

THE BELMONT HEALTH CENTRE
(Dr. J J Wijeratne & Partners)
Patient Participation Report
2011-12

Prepared by: Saththar Ghouse, Practice Manager. (Dr J J Wijeratne & partners)

Approved by: Mr. Ian Mandel, Patient Participation Group Chair.

Published on: 20th March 2012.

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Preface

Dr J J Wijeratne and Partners is a group practice formed by six General Practitioners and is situated at Belmont Health Centre at No-516, Kenton Lane, Harrow, HA3 7LT. The practice is in the East part of Harrow and has a branch surgery functioning at No-252, Long Elmes, Harrow, HA3 6LF. With a list size of 10,750 patients, the practice caters to a diversified patient population in Harrow. The patient profile comprise of 51% females and 49% males. Majority of the patients are between 17-44 yrs of age which is about 41% and 30% are between 45-74 yrs. From the total list about 23% are children between 0-16 yrs of age. The elderly population of 75 yrs and above is 6%. With a diversified ethnic back ground mainly comprising of White British, Indians, and Indian British, the practice cares for most of the acute and chronic illnesses in the community.

At Dr J J Wijeratne and partners we always value our patients' views and comments. We strongly believe in 'providing improved patient care' and we take all necessary action and effort to listen to patients to improve our services. We appreciate all comments made by our patients and take serious note of any actions that need to be taken.

As a step forward to improve communication link between the surgery and the patients, we formed a Patient Participation Group (PPG) in 2009. Following the new guidelines from Department of Health in April 2011, we agreed to improve our existing Patients Participation Group by recruiting new members and make it more representative of our patients. We focused on age, gender, ethnicity and special health needs as key are to make the group more representative.

A representative Patient Participation Group

We managed to recruit new members to our PPG through advertising in the reception and waiting area, by speaking to patients directly as well as sending emails to patients who have given their email addresses. Also we asked our current PPG to recommend any interested patients whom they knew to join the group.

After a successful recruitment drive which lasted for about 05 weeks we managed to increase our membership to 14 which was a 46% increase in numbers. We felt that this is a manageable number than having a larger group. The group comprise of 05 female and 09 male members. They are in the age group of 35-70years and are from different ethnic backgrounds. This includes White British, Indian British, Pakistani British, and Other Asians. They all have different health needs and are from different backgrounds bringing different skills to the group. Mr. Ian Mandel one of the PPG member from the inception group was selected as the Chairperson for the newly formed group at the first meeting held with all the new members.

In addition to the PPG, we are planning to form a Virtual Patient Reference Group (VPRG) by next year to attract younger patients who are more computer literate and more likely to join an online group. We feel that the current PPG does not sufficiently

represent the younger age group. This would also enable us to attract the occasional visitors to the surgery. Keeping all these in mind, we have started collecting email addresses from most of our patients. We are also trying to recruit few members from our branch surgery patients list, to get a better representation of all our patients.

PPG Meetings

Our Patient Participation Group meets once every three months unless we have any particular issue that needs to be discussed among the group members earlier than that.

After the expansion in Aug 2011, the newly formed Group met twice within the last few months and we discussed relevant issues pertaining to the surgery services and patient care.

The key area of focus in all our group meetings was to improve 'patients care' and keeping that in mind the newly formed PPG decided to carry out a local survey about the services provided by the surgery to find out the most concern issues among our patients. The Group discussed and decided areas of concern that need to be included in a local practice survey. We decided to seek the assistance of a professional independent body to conduct this survey through a simple questionnaire to be given to patients to get their feed back.

Agreed priorities

The Group discussed and decided to include the following areas in the local Practice survey,

1. Getting appointments and waiting times
2. Reception issues / privacy at reception etc
3. Clinical areas (Consultations, Prescriptions, Results, Test appointments etc.)
4. Other relevant areas (such as parking, Patients waiting area, facilities in the premises etc.)

There are two other practices in the building that are sharing some of the facilities and services provided by the PCT such as parking, waiting room and toilets. At the PPG meeting members agreed that we should compare these common issues with the other two GP practices.

