

# Water Meadow Surgery

## Patient Group and Survey Report 2014

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### INTRODUCTION

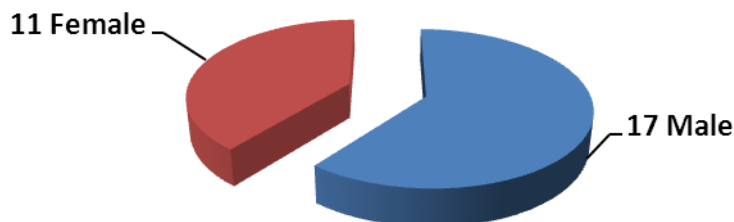
Two years ago we established a Patient Participation Group (PPG). Our purpose in doing so was to ensure that patients have the opportunity to be informed and involved in decisions about the range and quality of services we provide.

We have tried to ensure that the PPG is representative of the practice population, but we are aware that participation in the group is voluntary and therefore we have to an extent, been reliant on people coming forward to join. In order to recruit to the PPG we;

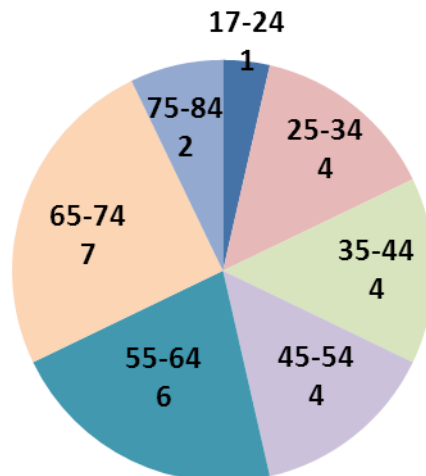
- advertised in the surgery on our two digital (TV) information screens ;
- displayed a leaflet in the waiting area ;
- advertised on our web site and
- pro-actively approached specific groups of patients e.g. ethnic minorities and young mothers, in order to try and have a balanced representation.

We currently have 28 members constituted as follows;

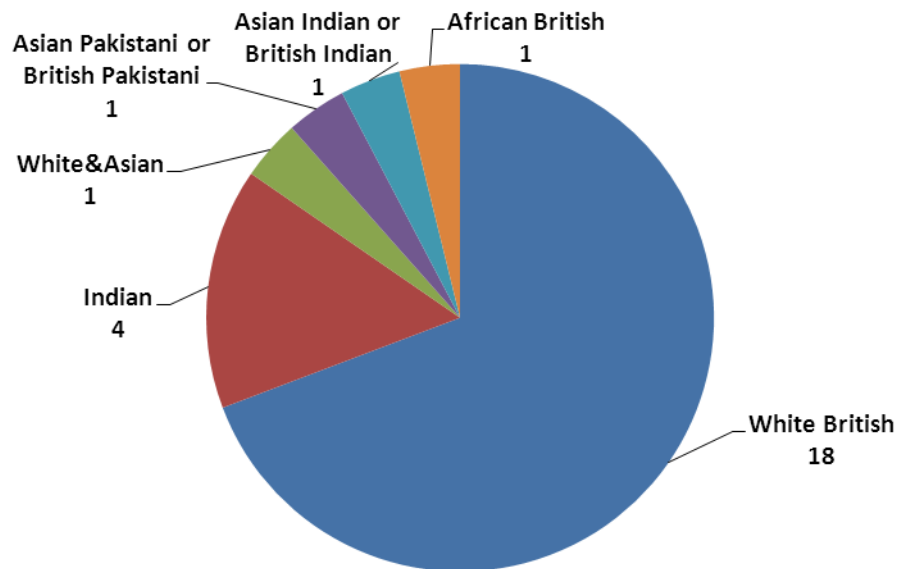
### Gender Group Members



### Age of Group Members



## Ethnicity of Group Members



We are still open to new recruits

## REVIEW OF THE YEAR

Last year we acknowledged that that we could and should always seek to improve our service and we undertook a project in-house to look at how we can be more efficient and effective in our processes; this is still ongoing. All through this process we have tried to think "what can we do better to improve the patient experience."

