



ATTLEBOROUGH SURGERIES

PPG NEWSLETTER NO. 2 AUGUST 2025

MESSAGE FROM THE PPG CHAIR

Attleborough Surgeries are pleased to release our second *PPG Newsletter* following our first in April 2025, which can still be viewed on the Surgeries' website if required.*

The feedback received has been favourable, and our new *PPG Newsletter* gives further information on some of the issues mentioned in the previous issue, as well as more analysis of the patient survey carried out by the Surgeries earlier this year.

This issue also contains new information on the following topics:

- The role of a Dispenser in a GP Practice
- An update on Missed Appointments
- Practice Half Day Closure on the afternoon of 17 September
- Future Events

Best Wishes,

David Branson,

Chair



To find out more about the PPG, its key aims, its terms of reference, and how to become a member, simply visit the **Patient Participation Group (PPG)** section of the Surgeries' website.*

You can also contact the PPG at nwicb.d82034.ppg@nhs.net

Bank Holiday/Half-Day Training

Please note that the surgeries will be closed on the following dates:

- 25 August – Bank Holiday
- 17 September – closed from 12 noon onwards for training at both surgeries

If you need non-emergency help on those days, go to 111.nhs.uk or call 111.

In a medical or mental health emergency, call 999.

The Norwich Walk-In Centre is located at Rouen House, NR1 1RB. Tel: 01603 677500. This service is available from 07.00am – 9.00pm, seven days a week.

* <https://practice365.co.uk/d82034/practice-information/join-our-patient-participation-group-ppg/>

THE DISPENSARY TEAM AT ATTLEBOROUGH SURGERIES



We were delighted to welcome Jenny, the Dispensary Manager, to one of our recent PPG meetings and wanted to share more widely the information we were given about the role of a dispenser working in a GP Practice.

ROLE OF A DISPENSER

Qualifications and Training:

- **Minimum Qualification:** All dispensers have a minimum of a Pharmacy Services NVQ Level 2 or are working towards this qualification.
- **Training Requirements:** New dispensers must complete 1,000 hours of supervised working in a GP dispensary or community pharmacy before being able to work independently. They should also be enrolled in competency-based training within three months of starting.
- **Continuing Professional Development (CPD):** We make sure that all Dispensary staff engage with ongoing training to maintain and update their skills.

Responsibilities:

- **Dispensing Medications:** Accurately dispense medications as per prescriptions, ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.
- **Customer Service:** Provide excellent service to patients, addressing their queries and concerns in a professional manner.
- **Inventory Management:** Manage stock levels, order supplies, and ensure proper stock rotation in order to prevent expired medications.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Adhere to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and ensure compliance with the Dispensary Services Quality Scheme (DSQS) and other relevant regulations.
- **Record Keeping:** Maintain accurate records of dispensed medications and other relevant documentation.

Limitations:

- **Prescribing Medications:** Dispensary staff cannot prescribe medications – this is the responsibility of qualified healthcare professionals who hold a prescribing qualification. Dispensers cannot prescribe under any circumstances.
- **Clinical Decision-Making:** Dispensary staff should not make clinical decisions or provide medical advice beyond their scope of practice.

We hope you find this information as helpful and informative as we did in better understanding the role of the dispensary team at Attleborough Surgeries.

PATIENT SURVEY – FEBRUARY 2025

Background

Earlier this year, SMS text messages were sent out inviting 2,000 patients to complete an online patient survey. The patients were selected at random from across five age groups, and the survey was also made available on the Practice's Facebook page. Paper copies were additionally available for patients who wished to complete the survey when they visited the practice.

From the 2,000 survey invitations sent to patients, we had a response rate of approximately 25%. Our responders were spread across all of the specified age ranges, but with a higher proportion of responses being received from patients aged 61 years and over.

The Practice, in designing the survey in partnership with the PPG, identified 14 specific areas of satisfaction we wanted to measure.

Results – infographic

The results of the survey can be seen in an infographic on the next page.

Positive results

We were delighted that of those examined, 71% of the areas received a very positive response regarding patients' experience with the Practice, including the check-in time at reception, handling of queries, quality of their clinical appointment and satisfaction with the dispensary and prescription service provided.

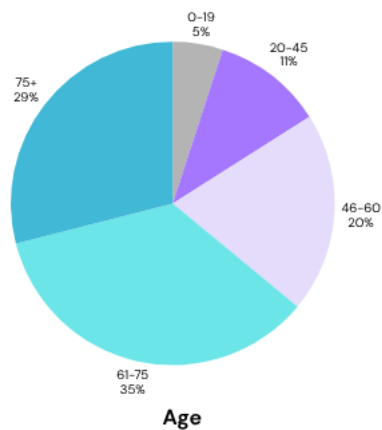
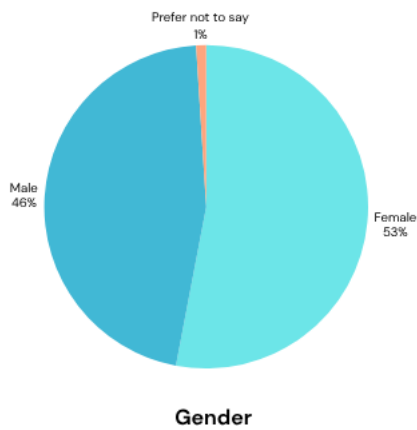
Less-positive results

Areas that scored the lowest rate of satisfaction included: the time waiting for the telephone to be answered; the waiting time to see a clinician when both acutely unwell and for long-term problems; and continuity of care.