The Group agreed and decided to employ an Independent research organisation 'GP Print Media' to conduct the Local practice survey. We met with the research officers from the GP Print media in late December 2011 and briefed them our requirements which needed to be surveyed. The company came out with many proposals for a questionnaire and we finally with the approval of the PPG members, decided to go ahead with a simple questionnaire which included some 'open ended' and 'close ended' questions in a multiple choice format. We agreed to have a paper based questionnaires to be given at the reception and to send it electronically to those patients who have given their email addresses to the surgery.

The Questionnaire

The following questions were included in the questionnaire for the local survey and patients were given a multiple choice of answers.

- 1) Thinking about the last time you tried to book an appointment to see a doctor within two working days were you able to do so?
- 2) Thinking about the last time you tried to book an appointment to see a doctor more than two working days ahead were you able to do so?
- 3) Normally how easy is it to get through to the Surgery on the phone?
- 4) Normally how easy is it to speak to a doctor on the phone?
- 5) Overall how would you rate the appointment system at the Surgery?
- 6) Thinking about the last time you saw a doctor at the Surgery how would you rate them in the following areas? (Asking about your symptoms, Listening to you, Explaining tests and treatments, Showing care and concern, Involving you in your care, Giving you enough time)
- 7) Thinking about the last time you saw a nurse at the Surgery how would you rate them in the following areas?
- 8) Thinking about the receptionists at the Surgery, how would rate them in the following areas?
- 9) If you request regular medication, how would you rate the Practice in respect to the way they process your request? It is processed:
- 10) If you have requested test results in the past, such as blood or urine test results, how easy is it typically?
- 11) If you have tried to book a test appointment at the Surgery, such as a blood test or smear test, how easy has it been?
- 12) How easy is it to park at the Surgery?
- 13) In your view is their ample seating available at the Surgery?
- 14) Overall, how satisfied are you with the facilities at Belmont Health Centre?
- 15) How satisfied are you with the Practice overall?
- 16) Which of the following options best describes your ethnicity?
- 17) If you would like to make any comments please use this section below:

As part of the last question, a section was included to fill about respondents' ethnicity and the age. This allowed us to get a general profile of the respondent.

Conducting the Practice Survey

Our independent research organisation has used the service of internet marketing research site 'Survey Monkey' to develop and distribute the questionnaire online and provided printed copies. During mid January 2012 we started distributing the printed copies of the questionnaire from the reception and sent electronic versions through email to patients who are on our email data base.

In total, we received responses from 144 patients who completed the questionnaire online and the paper format. The results of both the online and paper responses were collated to get the final survey results. It was noted that the response rate was quite significant with the online questionnaire and this gave us more confident in forming a VPRG for the next year. All the completed questionnaires are available for further audit purposes.

A presentation was prepared by the survey marketing company about the results and it was presented and discussed at the last PPG meeting. The discussion and the agreed action plan were documented. Also the PPG was briefed about the last 'National GP survey results' that was published in June 2011.