The three main themes came out a meeting with the group last year and these were;

- Getting through on the phone
- Mixed messages from reception and
- Communication

**Telephone:** The group felt that the phones are not being answered as quickly as they might be, especially early morning. The group suggested that the practice should consider call waiting – they all agreed that they would rather have the option of being held in a queue knowing that they would be answered soon, rather than finding the line constantly busy. They also felt that having the option to press a number, say for example, prescriptions, might free up the lines available to book appointments.

**What we said we were going to do**

Obtain quotes improve the telephone system

**What have we done?**

We have totally replaced our old telephone system with new equipment and software. We have also added a fourth line, thereby increasing the capacity to get through by 25%. We have added options for the elderly (over 75s) and housebound to dial direct through to order repeat prescriptions. We have also added call waiting function if lines are free but not being answered.

**Reception:** The group felt that there were mixed messages coming from the reception team; no two receptionists appeared to give the same message about how to obtain an appointment – some did not mention the 48 hour access and some (more worryingly) suggested that ringing back in 48 hours would guarantee an appointment. However, in doing so many of the group were then told that no appointments were available.

**What we said we were going to do**

The practice will arrange for staff training

**What have we done?**

We have had various meetings and sessions with the reception staff, which have hopefully improved things, although further customer service training is planned in the near future.

**Communication:** The group felt that changes made within the practice, whether that was prescribing policy, changes to appointment times or other matters that will affect patients, are not being communicated as well as they could be. There was discussion around making more use of e-mails to keep in touch with patients and possibly texting. The practice website ([www.watermeadowsurgery.co.uk](http://www.watermeadowsurgery.co.uk)) was generally considered to be good, but it was suggested that it could be improved and kept more up to date.

**What we said we were going to do**

We said we were going to produce a patient newsletter and redevelop our website

**What have we done?**

The newsletter is only just being drafted and the amended and refreshed website should be ready in the next few weeks

**What have we done this year?**

We communicated with the group about the format of the annual patient survey and we agreed that we would keep the same survey for this year to allow us to compare the results with last year (see below). We have also consulted with the group about future plans for expanding the practice and the patient newsletter – more to follow on this in early April.

## PATIENT SURVEY






It was agreed with the group to once again run the annual patient survey covering a broad range of areas which include convenience of access (telephone answering, opening times, ability to be seen quickly), patients' experience of the treatment and service they receive (receptionists, doctors, nurses), and any other issues patients wished to comment on, good and bad. This would enable a direct comparison with last year to help gauge whether the practice was improving.

During the third week in February, 252 questionnaires were posted to patients. These were chosen from the patients who attended clinics that week to help ensure a broad range of random users of the service. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a pre-paid addressed envelope for patients to return; we received 121 replies i.e. 48%.





## WHAT DID THE RESULTS TELL US?

Figures in brackets denote rating for last year

### Telephone

	76%	(75%)	Satisfaction with ability to get through on the phone
	99%	(100%)	Receptionists polite and friendly
	100%	(100%)	Receptionists being helpful
	99%	100%)	Receptionists discretion
	86%	(88%)	The way you were treated by receptionists

### Arriving at the surgery

	98%	(100%)	Receptionists polite and friendly
	98%	(100%)	Receptionists helpful
	97%	(100%)	Receptionists discreet
	88%	(90%)	The way you were treated by receptionists