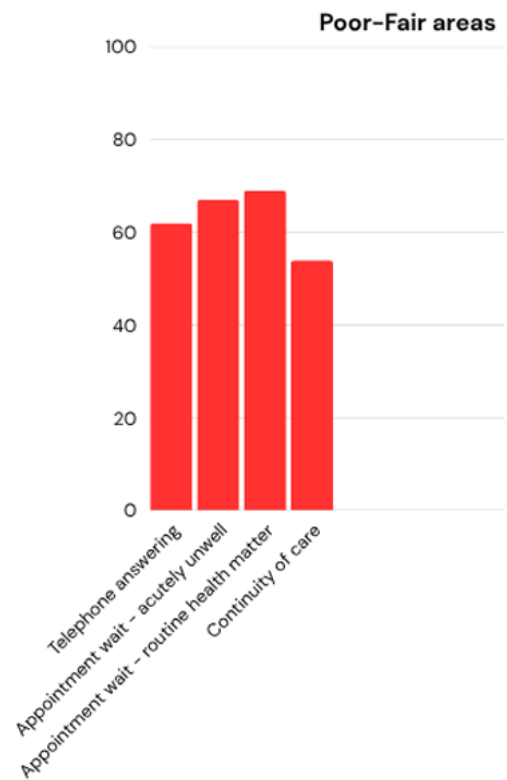
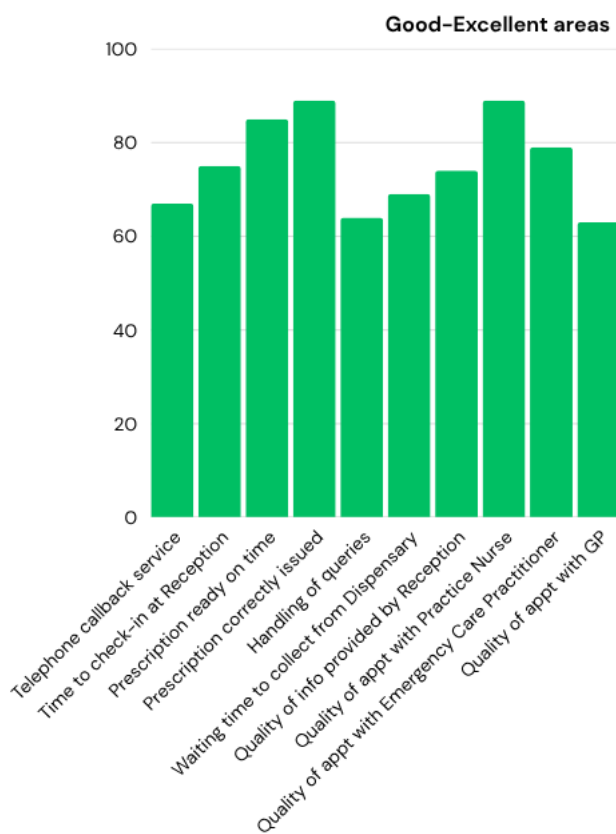
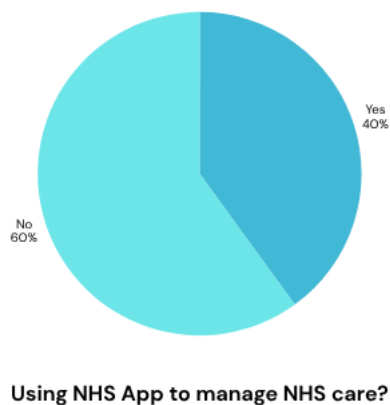
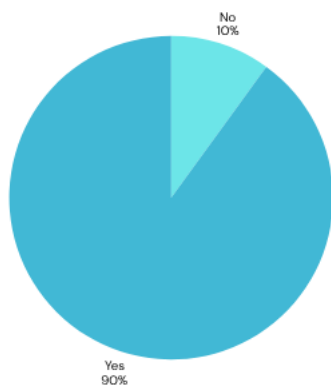
Next steps

The Practice is aware that access is an extremely important issue for its patients, and the findings of this survey mirror the concerns and frustrations felt by other patients across many other parts of the UK. However, we are keen to explore opportunities to improve patient satisfaction and to also support patients in using new technologies, such as the NHS app, and other services, including the Pharmacy First service, to free-up valuable time and resources so that primary care services are available for those who need them. The Missed Appointments figures reported in this *Newsletter* also show the high numbers which are continuing to occur, which further add to the long waits to be seen which patients are experiencing.