Survey results

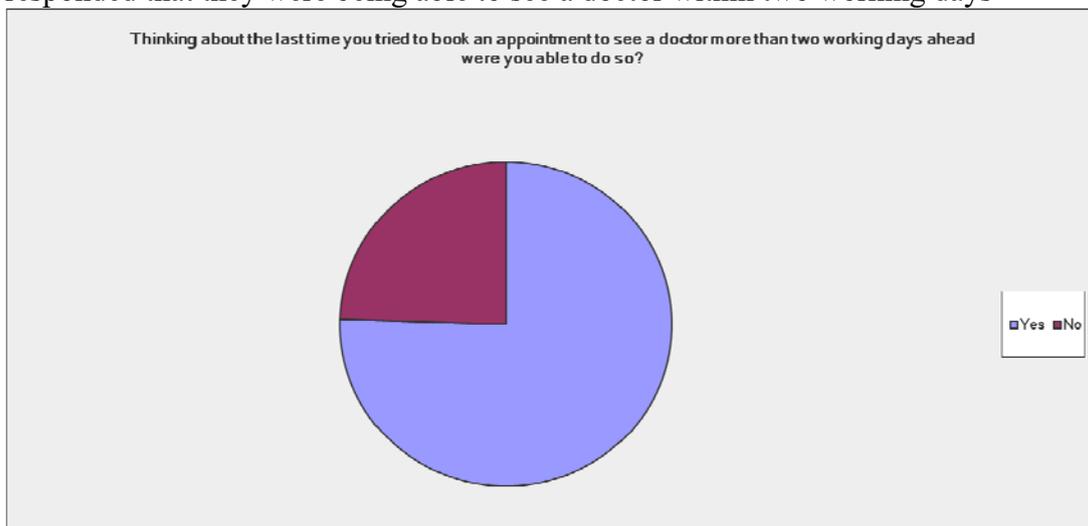
Overall, the results showed positive feed back for the surgery. Majority of the patients were satisfied with the current appointment system, which included getting an appointment within 48 hrs and the ability to pre-book appointments in advance. Also we asked patients accessibility to the reception over the phone, are they being able to speak to a doctor on the phone and were they able to see their preferred doctor. Most patients responded that they were satisfied with the overall service provided.

Patients satisfaction rate on clinical areas were evaluated as per a rating system and the figures showed a satisfactory level for doctors as well as for practice nurse.

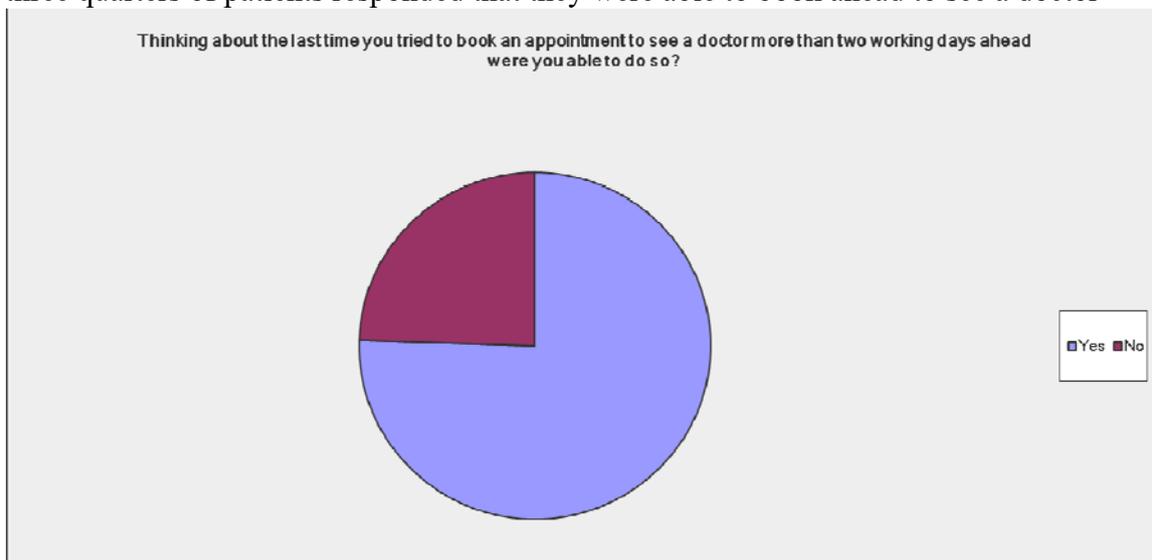
The appointment system.

Overall 70% of respondents said the current appointment system was good or very good and less than 10% rated it as poor or very poor.

When asked about the possibility of getting an appointment, around 4 out of 5 patients responded that they were being able to see a doctor within two working days



When asked about the possibility of pre booking appointments in advance. Just over three quarters of patients responded that they were able to book ahead to see a doctor



Getting through to the Reception

Accessing the surgery over the phone is an on going concern to us and we asked some questions from our patients to look for future improvements. Less than half of the respondents said that it was easy or very easy to get through to the reception phones. Around 30% said it was either easy or difficult and less than quarter said it was difficult or very difficult.

