



# PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP



## **I'm Not Well, What Should I do? (Active Signposting)**

### **Final Report.**

## **Introduction.**

Towards the end of 2016 the Charnwood Community Medical Group, Patient Participation Group (PPG) examined the provision of Emergency and Urgent care in a primary care setting. This report identifies the process that was adopted, actions and outcomes.

## **Process**

To enable the scope of the project to be identified a desk top exercise was held involving all members of the group. A series of questions were asked (*App 1*) and responses were captured. This information was analysed and it became clear that in certain situations patients were confused about the availability of urgent care, how to access it and indeed what illness / injury they can see their GP with. To progress this work a small project group was established and at its first meeting in mid-2017 undertook a mind mapping process (*App 2*). With this information a clear programme of work was agreed including the scope of the project and Terms of Reference. These are shown below:

**Scope.** That the project would look at the manner in which patients currently access care through their GP or via other NHS services. That it would, working with the practice partners and other NHS providers make recommendations for suggested change to ensure patients

**Ring at the right time**

**To the right person**

**To obtain the right care.**

## **Terms of Reference**

- Agree a title for the project
- Examine the current appointment system for on the day appointments
- Work with and support the practice in relation to work currently being considered relating to call messaging
- Examine any potential risk associated with the current booking system
- Examine the current signposting systems
- Consider the development of advice leaflets regarding types of illness / injury that can be seen in the practice
- Review current information provided by out of hours services (OOH)
- Review current information provided by 111 and 999 services

## **Title of the Project.**

It was felt that the title of the project would need to be something catchy and it was agreed to call it "I'm Not Well What Should I Do?" However at a later date we were informed by Mr P. Hanlon, Practice Business Manager, that in a recent publication by NHS England (GP Forward view, 10 high impact changes) there was reference to "Active Signposting". This can be defined as a process that provides patients with a first point of contact which directs them to the most appropriate source of help, when the GP isn't really the best person to see. It was agreed that there was a very close synergy between this and what we were examining and that we should consider this within our project.

## **Examine the current appointment system for on the day appointments.**

With the support of the Practice we were able to look at the current on the day appointment systems. We were reassured that the Practice frequently monitor on the

day appointments and free up extra GP slots as required. We were aware of how well the Practice manages this process and agreed that no further recommendations were required. The Practice Business Manager agreed to keep the PPG informed of any challenges that the system faces, including the on line appointment booking system which was recognised as currently not available on the day.

**Work with and support the practice in relation to work currently being considered relating to call messaging.**

Data was shared from the Practice regarding the number and categories of calls that patients request at the evening sit and wait clinic. We felt that some of these requests could be seen the next day or signposted to self-care or another service (Active Signposting). We worked with the Practice to develop a number of messages informing Patients of other services that are available to them while they were waiting to be connected to the surgery. We also developed an emergency message that the Practice could use when the GPs were running at full capacity.

**Examine any potential risk associated with the current booking system.**

During the desk top exercise (*App 1*) it was shown that there was confusion by some patients relating to the type of illness / injury that they should or could see their GP with, some of which should clearly be seen in urgent or emergency care. There were also situations where Self-Care would be a better alternative. An examination of the section within the "Patients Guide to your Practice" handbook relating to "Self-treatment of common illnesses and accidents" was undertaken. Our conclusions were that there was without doubt a lack of awareness of alternative provision, self-care and patient education.

**Examine the current signposting systems.**

As the Practice was actively pursuing Active Signposting initiatives, it was agreed that as progress was made it would be shared with the PPG for observation and comment. In addition a member of the group agreed to sit as a patient representative with the GPs in the Practice who were reviewing the processes.

**Consider the development of advice leaflets regarding types of illness / injury that can be seen in the practice.**

This was considered in detail; however it was felt that the current provision both on line and in the patient handbook was adequate.

