits where another perspective is provided on the management plan agreed with you.

The Practice would like to be able to provide a stronger response however they are short of GPs that are able to manage a patient list. They are continuing to work towards increasing the GP portfolio within the Practice.

There are almost 90 pages of comments which the Practice is going through and in amongst those are many comments and suggestions which will help patients and the Practice, so thank you again to those who took part.

Mental Health Support for Veterans

The NHS is rolling out an expanded mental health support service for Armed Forces veterans, as a survey found that more than half find it difficult to speak up about mental health issues.

A new campaign has just been launched to highlight its [Op COURAGE service](#), which now includes enhanced specialist support for addictions.

Latest available data shows that from April-November 2023, more than 4,500 referrals were made to the NHS service which provides specialist care, support and treatment to former Armed Forces personnel, reservists, and service leavers with mental health and wellbeing issues.

More than 30,000 referrals have been made to the veterans' mental health and wellbeing 'lifeline' service since it was first launched by the NHS in 2017.

There are about 2.4 million veterans living in the UK.

A new survey of over 3,000 veterans and serving personal, carried out by NHS England, found that the majority (around 60%), of those who took part, said they found it difficult to ask for help for mental health issues.

For those who sought help from Op COURAGE, self-referral was the top method (around 44%).

More than half of respondents (52%) said they currently had, or had previously had, a mental health problem and 54% said they had a physical health problem now or had previously had one.

As a result, NHS England redesigned the service, with a focus on boosting self-referrals, as well as the addition of enhanced addiction support, and today kicked off an awareness campaign highlighting the service which supports veterans, reservists, and service leavers.

Support for veterans, reservists and service leavers through OP COURAGE is provided by trained professionals from the Armed Forces community or with extensive experience of working with the military. For more information - [Op COURAGE](#)