### What does this tell us?

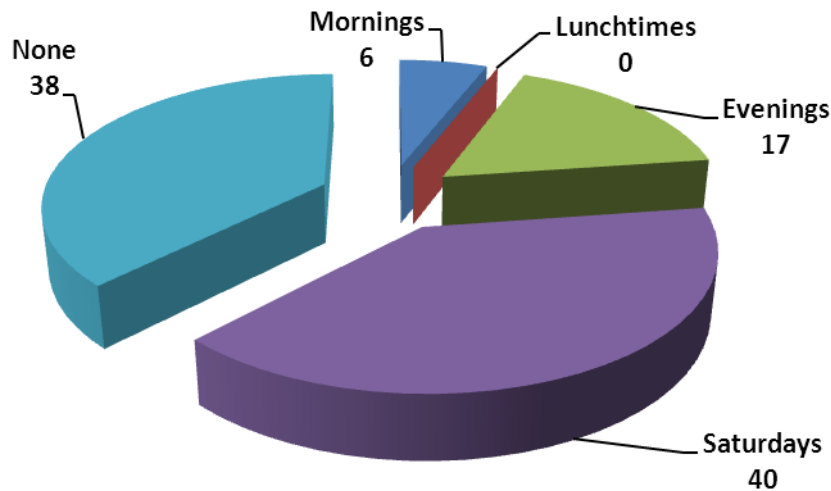
These are very high scores and maintaining such a high standard as we achieved last year was never going to be easy. However, we must not rest on our laurels and we must try to get back to where we were.

## Opening Hours



79% (78%) Satisfied with opening hours

However, when patients were given an opportunity to say what additional hours the practice should consider opening the following suggestions were received;



### What does this tell us?

Most people are happy with our opening times, but as can be expected, if people are offered more choice they will welcome it. We already offer a pre-bookable Saturday clinic every other week. We also offer evening appointments one evening every other week and some early morning (7am-8am) slots. We will be reviewing our extended hours to consider whether to continue these after 1<sup>st</sup> April.

## Seeing a doctor or nurse

65% Would like to see a doctor of their choice

We have a personal list system so that pre-bookable routine appointments are offered up to 4 weeks in advance with a preferred doctor



**48%** Managed to get an appointment with the doctor of their choice in less than 5 days – this is down from 54% last year

Due to increasing demand, it is more difficult to get an appointment with a preferred doctor – this is something we have been working on. We have employed more doctor sessions, but demand continues to outstrip supply



94% Were able to see any doctor in less than 5 days



92% Said that if they needed to see a doctor the same day they could  
If something is **clinically** urgent we do not turn patients away



61% Had to wait less than 10 minutes to see the doctor or nurse

## Consultation

<b>91%</b>	Satisfaction score with doctor/nurse questioning
<b>92%</b>	Satisfaction score with how well the doctor/nurse listened
<b>93%</b>	Satisfaction score with how well the doctor/nurse put them at ease
<b>92%</b>	Satisfaction score with the way the doctor/nurse involved them
<b>91%</b>	Satisfaction score with the doctor/nurse explanations
<b>91%</b>	Satisfaction score with the time the doctor/nurse spent with them
<b>90%</b>	Satisfaction score with the doctor/nurse showing caring concern
<b>93%</b>	Overall assessment of consultations with doctors/nurses

These figures are roughly a percentage point up on last year

## General

58	Average age of respondent
61%	Female respondents
98%	Respondents who were white British ethnicity
69%	Respondents who had travelled to the practice by car
85%	Satisfaction score with patient information screens

## Summary



<b>92%</b>	Satisfaction score for the practice to be good or better
<b>100%</b>	Would recommend the practice to family and friends

We are not perfect and we know it – there is still a lot more to do and one of our priorities is improving our communication with patients.

Demand for our service is increasing (as it is in all general practices) – people are attending the doctor more often than they used to; for some this is because they need to see a doctor or nurse; others perhaps could be educated about self-help options available to them to treat themselves, for example, visiting their pharmacy for simple coughs and colds. This will help free up more appointments for those who need them the most.

## WRITTEN COMMENTS

On the whole these have been very positive. It is difficult to summarise all the positive comments, so these are attached for you to read – these go to show that you think we are doing a reasonable job - we hope you will agree with most of them.