Speaking to a doctor on the phone / seeing the preferred doctor

Speaking to a doctor on the phone / seeing their preferred doctor was considered an important aspect from patients' point of view. Less than a quarter of patients said it was easy or very easy to speak to a doctor on the phone and the majority 44.4% said it was neither easy nor difficult. More than half of the respondents said it was easy or very easy, while a quarter said it was either easy or difficult to book an appointment with their preferred doctor.

Able to see the practice nurse or Health Care Assistant

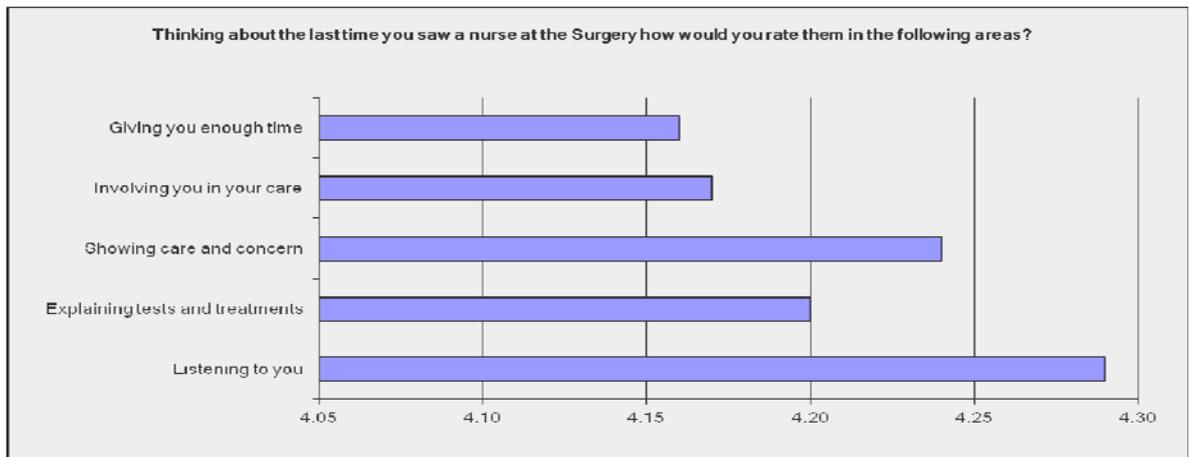
Also in respect of being able to book appointment with the practice nurse or HCA, over 70% said that it was easy or very easy and only 2% said that it was poor or very poor.

Rating the doctors (as per the last visit by the patient to see the doctor)

The average rating received for doctor's service was 04 out of 05 (05 being the highest). The questions were whether the doctor asked about symptoms, gave them sufficient time, listened to them, showed care and concern towards them and explained tests results and involved them in their care plan.

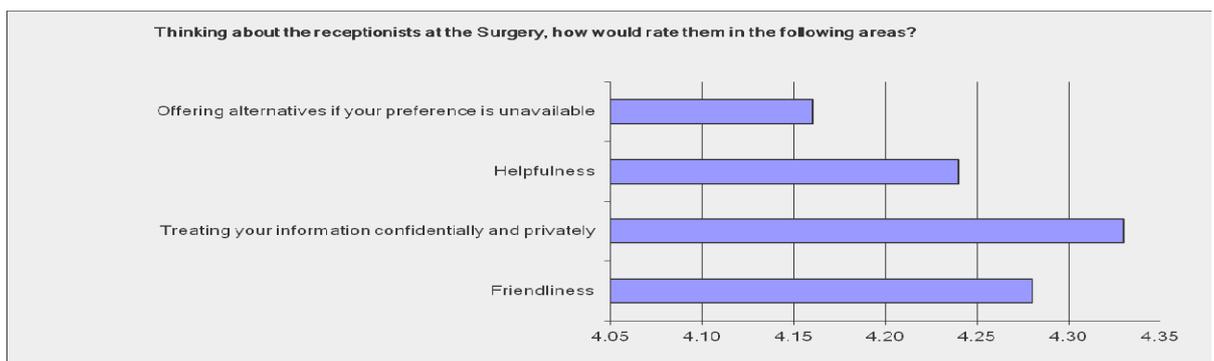
Rating the Practice Nurse (as per the last visit by the patients to see the nurse)

Overall a range of similar questions were asked and the response was an average score of 04.21 (05 being the highest) which was again between good and very good.



