

GP Practice relocation into the Alfred Barrow Health Centre- Engagement Feedback

Introduction

The former Alfred Barrow School site on Duke Street, Barrow-in-Furness is currently being redeveloped to create a new health centre. It will integrate community, primary and social care services focusing on helping people to stay well within the community.

The new Alfred Barrow Health Centre will be occupied by a variety of services including three GP practices:

- Abbey Road Surgery
- Atkinson Health Centre
- Risedale Surgery

Previous engagement activity

The affected GP practices were identified as moving into the Alfred Barrow Health Centre early in the project. The decision to relocate featured in wider community engagement which included public events. Additionally, the GP practices were provided with information to display in their patient waiting areas. It was recognised that further detailed engagement with patients from the affected GP surgeries was required which led to the following activities.

Engagement objective

The purpose of the patient engagement activities was to inform patients about the progress of the relocation of the three identified GP practices and ensure they have the opportunity to raise any concerns and share their views.

Methodology

There were two ways in which patients could provide their feedback; via a survey either online or in paper copy or by attending a drop-in session at their GP surgery.

Survey: Hard copies of the patient-facing survey were available in the waiting areas of the three affected GP practices. The online survey was available to be completed on the Morecambe Bay CCG website or on each of the websites for the three affected GP practices. The survey was available between 20 December 2018 and 31 January 2019.

Drop-in sessions: Feedback was obtained from patients at face to face drop-in sessions at each of the three affected GP practices. In total six drop-in sessions took place during the month of January, some took place during the day and others took place in the evenings to ensure the engagement was as accessible as possible to all patients.

The survey and drop in sessions were promoted in the following ways:

- GP practice websites
- Morecambe Bay CCG website
- Posters within the affected GP surgeries

- Social media
- Text messaging to patients over the age of 18

Response rate

Number of patients registered at the three affected GP surgeries: 18,264

Number of completed surveys: 199

Number of patients who attended the drop-in sessions: 30

Total patients engaged: 229

Survey results- Key findings

1. Patient demographics

The breakdown of the number of patients who completed the survey by GP practice:

- Abbey Road Surgery: 109
- Atkinson Health Centre: 30
- Risedale Surgery: 59

2. Patient awareness

When asked if patients had been given any information or heard about the move of their GP practice to the Alfred Barrow Health Centre (prior to receiving the survey/ leaflet) the following responses were given:

- 68% of patients answered yes (n=136)
- 24% of patients answered no (n=48)
- 8% of patients answered not sure/ don't remember (n=15)

Following the survey/ leaflet 71% (n=139) of respondents stated that they felt they had been thoroughly informed about the relocation of their GP practice. 29% (n=57) of patients asked stated that they did not feel they had been thoroughly informed about the relocation of their GP practice.

More specifically, following the information provided 85% (n=168) of patients asked stated that they now understand the reasons why their GP practice is moving to the new location. 15% of patients asked stated that they still did not understand the reasons their GP practice was moving into the new location.

The main reasons patients felt they were not informed about the relocation of their GP practice, including their understanding of why their GP practice is moving to the new location was a lack of readily available information, no formal communication such as patient letters and no previous opportunity to give feedback.

3. Concerns/ issues

When patients were asked about their feelings relating to the move of their GP practice to the new location the following responses were given:

- 23% (n=45) of patients asked stated they were very happy about the move
- 28% (n=55) of patients asked stated that they were happy about the move
- 39% (n=77) of patients asked stated they felt neutral about the move
- 5% (n=9) of patients asked stated that they felt unhappy about the move
- 5% (n=9) of patients asked stated that they felt very unhappy about the move

As part of the survey patients were asked to provide further comments to support their response. Positive key themes include:

- Bringing services together
- All services provided in one place
- Central location
- Improved building
- Car park
- New doctors and nurses encouraged to work in Primary Care
- Access to additional services
- Proximity to workplaces
- Improved access to appointments
- Part of local bus route
- More clinical skills available
- Improved facilities
- Easier access

Negative key themes include:

- Loss of personal service provided by a local GP practice
- Distance from current GP surgery location
- Uncertainty about the move
- Concerns around access
- Lack of information
- Parking issues
- Access to the centre particularly for the elderly
- Change in consistency of care
- Happy with current GP premises
- Preference for a small surgery

Of the patients who completed the survey 64% (n=124) reported that they did not have any issues or concerns regarding the relocation of their GP surgery. 36% (n=71) of respondents stated that they did have issues/ concerns regarding the relocation of their GP surgery.