However, there are some, not so good, comments – these are also attached. These seem to fall into the following areas;

- Parking
- Waiting times
- Opening hours

**Parking:** We know this is a problem for some patients. We are surrounded by other properties on three sides and the River Chess to our rear, therefore expanding the car park is not an option. The problem is made worse by the fact that visitors to the Job Centre often use our car park as they do not have one of their own for public use. Also, some patients use the opportunity to 'pop into town' while visiting the surgery thereby blocking a space for longer than necessary. We do have three spaces marked for disabled use, but these are understandably used by other patients, otherwise we are further limited on spaces. What can we do?

**Waiting times:** The overall score in this area was not brilliant and there are some complaints about the waiting times to see some doctors and nurses. These complaints fall into two categories

- i. those where the patient has arrived for their appointment, but have to wait longer than expected and
- ii. Those where the complaint is in the delay in obtaining an appointment in the first place.

With regard to the first category, this is more often than not due to the fact that the doctors have 10 minute standard appointment slots, but some patients attend with complicated or multiple problems and therefore they run over their allotted time – hopefully this is because the doctor feels they need the time. The consequence of this of course is that the next appointment runs late. If this happens two or three times, it is easy to see how a clinic could be running quite late.

Delays in obtaining appointments to see a preferred doctor or nurse are due to the fact that we have an increasing demand from patients and we are trying to 'fit a quart into a pint pot'. Our doctors and nurses can be booked up to five weeks in advance, however, these appointment slots are very quickly taken so that with some of our doctors you cannot book a routine appointment for perhaps three weeks and sometimes a little longer if that coincides with the doctor being on leave.

We have reduced the delays lately by ensuring that all our doctors have appointments which are released 48 hours in advance. This ensures that the doctors are not totally booked up for weeks in advance. It does mean that patients may be told that pre-bookable appointments are not available for some weeks, but if patients call early they should hopefully be given an appointment within two days, albeit that (like all appointments) these are on a first come first served basis.

**Opening Hours:** For the past five years we have been offering extra hours. Every other Saturday we have a morning clinic – this is not a drop in service, the phones are not switched on and appointments have to be booked in advance. On the weeks when we are not providing a Saturday service we are instead providing two early morning surgeries between 7.00am and 8.00am and an evening surgery between 6.30pm and 8.00pm – once again this is not a drop in service, the phones are not switched on and appointments have to be booked in advance. Details of the dates and times of these clinics can be found on the website.

### **WHAT DO WE CONCLUDE FROM THIS?**

We don't always get it right. We do our best and sometimes it seems that this is not good enough. We know this and we want to improve, but we have to accept that we cannot please everyone. Where it is reasonable to do so in terms of availability of staff, premises and cost, we will try and fix things.

However, year on year we are being expected to do more for less and things are getting worse. The NHS has to find £20 billion of savings and we are expected to bear some of that cost; patient demands are increasing and we have to balance the two.

We have to concentrate on doing what is right – providing patients with what they need not necessarily with what they want. Sometimes these are one and the same, but sometimes, expectations are unreasonable. At the end of the day, patient care is what is most important.

### **SUMMARY**

Overall the results of the patient survey are a great endorsement. It is good to know that so many of our patients appreciate what we are trying to do for them. However, we do not intend to rest on our laurels and we will keep looking for ways to improve. Sometimes we will not reach the expectations of some of our patients and we hope that this will not be because we have not tried or because our standards are lowered. We want to be the best practice we can, one that we and our patients can be proud of.



## Appendix A

### SURVEY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS – WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT THE PRACTICE?