Rating the Receptionist

The receptionists faired equally well with an average rating of 4.25 (05 being the highest) on a range of areas, covering helpfulness, friendliness, offering alternatives and treating information confidentially



Overall administration

Around 86% of the respondents felt that their regular medication (repeat prescriptions) was processed in an efficient manner and only 3% said that it was inefficient.

Providing test results is another important administrative task and 70% of the survey respondents felt that it was easy or very easy to get their test results.

With regards to booking smear tests appointments, over 70% of respondents rated that it was easy or very easy.

About the premises

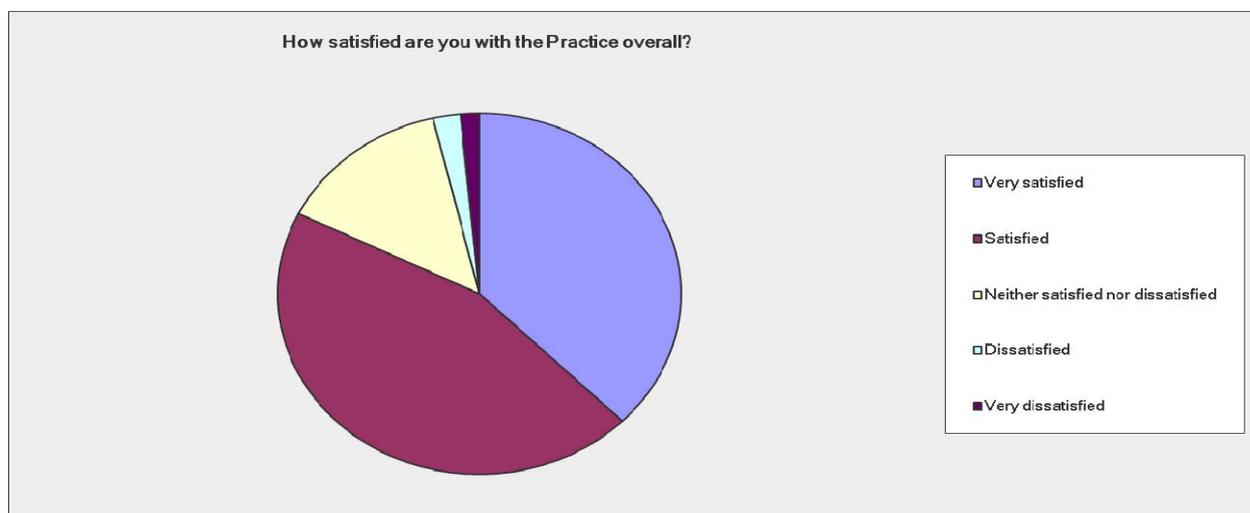
Around two-thirds of the patients said that it was difficult or very difficult to park at the Surgery. This is a real concern for the surgery and we have been negotiating with the Harrow council and Harrow PCT in the past to find alternative parking space for patients. Harrow East District Nursing team is based in the same building sharing the car park with the 03 GP practices limiting parking slots for patients.

As per the survey over 90% said there was ample seating facility available in the surgery waiting area. But as a practice we are concerned about the patients waiting area facilities such as seating, leg space, drinking water, toilets, reading materials, and TV screen etc. We are in negotiation with the facility providers to find ways to improving the patient waiting area.

Well over 80% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall facilities at the premises.

Overall satisfaction

Overall 82.4% of respondents said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the Practice and less than 4% said that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.



About the respondents

The survey received 144 responses and 63% of them were women. The age range of respondents was between 16-90 years of age; however the majority were between the ages of 25 to 64. There was a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and the largest group being 'White British' followed by 'British Indian' and 'Asian'.

