

Care Navigation – Healthwatch County Durham Evaluation 2019

In 2018 Healthwatch County Durham (HWCD) was approached by the County Durham Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to independently evaluate the Care Navigation system. This was a joint review for both North Durham and Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield CCGs. Both CCGs have acknowledged the content of the report and the main themes that have emerged from the evaluation.

Those themes were based on staff and patient responses about the usage of Care Navigation in practice.

Staff feedback includes the following:

- Training – consideration should be given on how to support staff to develop their confidence and skills base.
- Templates – staff reported they are unclear how the link to external services works once they have signposted patients. More information on waiting/opening times for the external services would be useful.
- More templates on the system would be useful. Common services mentioned include Musculoskeletal (MSK), Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT), Minor Eye Condition Services (MECATs), Health and Social Care, Dental.
- Feedback – staff feel they would benefit from receiving regular updates on the difference Care Navigation has made to GP appointments. Also, sharing best practice between surgeries, refresher training and more information to patients that they do not always need to a GP every time.
- The majority of practices went live with Care Navigation in July/September/October 2018.
- When implementing the programme into practices, staff received support from their reception colleagues, practice manager, other reception staff, GPs and the CCG project lead.
- Staff felt they would benefit from further confidence and skill based training.

Patient feedback includes the following:

- 62% confirmed they have heard the answer phone message at the practice. 25% didn't hear message and 13% unsure about it. The CCG are advised to re-iterate the importance of the message containing information **that receptionist are qualified to take the call but will not be making any clinical decisions.**
- Patients with hearing loss find the system difficult to access.
- Although 71% of patients had confidence in the person they spoke to, they do not always feel sharing information about their condition was appropriate.

- Confidentiality issues were flagged re speaking at the reception desk.
- A lot of responses referred to the concerns around waiting times to see the doctors, lack of appointments at the surgery.
- Majority of responses were aged 25 to 64.

Additional comments

A significant number of additional comments were received from patients (approx 500). Although Healthwatch were not asking patients about their experiences of getting an appointment with a GP, many of the comments received related to this.

The lack of available appointments, the difficulty of having to ring the surgery at 8.00am or visit at that time and, the length of time patients had to wait before they were able to see a GP were repeatedly raised.

CCG Conclusion

1. The CCG will encourage an Improvement Grant to support improvement to premises that will assist confidentiality.
2. The CCG will re-iterate with practices the opportunity to strengthen the phone message including support of the receptionist.
3. The practices have volunteered to supply their patient appointment data. The CCG monitors this on a monthly basis. The data is showing that County Durham practices are offering an appropriate number of appointments for their population. The CCG will continue to support practices in improving access. The CCG is grateful to Healthwatch for this comprehensive report. The CCG have put in place an action plan to improve the approach to care navigation.

Action plan for the CCG and practices to implement following the report based on patient and staff responses

Issue	Proposed Action	CCG update
More confidence building training	<p>Communication and Resilience (Soft Skill) training planned as part of Phase 1 template implementation</p> <p>Refresher training session planned with launch of the Phase 2 templates</p>	Soft Skills training now completed for North Durham Practices, two further sessions planned in DDES to complete in July 2019
Opening/ closing times of the external services	Look into adding the additional information to the templates for each service	Opening times will be added where possible
Additional external services to be added to signpost patients	External services including those identified in the feedback from staff i.e. MSK (physio), Dental, IAPT	More templates are being developed and will be implemented over the summer
Regular feedback and updates for reception staff on Care Navigation	Care Navigation Newsletter	Communication every 2 months via Care Navigation Newsletter
Reinforce message that receptionists are trained to take calls but not making any clinical decisions	GP telephone message on the practice voice mail	<p>The CCG will re-iterate with practices the opportunity to strengthen the phone message including support of the receptionist</p> <p>Project lead to work with those practices identified to look at adding the answerphone message which will reinforce to patients that the receptionist will not be making any clinical decisions</p> <p>ND – 99% coverage apart for practices that do not use the answer phone</p> <p>DDES – 99% coverage apart from the practices that do not use answer phone</p>

Patients with hearing loss	Consider more information on the website and practice, text messaging from practice?	More information about the Care Navigation to be added onto the website and to be displayed in practice
Confidentiality	Email to practice manager	<p>The CCG will work with practices highlighting the importance of having a confidential area at near practice reception desk. It is acknowledged that this is not always possible due to the layout and size of the practice reception area</p> <p>The CCG will encourage an Improvement Grant to support improvement to premises that will assist confidentiality</p>
Sharing best practice	Arranged via Locality Champions	<p>Locality Champions have been identified across both CCGs, the first meeting held May 2019. Locality Champions will work within their geographical area to promote good practice, verify the use of templates, identify any training needs etc</p> <p>Each practice will identify a super user who will support other staff within the practice by promoting best practice and will provide training to new staff</p>
More external templates to choose from	Phase 2 implementation / more information available via Newsletter	Phase 2 implementation / more information for staff will be shared via the Care Navigation Newsletter and locality champions
Internal navigation tab to be first on the system	Give consideration	To be discussed as part of the Locality Champions meeting
Number of appointments and length of time patients have to wait to see a GP	Could patients' concerns be partially addressed by providing further information on Care Navigation that highlights the aim of reducing the demand for GP appointments?	<p>Review patient information to ensure patients understand the reason for care navigation</p> <p>The CCG will continue to support practices in improving access</p>