- Dr Cooper
- Its good have pharmacy on site
- Everything
- Friendly staff
- Friendly and polite receptionists, pharmacy, nurses, GPs. It's a nice place to come
- I have never encountered problems with my practice
- Location, friendly staff - my gp is good at responding to email
- The whole enterprise is good - doctors, nurses, chemist, reception
- The friendliness of the Dr's and staff
- Everything
- Chemist, toilets and play area and the doctors and nurses
- It's well-maintained; good for east side of Chesham
- Doctors
- To be fair, as the booking and check in process are automated this does reduce interaction with staff, but generally friendly and helpful
- Clean, warm, always enough seats, receptionist very friendly, pharmacy staff helpful. Best thing is ease of making appointment. Dr Cooper is worth the wait
- The practice is welcoming you can always get appointments. The practice is old fashioned in a positive way. A place where people matter
- The lady GPs and nurses are very welcoming and friendly and they listen
- In general all the doctors are pleasant and helpful - autism awareness. Work very well in stressful conditions
- Friendly, accommodating team, caring and great team, receptionists, nurses, GPs at just doing their job - genuine
- Always get to see doctor
- Friendly and welcoming. Good service, either emergency or routine
- Helpful people. Good support services e.g. flu jabs, over 50 MOT's - check overs
- I like the fact that the Dr still comes out to call you in. All the Dr's I have seen have always been very caring and give you time beyond 5 minutes if needed. Dr Offside is particularly good at explaining in detail what might be wrong and always involves me in decisions about my health needs.
- There was a very helpful response when I was so bothered by a pain in my head at the end of a long drive home. End of the day but a friendly doctor came out and reassured me.
- It is a friendly practice but would seem to be over prescribed with patients. I don't like the TV screens!!
- It's nearby. It has a pharmacy. The doctors and staff I have met are professional and pleasant.
- Polite and always helpful
- Dr Offside is fabulously helpful at all times
- Water Meadow Surgery to my mind is the best in Chesham. The receptionists always try to make sure my family has a same day appointment for emergencies. The entire practice is caring and understanding which is why I have been registered with the practice all my life.
- Being greeted by GP - very good receptionists
- Friendly and well organised

- Well run
- It's easier to get appointments than the other practice in the area, also px service is better
- The general atmosphere by all the staff
- HB is brilliant & would see her again
- Doctors & staff
- Friendly, efficient, chemist on site, online pxs
- Very helpful
- Get seen when needed
- Always get appointment, good friendly staff
- Efficiency combined with expert care
- Everything, it is always clean and tidy
- Everyone is very friendly and kind as we are now older
- The practice is very caring and friendly
- I am so impressed with Water Meadow Surgery. The staff are kind and helpful and will do their best to get you an appointment as soon as they can.
- Very willing to try and help to arrange appts etc. Staff very friendly and helpful. My GP is excellent - very supportive and has really helped me through some very difficult times.
- Friendly atmosphere and convenient pharmacist
- Wasn't made to feel rushed even though only 10 min appoint
- Patient staff
- Always clean & tidy, friendly staff & caring drs
- Polite & helpful receptionists
- Helpful & friendly
- Pleasant environment. Waiting time not too long
- Everyone is kind & considerate
- Very caring team
- Friendly, calm, clean comfy
- Lucky with Dr Offside & surgery
- Friendly and helpful staff
- All staff & drs are very friendly reassuring
- Friendly practice nice that nurses and drs come out to call patients
- I have never had any problems here excellent
- Ease
- Helpful clean tidy
- Very satisfied
- I do not have to wait a long time for appointments compared to things in the media
- Friendly
- The professionalism of the doctors, nurses and reception
- Good size, clean waiting area good attitude manner of staff
- Everything

- Fiona Neale is the perfect GP
- Everything
- Reception very helpful. I like my GPs. Also online prescriptions are good
- Drs & staff are friendly professional
- Friendly service. Speed of seeing my young children
- Very caring GPs that take time to listen & explain things
- Clean friendly
- Pharmacy, self-check in and services offered
- Friendly
- Friendly
- Everything