Comments from respondents

A total of 43 comments were made, which included positive and negative comments. These comments were well accepted and discussed at our practice staff / clinicians meetings to take necessary actions immediately.

Positive comments

- I have noticed and appreciated improvements made in the practice over the previous few years.
- Overall the care is very good.
- I am very pleased with the Surgery.
- I'm moving house very soon but I wouldn't change my doctor or my surgery - that's how good they are.

Negative comments

All these comments will be evaluated constructively to improve our services.

- Difficult to make appointments.
- It is difficult to make an appointment with the receptionist and she is not very helpful to provide times that suits you and very rude sometimes. Also when you arrive for appointments they are too slow to attend to you.
- Timing - poor quality.

The key discussion points.

Based on the survey results the following points were noted for discussion at the PPG meeting.

- The survey questionnaire should have been available in more than one language to get wider response.
- The questionnaire should have been more strait forward with out being ambiguous when asking respondents feedback. E.g. dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- Booking appointments ahead – Should consider all avenues to keep more bookable appointments in advance.
- Getting through to the reception is an area that need to be looked in to and other possible avenues had to be considered.
- Seeing the own doctor is another area that needs to be improved and to look for any other ways to improve it.
- Look for other areas to improve the current appointment system further.
- Parking for patients is a major concern.
- Timing – Ways of improving waiting time for doctors and admin response time.

Agreed action plan.

After discussing the key areas of concerns based on local survey results, the PPG agreed following action plan to be set for the improvement of ‘Patient care’.

- We will see all possibilities to have the future survey questionnaires in other languages widely used by our patients to reach more audience.
- We will ‘design’ the questions and ‘word it’ in a simpler way to avoid any ambiguity.
- Feedback from patients about clinicians was discussed at weekly clinicians practice meeting. General staff feed back was discussed at the monthly staff meeting. All areas that need to be improved were discussed at these meetings and PPG was informed about any development.
- We will increase the number of appointments kept open for ‘pre booking’ on the booking system form 03 to 05 per session which is an increase from 20% to 33%. Patients should be able access these appointment slots through our Automated telephone booking system, EMIS (Access) which

is our internet booking option or simply by calling at or phoning the reception for a pre-book appointment.

- Improvement at the reception is an on going programme at our surgery and we will try out new ways of answering calls to minimise call waiting time. As a trial, one of our reception staff has started to answer the calls away from the reception desk (with less distraction) in the morning busy hours to increase call answering speed. We have agreed to continue this with 1-2 reception members. Also we are looking at alternative systems to answer calls faster in the future.
- Reception staff and other staff members will always try to be more accommodative and give appointments with patients preferred doctor.
- Improving appointment system through triaging by doctors and reception staff will be re introduced. This should filter the appointments to a greater extent to prevent unnecessary none urgent appointments.
- PPG members raised their concern about the 'Did Not Attend' (DNA) patients and wanted to take all possible actions to minimise it. Introducing a 'Message alerting' system to patient's mobile numbers was discussed and currently looking at the possibilities of implementing it soon. PPG members suggested that this should be done to all the appointments but as a practice we disagreed due to limited man power available to continue it on a daily basis.
- Parking for patients is a major concern. PPG members strongly felt that we should re-appeal to the Harrow council and to inform Harrow PCT about the limited parking facilities. This was done many years ago but to stress it again with the help of the other two practices in the premises was agreed. All felt that this is something which came out from the PPG that has to be taken up with the PCT for further action.
- PPG members discussed ways of reducing waiting time for doctors and admin response time. Clear messages to patients about average admin time, surgery policy on none NHS related letter which are not urgent, inform patients of longer waiting times when necessary are some of the other points that were discussed. All agreed to reintroduce the triaging system to avoid unnecessary appointments and delays. Some members of PPG suggested the possibility of informing the patients when 'a doctor run late' before patient come to the surgery. But the reception staff and the practice admin staff disagreed since it is not possible and practical because doctor could catch up the time with his/her next few patients. Staff members are not in a position to tell the patient a length of a clinician's consultation time.

