

City Wellbeing Practice and Brayford Square Surgery Practice Merger

Patient Engagement Report

15 March 2021

Contents

| | |
|---|----------|
| Context and Background | 2 |
| Patient Engagement..... | 2 |
| I – Engagement activities | 2 |
| II – Key outcomes of the patient survey..... | 2 |
| III – Key outcomes of the patient drop in sessions | 4 |
| Stakeholders Engaged | 6 |

This document sets out the outcomes of the engagement activities in relation to the City Wellbeing and Brayford Square practices merger.

Context and Background

City Wellbeing Practice and Brayford Square Surgery are GP practices in Tower Hamlets that currently hold two separate GMS contracts. The two practices have broadly comparable demographics and are situated approximately 0.8 miles apart. In December 2020, the practice applied to merge contracts as of 1 April 2021. The merger will result in one practice with a registered list of circa 10,100 patients. The Committee approved the application to merge, pending the conclusion and outcome of the patient engagement.

Patient Engagement

I – Engagement activities

An information letter, in English has been sent to all registered patients at City Wellbeing Practice and Brayford Square Surgery on the 14th of March 2019. A full translation service across all languages was made available via a freephone number (see Appendix 1).

A survey was available via a web link in the letter and on both practices websites.

In the letter, patients were invited to join one of the two virtual drop in sessions (per practice) on :

- Thursday 25th February 2021 12:30 to 13:30 and 16:30 to 17:30 for City Wellbeing patients
- Friday 26th February 2021 12:30 to 13:30 and 16:30 to 17:30 for Brayford Square patients.

A text message was sent on the day to patients to remind them to join the drop in sessions which included a link to the meeting.

In total, 57 patients attended the City Wellbeing virtual drop in sessions and 35 attended Brayford Square Surgery sessions. During the session, patients were invited to complete the online survey and to vote in a poll to decide on a new name for the merged practice. Practice, WEL CCG and North East London Primary Care Commissioning staff were present to help answer patient's questions, provide information about the merger, future relocation and collect any feedback.

II – Key outcomes of the patient survey

24 patients responded to the survey, 15 from City Wellbeing Practice and 9 from Brayford Square Surgery.

About the respondents:

Sex

There were 18 female respondents and 6 male respondents.

Age

The age ranges for the patients answering this survey were as follows; 15-29 (3), 30-44 (9), 45-64 (7), 65-74 (4) and 75-84 (1).

Ethnic Origin of Respondents

33% Countries within the UK

21% White other

13% Irish

13% Bangladeshi

4% Pakistani

4% Hispanic,

4% Other Asian background

1 person preferred not to answer.

Disability

21% of respondents reported that either they, or someone they cared for, had a disability.

Sexual Orientation

79 % Heterosexual

17% Gay or Lesbian

4% Bisexual

Key results are highlighted in the section below.

Theme #1: Practice merger

Most of the patients that responded to the survey were satisfied with the plans for the merger, however four respondents expressed concerns about the potential impact this might have on the service they received. The main concerns expressed by patients related to whether they would be able to continue to see their preferred GP and the potential to lose the relationships and trust they have established over the years with staff from their practice. They expressed their satisfaction with the current quality of care they receive but were concerned that the merger could affect practice capacity.

Theme #2: future relocation

In relation to the question about the relocation to new purpose built premises contributing to improving services in your GP Practice, On a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being 'Not confident' and 5 being 'Very confident'), most patients responded that they were confident that the move will lead to improvement (11 patients, answered 4 or 5 and 5 patients answered 3 with the remaining responding with 1 or 2).

Patients gave their comments on thoughts or concerns about the practice relocating to a new site in autumn 2021. These ranged from concerns about the location being further away (four patients) to supporting a new modern building (three patients). There were also some comments from

patients who are currently able to walk to their GP surgery but may not be able to do that once the move takes place.