## Appendix B

### SURVEY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS – WHAT COULD WE IMPROVE?

- Bring back blood testing at surgery, and a water dispenser
- Your booking system, the 2 day ahead release appointments are really annoying, why can't we just book the next appointment
- Hours open, availability of appointments. I work full-time and it is difficult getting time off to attend the surgery
- Car parking; higher chairs (with arms) for people with back problems
- When its busy it's hard to make an appointment and also to get help sometimes when you make an appointment. Parents who have little children need to ask for them to be seen at the same time. I think this is better if patents and children are encouraged to have the same appointments if possible
- Maybe have a tv showing news, especially if patients are having to wait a while
- The magazines
- GET VERY UPSET WHEN AKED WHY SEEING DR BY RECEPTIONISTS, WHEN I WANT SEE GP. , THAT NOT THERE JOB
- Coffee!
- If it would cut down waiting to see a doctor, not particularly your own, then evenings or weekend surgery should be considered.
- Opening hours. Perhaps 24hr Stage 1 A&E! We do not knowif your practice offers home visits by the doctor.
- Blood tests available downstairs as some patients have trouble
- Trying to get f/u appts rather than booking with 3 weeks wait or call on the day
- Appt times more flexible for working patients,weekend appts useful
- Not always enough time to talk to gp's
- Please make phone message shorter, I sure by now everybody knows ypu don't take phone px
- More parking space
- Appointment system complicated
- More pre bookable appointments
- Car parking, reduce waiting times
- A few more chairs with arms to help us stand up
- Difficult to get follow-up appointments if needed.
- Keeping on time
- TV 24hr news in reception
- Music in waiting room
- Drs listen to what patients are saying
- To be able to see allocated dr each time for continuity of care
- Extra appointments outside of office hours
- At least one window should be left open for air
- Waiting time for appointment
- Reception is good sometimes and other times it is not

- Being able to make an appointment in advance without being told there are no appointments left
- Travel vac time is too long if you book a late holiday
- I have to take time off unpaid to attend appointments as work not near
- Car parking
- Waiting area very grey not nice
- Perhaps 24hr stage1 A&E
- Long time trying to get through on phone at 8.30 maybe try a call waiting service
- Longer opening times
- Some screens use poor colouring & small print-hard to read
- Waiting time sometimes too long (40 Mins today)

**SURVEY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS – OTHER COMMENTS.**

- Fix flusher in toilet
- Most of my visits concern blood pressure (high) and your car park does nothing to help this
- It's impossible to remember to ring at 8.30. Friday morning or whenever the appts have always gone
- Sometimes car park gets very busy, explain about alternatives
- Unlike the New Surgery, Water Meadow has a good staff retnesion. I have seen Dr Cooper since he qualified, receptionist also long standing, tells me the surgery is a happy workplace and staff are content- satisfied patient
- The surgery has always gone above and beyond the call of duty.The GP did home visits when I was very ill on her day off.the midwife visited me in hospital and home. I think the surgery is wonderful
- I booked in on the screen and had no contact with receptionist. They are usually very helpful.
- Having moved to Chesham from London my wife and I feel that we both get better service here
- In general, totally happy with GPs seen, especially Dr Shotts,Barnett and Murray
- A little praise for the secretaries, we always find them very helpful
- The only real problem is parking
- Keep it up
- Best practice in Chesham, would always recommend this practice
- Other members of the family have been with this surgery for 30 years plus, so you must be doing something right
- Thank you - Water Meadow seems almost unique in its compassion and care. We are so thankful for such a great surgery.
- The option of a telephone call very helpful too especially if difficult to get an appt and sometimes appt not needed and problem resolved quickly this way
- I cannot see how receptionists can be discreet when other patients are waiting behind to speak to them and perhaps when patients have hearing problems.
- Non existent after care after major bowell cancer op, no contact
- Last telephone call was quick & direct much improved
- I was a very nervous patient but am now happy to come to the surgery
- Charli was really helpful on reception
- Keep up the good work
- Clean & roomy. Car park sometimes a problem
- Excellent practice
- Self conscious of using bp machine in reception
- We get a much better service here than our other practice
- Thank you for a great service
- I could do without the radio playing but I suppose others like it
- Our family have always received good care from here thank you
- The car park cant always find a space
- Very clean &tidy
- Occasionally the doctors are quite delayed in seeing patients - but I know that this is because they are doing their best for each patient.