

## Case Study – Patient Online Services

### Newbridge Surgery



Patient online services have been working well in Newbridge Surgery for a few years now. Patients have found that the ease of using the online services has greatly benefitted them and it is often commented on their Friends and Family Test comment slips that the availability and convenience of online services is one of the things they highly value about the practice.

In order to improve the numbers of patients using the service, Newbridge

Surgery signs up any new patients as part of their registration, advertises the services in the waiting room, advertises it as part of their patient newsletter and promotes the services on their website.

Advertising on the surgery website has been a particularly successful method of promotion for Newbridge. Patients are able to print the form at home, fill it in and then come into the practice to get log in details.

From viewing the statistics of the Surgery website, Newbridge have found that many people are accessing the website at night in order to access these services therefore highlighting the great convenience for patients.

Jackie Smith, Practice Manager at Newbridge Surgery commented: “It’s important to keep up the management of the system however we have found that patients really like using it as there are many benefits for them.

In terms of our internal processes, we have found this a different way of working but we have seen the internal benefits such a slight easing on the pressures at the front desk. We try to make it as easy as possible for patients to sign up, therefore if the patient is known to the reception staff we do not ask them for ID when they are requesting to book appointments online, but we do ask for ID when they are requesting access to view medical records.”

### Appointments

At Newbridge Surgery 16% of patients signed up to use online services however this has not affected the availability of appointments. All routine GP appointments are released to the online system and are available up to 21 days in advance. This means that from a patient point of view there is not a lack of appointments available but the practice has found that all these slots are never taken solely by online users. Usually only two to four per day are booked online.

Apart from freeing up the phone line, other benefits to patients booking online mean that these appointments can also be cancelled online. This means that appointments can be cancelled during hours when the phone lines are closed meaning that patients who may have not attended are able to cancel at their convenience.

### **Access to test results**

The ability of patients to view test results online means it is now much easier for patients to receive test results as and when it suits them. Therefore when a patient has an appointment with the HealthCare Assistant they are encouraged to sign up to view the results including any comments from the doctor.

### **Repeat prescriptions**

Online prescriptions are easier for patients. EPS and patient online link in together to reach the pharmacy so there is no paper used. This is especially useful as a good audit trail for practices.

At Newbridge Surgery they have found that patients who cannot attend the Surgery in person, for example one patient is a longer term carer and finds this an invaluable service because they have been able to request the repeat medication online, which has then been sent electronically from the practice to the pharmacy of the patient's choice, and the patient had made arrangements with the pharmacy for the medication to be delivered to their house.

### **Coded Record Access**

Although the practice has been using the online system for all other services for some time, they have only allowed access to coded medical records over the past twelve months or so.

Upon request, summary care records can be viewed and the patient is told that it will take 14 days to process their application to give them further access to coded information.

Dr Pickavance, Lead GP at Newbridge Surgery said, "It's important for practice staff to view the system from the patient point of view. It was only when I viewed my own medical record online did I see the full value in being able to do so as a patient.

"This is a fantastic tool for patients to help them manage their long term health care needs. It also means that if you fall ill abroad this is a way in which you can have access to your medical history at all times on your phone or via a computer."

"It is also important to note from a clinical side that should a GP not want a specific consultation to be viewed by the patient for a clinical reason it can be marked as private and will not show up on the patient's view of their record."

For more information on Newbridge Surgery and how they use Patient Online please contact Jackie Smith, Practice Manager, [jackie.smith21@nhs.net](mailto:jackie.smith21@nhs.net)

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