**Review current information provided by out of hours services (OOH) and review current information provided by 111 and 999 services.**

There was a lot of information in stand-alone leaflets about each of the above. However, no one leaflet linked together 111 and out of hours services. Speaking to patients many were still unaware of how to contact a GP when the surgery was closed, there was confusion around what the 111 service was for and when they should be contacted. Many patients felt that ringing 999 was the best solution if they were in doubt. Patients knew about the urgent care centre in the town, but were confused about what illness or injury they could attend with.

**Outcomes.**

Having very carefully considered all of the above areas, studied the mind map (*App 2*) and considered the work that the Practice was undertaking in a number of areas around Active Signposting it was agreed that a patient information leaflet would be designed to combine information in a simple and understandable way. The objective was to improve patient education and awareness relating to self-care, out of hours

services, 111, how the GP can help and how we can help the GP, alternative care pathways and a simple flow chart.

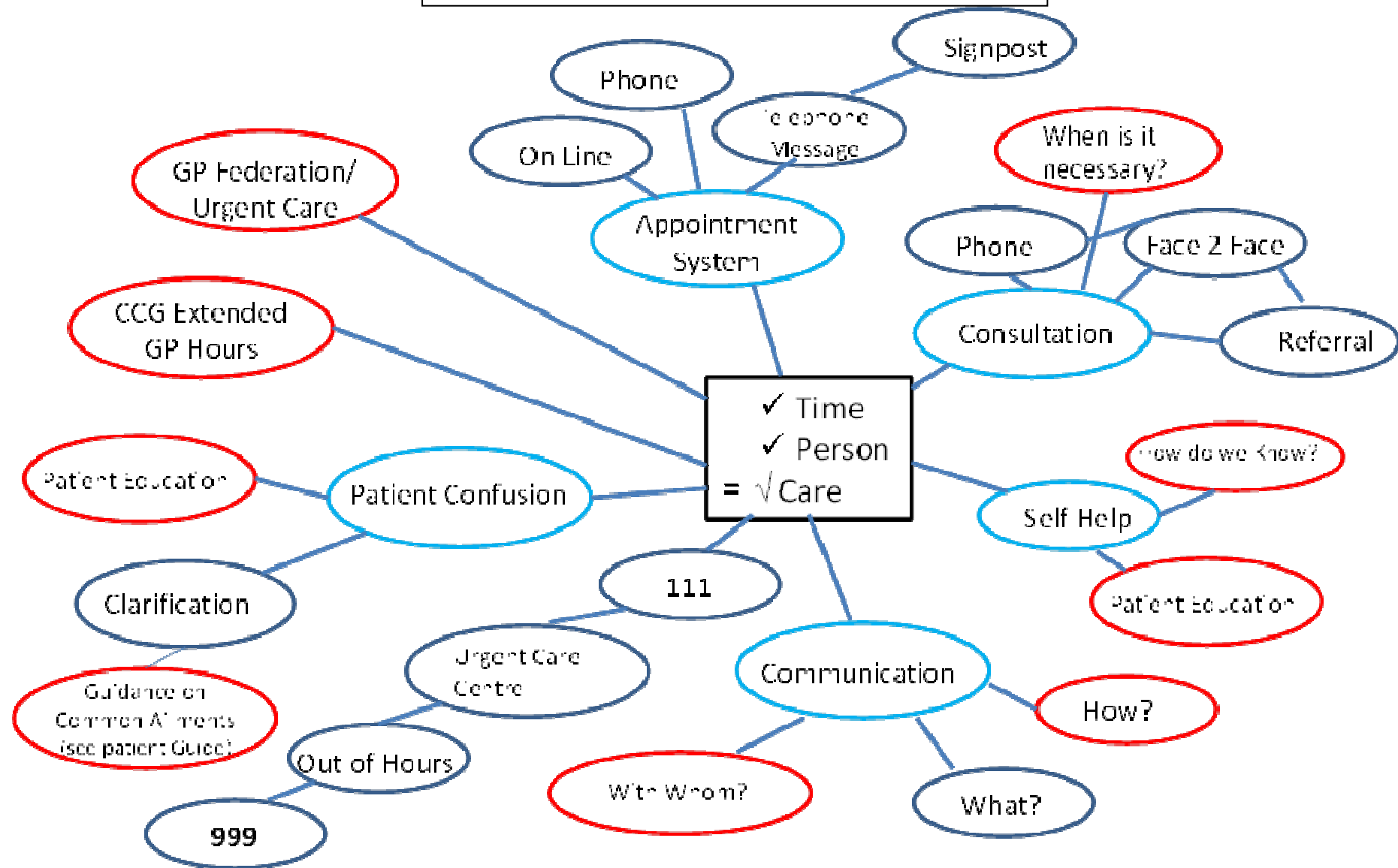
The overall objective was to ensure the patient would **Ring at the right time, to the right person, to get the right care.**