Steps taken to improve the services.

As a result of the survey and PPG discussions, we have already taken some steps to improve the service.

Patients' access:-

- We increased our bookable appointments to 60 per a morning session. As a result our doctors work longer hours now. The morning sessions have been extended up to 3 ½ hours and the evening sessions remains as 2 ½ hours.

- We are open on Saturday morning for 03 hours to give opportunity for patients who can not visit the surgery during weekdays.
- We are open till late on a Tuesday (till 08.30pm) to allow patients to visit late evenings.
- Since February 2012, we started offering an additional 4 ½ hours per week as ‘walking clinics’ to our patients to improve surgery access further.
- When we run out of appointments in one of sites we offer alternative appointment slots (if available) at our main surgery & branch surgery to patients who request same day appointments.

Access to other health care providers:-

- We have started communicating with other healthcare providers more frequently than earlier by inviting them for our weekly meetings. This has helped to iron out any issues or unnecessary delays that patients may have to face. We have a multi disciplinary meeting organised on a quarterly basis and normal clinical meetings on a weekly basis. District Nurses, Community Health Visitors and other service providers in the community are invited to attend to these meetings.

Non-discriminatory policy for new patients:-

We have a strict non-discriminatory policy when registering new patients and we always try to be more accommodative when registering new patients since some of our doctors have contracts with neighbouring PCTs to register new patients.

Enhanced opportunity for patients to see the same doctor:-

We have taken necessary steps to provide continuity of care by booking appointments with the same health professional when ever possible. Reception has been trained and other admin staffs have been instructed to follow it.

Use of skill mix available in the practice:-

We try to optimise our professional skill mix available at the practice. We always provide a better choice for patient as per the requirement.

Choice of modes of contacts:-

We provide options for patients to contact the surgery. Patients can now contact the surgery by visiting in person, through contacting the reception over the phone, via email or through the newly introduced ‘on line’ booking system from our web page.

Enabling care as close to home as possible:-

We will always try to provide the necessary services for the patients in close proximity to their geographical location. Where it is considered necessary we make every effort to provide the necessary care in the patient’s residence. E.g. Physiotherapy referrals at Belmont Health Centre itself.

Surgery opening times.

Our opening hours have now extended since mid February 2012. We are now providing additional 4 ½ hours per week as ‘Walk in’ appointments on Tuesdays and on Saturday creating more appointments for patients.

| Day | Details of opening hours at Belmont Health Centre (Main Surgery) |
|------------------|---|
| | Reception time |
| Monday | 08.00 to 18.30 |
| Tuesday | 08.00 to 20.30 |
| Wednesday | 08.00 to 18.30 |
| Thursday | 08.00 to 18.30 |
| Friday | 08.00 to 18.30 |
| Saturday | 09.00 to 12.00 |
| Sunday | CLOSED |

| Day | Details of opening hours at Long Elmes (Branch Surgery) |
|------------------|---|
| | Reception time |
| Monday | 08.30 to 13.30 |
| Tuesday | 15.00 to 19.00 |
| Wednesday | 08.30 to 13.30 |
| Thursday | 14.00 to 18.00 |
| Friday | 08.00 to 13.00 |
| Saturday | CLOSED |
| Sunday | CLOSED |

Out of hour arrangements.

Patients could call our out of hours service provider ‘Harmoni’ on the following number 020 3402 1000 if they need to seek medical advice or any medical attention when the surgery is closed.

This information is provided on all our surgery communications. (Notice board, at the reception, appointment cards, practice booklet, practice web page and on branch surgery front door).

Correspondence address

Belmont Health Centre:
516 Kenton Lane, Harrow, HA3 7LT
Tel: 020 8863 6863
Fax: 020 8424 0542
Web: www.belmonthhealthcentre.co.uk
Email: jwbelmonthc@gp-E84069.nhs.uk

Branch:
252, Long Elmes, Harrow, HA3 6LF
Tel/Fax: 020 8428 4249