Patient concerns and issues reported in the survey include the following:

- Concerns around parking
- The number of disabled parking spaces
- The possibility of a less personal service

- Uncertainty around whether patients will continue to see their current practice doctors
- How the move will affect staff jobs such as receptionists
- Travel distance from current GP practice location
- Impacts on the service provided and waiting times to get a GP appointment
- Patient parking being the other side of a busy road
- Cost of transport to the new centre
- Confidentiality following the move

4. Further questions

In total 15% of survey respondents (n=28) stated that they had further questions that the survey/ leaflet had not answered.

Questions asked as part of the survey focus on the following topics:

- Car park monitoring
- Number of car parking spaces
- Location of GP surgeries within the new centre
- Access to GP appointments
- Date of move
- Access to familiar GP
- Possible service impacts
- Specific services moving into the building
- Pooling/ merging of services
- Continuity of healthcare
- Location

5. Information sharing

When asked about how they would like to be kept informed about the move, the following responses were given as part of the survey:

GP Practice website: 35% (n=78)

Email: 30% (n=68)

SMS text: 19% (n=43)

Other: 8% (n=18)

I would prefer not to be contacted: 8% (n=18)

Other ways patients wish to be kept informed include:

- Social media
- Post to home address
- Email
- WhatsApp
- Leaflets in GP practices

Face to face drop-in sessions- Key findings

Key themes/ areas of discussion from the face to face patient drop-in sessions include:

- Purpose
 - Reason for the move
 - Benefits of the move
- Parking
 - Number of spaces available for patients and staff
 - Cost of parking
 - Car park location
 - Car park monitoring
 - Validation of car park tickets
- Completion date
 - Possible delays
- Transport
 - Bus routes
- Disabled access
 - Parking
 - Building accessibility
- Road crossing
 - Type of crossing on Duke Street
- Building
 - Maintenance of existing building
 - Toilet facilities
 - Lifts
 - Waiting rooms
 - Location of services within the new centre
 - Availability of refreshments
 - Possibility for expansion
 - Navigating the building
- Services
 - Pharmacy provider
 - Services moving into the new centre
- Access to appointments
 - Appointment booking
 - Access to preferred GP
 - Patient check in systems

Specific issues identified during the face to face drop-in sessions:

- Patients expressed concerns that they will have to cross the road to get to the health centre from the patient car park
- Patients expressed concerns about using new facilities in the building such as self-check in machines
- One patient raised a concern that the land where the patient car park will be situated is not level which could cause issues for those with mobility issues
- Concerns were raised relating to how patients and visitors would find their way around the Alfred Barrow Health Centre
- The lack of a clear estimated completion date was raised as an issue
- Patients expressed confusion surrounding the running of the GP practices for example whether the three affected GP practices would be merging (which is not the case)
- Concerns were raised over the number of staff car parking spaces compared to those allocated for patients
- A number of patients stated that they are unhappy with the relocation of their GP practice as they prefer its current location.

Recommendations following patient engagement

1. A patient facing Frequently Asked Questions document to be produced answering questions raised as part of the survey and drop-in sessions. This should be published on the Morecambe Bay CCG website and the websites of the three affected GP practices.
2. Formal patient letters to be made available in the three affected GP practices. It is recommended that letters include the following information:
 - The reasons for the relocation of the GP surgery
 - Car parking arrangements
 - Clarification of service continuity for example that the GP surgeries will continue to operate independently and patient access to appointments and current GPs will remain the same
3. Further positive communication surrounding the relocation of the GP practices into the Alfred Barrow Health Centre for example highlighting the benefits of the new centre.
4. Consideration to be given to patient and staff car parking arrangements and whether patient car parking spaces could be allocated closer to the building.
5. Consideration to be given to increasing the number of disabled car parking spaces/ car parking spaces for patients with mobility issues

6. Patients to be provided with continuous updates on the project via GP practice websites, text messaging and emails for those patients who have specifically identified this as their preference.

7. Patients to be given clarification around the completion date once this is known.

Next steps

This report will be submitted to the Alfred Barrow Health Centre Project Board on Wednesday 13 March 2019.