The leaflet (*App 3*) was carefully designed to make it eye catching, and the Practice agreed to distribute it at all of the surgeries along with posting it on the Practice Website. Additionally members of the PPG have been in attendance within the surgeries recently as part of a patient engagement exercise and personally spoke to a large number of patients sharing with them the work of the group and in particular the information within the leaflet. Patients were very appreciative and many openly admitted that they were now much more aware of the alternatives available to them apart from seeing the GP and importantly had a better understanding of the out of hours services and 111.

**Questions considered by break out groups looking at Urgent Care at the PPG meeting Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2016.**

**Urgent Care**

- How would you define urgent care?
- In an ideal world what would you like the model of urgent care to look like?
- As a PPG what can we do to support or help improve urgent care locally?
- What could the practice do to improve urgent care, access and provision?
- What illness / injury can you see your GP with in relation to urgent care?
- If you have had call or contact 111 or visit the Urgent Care Centre, briefly what were your experiences?





## Information to help you

If you need help or assistance with **remaining independent** in your own home please contact First Contact Plus on **0116 305 4286** or for care package and equipment in your own home call Social Services on **0116 305 0004**.

Many of our patients feel they would benefit from having **counselling support**, you can self-refer to this service without needing to discuss it with a doctor either via the online referral form at [www.iaptportal.co.uk/ltw.html](http://www.iaptportal.co.uk/ltw.html) or by calling **0115 876 0157**.

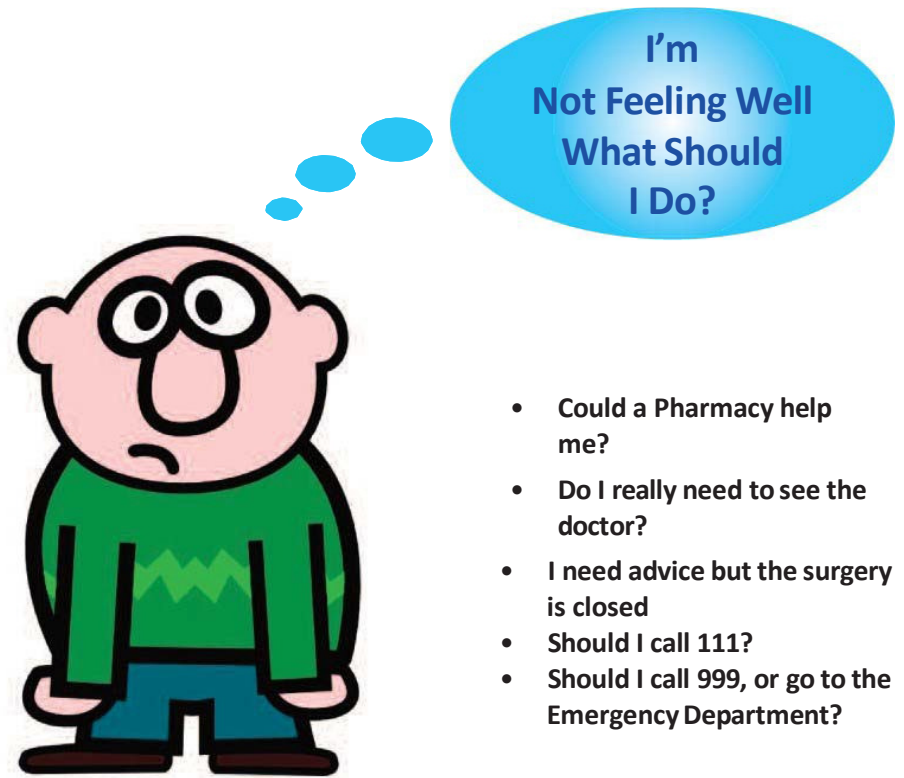
If you need to reach a **district nurse or one of the community teams** such as the physiotherapists, please call the single point of access on **0300 300 7777**.

