

Case study: Whittington Health

Embedding self management support through service redesign at Highgate Surgery

The challenge

After attending the Practitioner Development Programme, two clinicians at Highgate Surgery began to look at ways to embed self management within their diabetes service. They looked at how they could make small changes to their service that would help patients to self manage and how they could work in partnership with patients.

What we did

The practice adapted the diabetes templates the team were using so that the template:

- acts as an aide memoire for the clinician covering key points needed for targets
- encourages the clinician to get the patient to set out what they want to discuss during the appointment at the beginning to the consultation, which then defines the remainder of the consultation
- prompts goal setting and action planning as important elements of follow-up
- reminds patients about and signposts them to self management programmes and similar support programmes that are on offer to them in the community.

Initially the length of consultations in the clinics was increased from 20 – 25 minutes to enable the clinicians more time to practice their new self management support skills and to give patients time to adjust to the new way of consulting. For the first year this was more time consuming for the clinic, but now the practice are back to 20 minute appointments and most patients have an idea of their agenda and are less surprised by the consultation style.

To increase their partnership approach, the practice has:

- developed a patient group to help with service redesign
- held several meetings and then educational events in the evenings on topics suggested by the patient group – these are generally well attended and provoke lots of discussion amongst the

patients and the staff who attend

- passed the decision making back to the patients in clinics, empowering the patient to make informed choices.

Initially, developing partnership working required a lot of time, input and involved several consultations, however over time the additional effort required has reduced.

Our Learning

As both patient and clinician become more confident, other means of communication can become very effective i.e. telephone and email. There is anecdotal evidence that supporting self management within clinics reduces the face to face contact. For instance, simple questions, requests and conversations can be had via email which further aids patients who often had neglected aspects of their care due to having to take time off work to attend appointments.

Highgate Surgery is currently in the process of collecting information about number of consultations before and after they worked with the Co-creating Health programme to introduce self management support. Anecdotally, on average consultations regarding diabetes are reduced by 2-5 per year. For example if Highgate have over 350 patients with type 2 diabetes on their list, if they could save 2-5 appointments on even half of these that would make good savings. Currently looking at ways of how we could collect more evidence to be able to quantify the impact of this.