The PPG and the Practice will be working together on the results of the patient survey over the coming months. We will look at devising an action plan, focusing on opportunities for improvement and methods for helping inform patients of other steps that they can choose to take in order to support and manage their own health.



2025 Patient Survey



MISSED APPOINTMENTS – JAN–JUN 2025

Month	Appointment Type	Number of Appointments	Time Lost
Jan	GP/Advanced Care Practitioners	56	18 hours
	Nurses	143	35 hours
Feb	GP/Advanced Care Practitioners	28	9 hours
	Nurses	128	35 hours
Mar	GP/Advanced Care Practitioners	30	9 hours
	Nurses	119	29 hours
Apr	GP/Advanced Care Practitioners	51	15 hours
	Nurses	99	27 hours
May	GP/Advanced Care Practitioners	62	18 hours
	Nurses	96	27 hours
Jun	GP/Advanced Care Practitioners	59	21 hours
	Nurses	115	29 hours
TOTALS		986	272

As shown above, the number of face-to-face appointments that went unused due to missed appointments in January to June this year continues to be of concern.

986 appointments in total were missed, resulting in **272** hours of lost time.

We appreciate that, due to high demand and fully booked schedules, patients may sometimes be declined an appointment. It's therefore incredibly disappointing when those with an appointment miss their booked time without letting the surgery know. This prevents another patient from being seen.

Please remember: If you can't attend, do cancel your appointment, so that it can be offered to someone else in need! Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.



FUTURE EVENTS

AUTUMN FLU AND COVID VACCINE CAMPAIGN – COMMENCING OCTOBER

The Practice is delighted to confirm that we will be offering Covid-19 vaccinations as part of this year's Autumn programme, alongside our flu vaccination service.



Eligible patients will be able to receive both vaccines in one visit. Invitations will be sent to eligible patients, so please do not contact the Practice at this time.

HALF-DAY TRAINING

Both Surgeries will be closed from 12 noon onwards on the afternoon on 17 September in order to support a whole-Practice training session.

During this closure period, telephones will be covered by our out-of-hours provider. For any health matters that cannot be delayed until the next day, please see the detailed information box on page 1.

OTHER EVENTS COMING UP

- SEP** Heart to Heart – Organ Donation Week
- OCT** Stoptober – Quitting Smoking Month
- NOV** Self-Care – Mind and Body Week
- TBC** Practice Open Morning – planned for a Saturday in the autumn

LOCAL SUPPORT GROUPS



Name	Location	Details/Contact
St Marys Church	Church Street	<p><u>Drop-in and Share Table:</u></p> <p>People bring donated food in and this is free to take for anyone who is finding it hard to manage. The Town Council also provides an annual grant to help purchase food for the share table.</p> <p>Thursdays 11.00am–12.00 noon, and Saturdays 10.00am–11.30am.</p> <p><u>Lunch Club:</u></p> <p>Held monthly on 1st, 3rd and 5th Friday at 12.00 noon, and costs £6. Booking for lunch is essential – please phone 01953 454977.</p> <p><u>Website:</u> https://www.attleboroughchurch.org.uk/community-groups.html</p>
The Chambers Community Café	Town Hall, Queen's Square	<p>Share a cuppa or a bite to eat, socialise and meet new people.</p> <p>Sundays, 12.00 noon–2.00pm, and Thursdays, 11.00am–2.00pm. Signposting to various services providing help, support and advice, if required, is supplied on Thursdays. (Both days are sponsored by local businesses.)</p> <p><u>Facebook:</u> https://www.facebook.com/groups/125291828181676/user/100068623161292/</p>
The Kindness Cabin (social shop)	Car Park, Queen's Square	<p>Nominal joining fee – then food can be purchased at subsidised prices.</p> <p>Members are entitled to free fruit and veg, bread and bakery items, and sanitary products, all as part of the Food Waste Scheme.</p> <p>Tuesdays 6.00pm–8.00pm, Thursdays and Sundays 10.00am–12.00 noon.</p> <p><u>Contact:</u> Elaine Easthope or Clair Fisher at alittlemorekindness@hotmail.com</p> <p><u>Facebook:</u> https://www.facebook.com/groups/586982843522161/</p>
The Kindness Café	Connaught Hall	<p>Free lunch.</p> <p>Run by volunteers using donated food (including supplies from the Kindness Cabin).</p> <p>Thursdays, 12.30pm–3.00pm.</p>
The Lighthouse (Attleborough foodbank)	131 Hargham Road	<p>Foodbank sessions are held on Tuesday mornings, 10.00am–11.00am, with a specialist Citizen's Advice worker on hand to answer queries.</p> <p><u>Website:</u> https://www.thelighthouseattleborough.co.uk/groups/foodbank</p>