Theme #3: what patients value most from their practice

Patients were asked “What do you value most in your practice” and had to select two areas that are most important to them. For the majority (20 patients) this was being able to speak to their preferred GP. 7 patients replied that they valued being involved with decisions about their care, 4 indicated opening hours and access to online services and 1 free text comment mentioned that having staff they could trust was most important.

In regards to the importance of being able to see a male or female GP, patient’s responses were divided with 50% of patients felt it was important or very important.

There were a variety of answers to the question about what was important when talking to or visiting your GP receptionist, but the majority of these were about staff being friendly, patient and polite. The remainder of the comments were about the speed in which calls were answered and the cleanliness of the surgery.

The question on whether there were other services that patients would like to see provided at their GP surgery resulted in the following responses_ 16 patients said stated ‘No’ there were no other services they would like to be provided. 6 patients responded yes to this question and suggested that the following services could be provided:

- a diabetic service,
- A mental health counsellor,
- LGBTQI services,
- sexual health clinics,
- online repeat prescription email services, and
- the ability to book appointments for children online.

Only 30% of respondents knew about their practice Patient Participation Group and how to get involved.

Respondents ranked the importance of the online availability of the following services as follows (in order of importance).

1. Ability to order a repeat prescriptions
2. Online consultations
3. The ability to access / view personal medical records
4. Information about their patient participation group

III – Key outcomes of the patient drop in sessions

57 patients from City Wellbeing Practice and 35 patients from Brayford Square Surgery attended the virtual drop in sessions.

Representation at the sessions included, Tower Hamlets CCG Primary Care Commissioning, North East London Primary Care Commissioning staff, with Bengali interpretation available.

Key areas raised at the sessions:

Current Services

- Patients were complimentary about the quality of care they were currently receiving at both practices but in particular with Brayford Square surgery. They explained that they trusted the practice team as they felt that they had known some of them for a long time. It was clear from the patient participation sessions that for patients, having staff they know makes a big difference to how they feel about the quality of their care. Patients felt reassured when the practices confirmed that they were planning to keep the same staff including clinicians after the merger and the move.
- Some participants highlighted that at times they found difficult to get through the practice.

About the merger:

- Some patients wanted to know if the merged practices will be able secure a good level of staffing (incl. male/female GPs, speaking Bengali Sylheti) which would contribute to improving access to the practice's services. Patients also sought reassurance around continuity of care in the context of a bigger practice – they wanted to know if they would still be able to book appointments with 'their' GP.

About the future relocation:

- Patients asked how they will find out about the future premises relocation and they were keen to be kept informed. It was explained that letters with further information would be sent closer to the relocation date.
- Some patients were confused about the new site (Deancross Street) as it is currently occupied by the East One Health practice.
- Some patients mentioned that they would like to re-register with another practice closer to where they live as they felt that the new location will be too far. Although both practices would like to keep all of their existing patients when they move, they confirmed that they will provide support and assistance to any patient that requires help with registering with another practice.

Summary:

The key themes emerging from the patient survey and patient engagement sessions have been discussed with representatives from both practices. The following reassurances that were given to patients during the engagement sessions will be reinforced and be made more widely available in an updated FAQ document. These were namely that the practice merger and relocation will not:

- result in a reduction of existing services
- materially change the way in which patients can contact the practice
- reduce the availability of clinical and administrative staff
- reduce the availability of appointments.

Patients were also informed about how to raise any concerns they may have if they notice any changes after the merger or relocation that they think the practice should address.

In addition to responding to the above key themes, both practices have used this patient engagement exercise as an opportunity to promote their Patient Participation Groups so that

hopefully more patients get involved in shaping decisions that are important to them on an ongoing basis.

Stakeholders Engaged

The following stakeholders have been notified of the merger and the future relocation of City Wellbeing and Brayford Square practices:

- London Borough Tower Hamlets
- Local Councilors
- Local MP
- The Mayor
- The Local Medical Committee
- Healthwatch
- The GP Care Group
- NHSPS
- LPC and local pharmacies
- Tower Hamlets Community Commissioning Patient Panel
- Healthwatch Tower Hamlets

To date, we have not received any comments or feedback from the above stakeholders.