If you have a **dental problem**, please contact your dentist as GPs cannot prescribe medication for dental problems. If you need emergency dental help or are not registered with a dentist please call **111** for help and advice.

If you have a form to have a **blood test** from a hospital doctor or consultant please ring **01509 568800** to arrange to have this taken at Loughborough Hospital

## Make the **RIGHT** decision

	<b>For common ailments and illnesses:</b> Hangover /grazed knee/ Sore throat/cough	Self-Care
	<b>Feeling poorly and need advice about:</b> fevers / stomach upset / aches and pains / headaches	Pharmacy
	<b>Need help fast and it's not an emergency?</b> unwell?/ confused? /need help?	NHS 111
	<b>For symptoms that don't go away:</b> ear pain / back pain / stomach pain	GP Surgery
	<b>When it's urgent but not life-threatening:</b> Sprains / fractures / minor burns / skin infection	Urgent Care Centre
	<b>Only in an emergency:</b> Loss of consciousness / Severe breathing difficulties / heavy bleeding	Emergency Department



If you are unsure what to do  
please read on.....

## Your Questions Answered

**What is self-care?** Be prepared for most common ailments by keeping a well stocked medicine cabinet at home.

**What can the Pharmacy help me with?** They can help with many common ailments. They can give advice or, sometimes, medicines but will also tell you if you need further medical attention.

**What if I need a Doctor but the surgery is closed?** During the evening, or at weekends and bank holidays, if you feel you need a doctor call 111 and the operator will guide you with what you need to do. If a doctor is required arrangements will be made for you to speak to one, or to see one.

**Should I call 111: What do they do?** If you're not sure which NHS service you need, or if you need some help out-of-hours, call 111. You will speak to a highly trained advisor, who will ask you a series of questions to assess your symptoms. You will then be directed to the most appropriate medical care.

### **Should I call 999, or go to the Emergency Department?**

999 Emergency Ambulances and Emergency Departments provide vital care for life-threatening emergencies, such as loss of consciousness, suspected heart attacks, breathing difficulties, or severe bleeding that cannot be stopped. Calling an ambulance or attending the Emergency Department when not needed puts huge pressure on these services, and is costly to the NHS. If you're not sure it's an emergency, call 111 for advice.

**Ring at the RIGHT TIME**

**To the RIGHT PERSON**

**To get the RIGHT CARE**

## How your Doctor can help you

The doctor can speak to you on the phone if you think it is more appropriate than visiting the surgery.

The receptionist can book you an appointment to see the doctor. You can book some appointments, and order your repeat prescriptions on line. Ask the receptionist how to do this.

For patients whose illness prevents them from attending the surgery, a doctor can phone you to assess whether a home visit is necessary.

## How can I help my Doctor?

**If you cannot attend your appointment, or no longer need it, please ensure you cancel it.**

**Emergency Only Surgeries:** when you hear a message on the telephone system saying that the surgery is operating an emergencies only surgery, please only book an appointment if you have a problem that genuinely can't wait until the next day.

**Repeat Prescriptions:** Make sure you order your repeat prescription in good time, at least 48 hours before you run out.

**Travel Vaccinations:** Make arrangements for travel vaccinations in good time.

**Medicines Wastage:** Every year many millions of pounds of NHS money are wasted because we do not manage our repeat prescriptions carefully. However you get your repeat prescriptions please ensure you only order the medicines you will need for the next month.

**Antibiotics:** Antibiotics will only be prescribed if in the opinion of your doctor they are needed.

**"Together we all make up part of the healthcare jigsaw to get you better. Help us to help you. Choose Well."**