

## The Avenue Surgery

### New Telephone System Patient Survey 2017 18 Report

In December 2016 we introduced a new telephone system at The Avenue Surgery. To handle calls in the most efficient way, we have two separate telephone numbers to contact the Surgery:

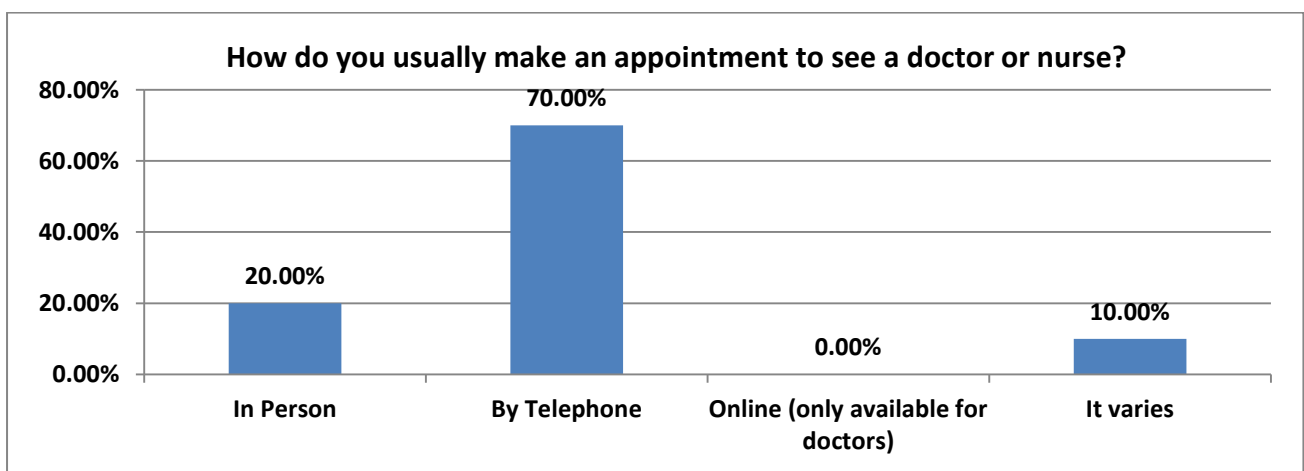
**01273 606214** which is to book appointments; and **01273 604220** which is for enquiries.

Our new telephone system provides the option to automatically transfer to the correct telephone number if the wrong number has been dialled eg the appointment line rather than the enquiries line. Previously callers were unable to do this.

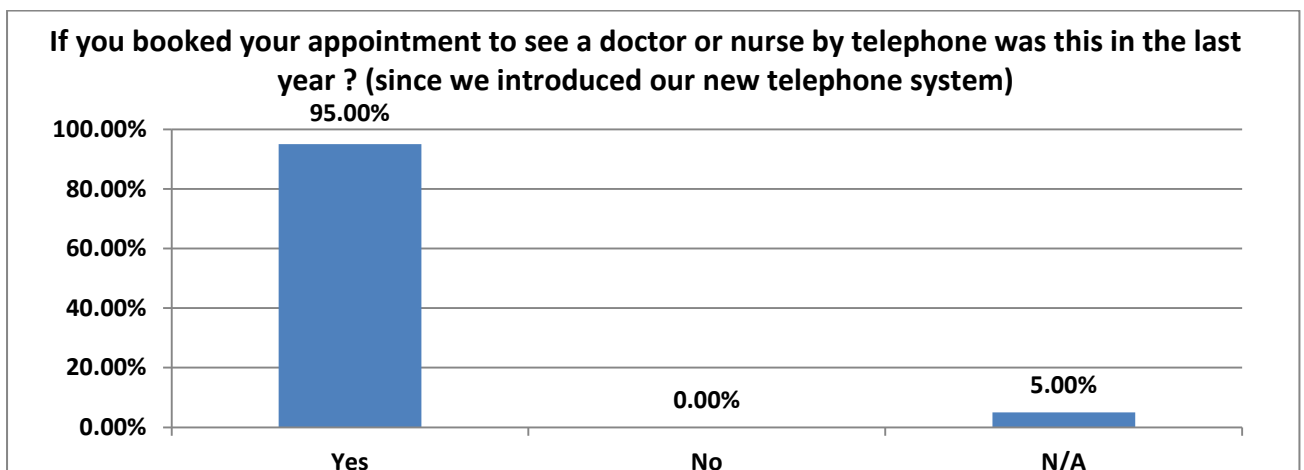
In consultation with our Patient Participation Group we developed a patient survey to see if patients have noticed any change since the new automated information and choice telephone system was introduced.

Paper copies were made available at Reception over a 4 week period in January and February 2018. The survey was also promoted with posters in the waiting room, on our website and on the patient information TV screen. A total of 20 surveys were completed during the 4 week period.

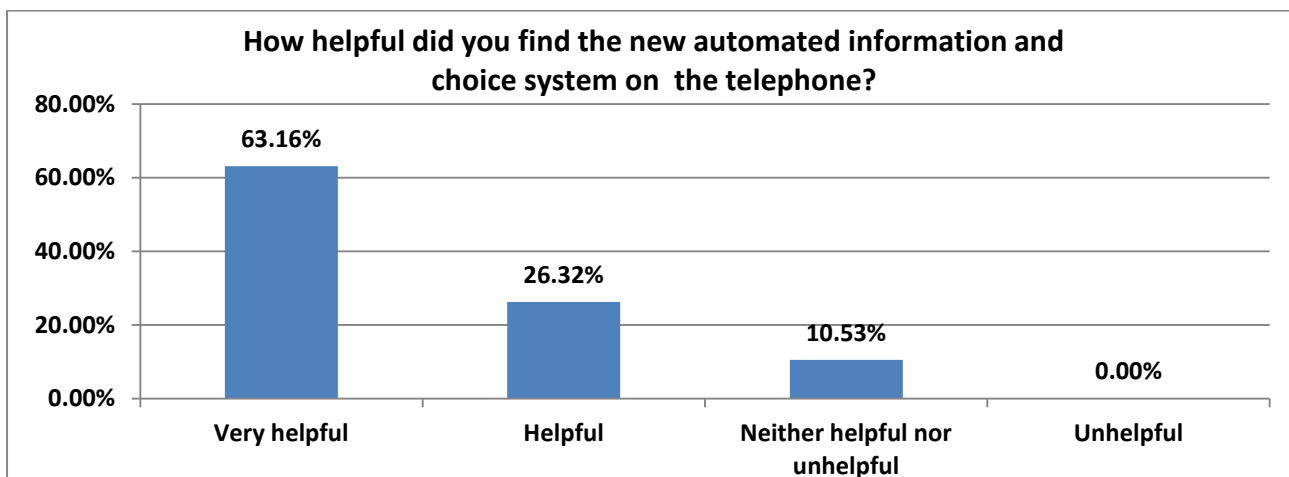
Seventy per cent of respondents usually book their appointments to see a doctor or a nurse by telephone, with 20% booking in person and 10% indicating that they book appointments using a variety of methods. It was, perhaps, disappointing to note that no respondent specifically indicated that they book appointments on line.



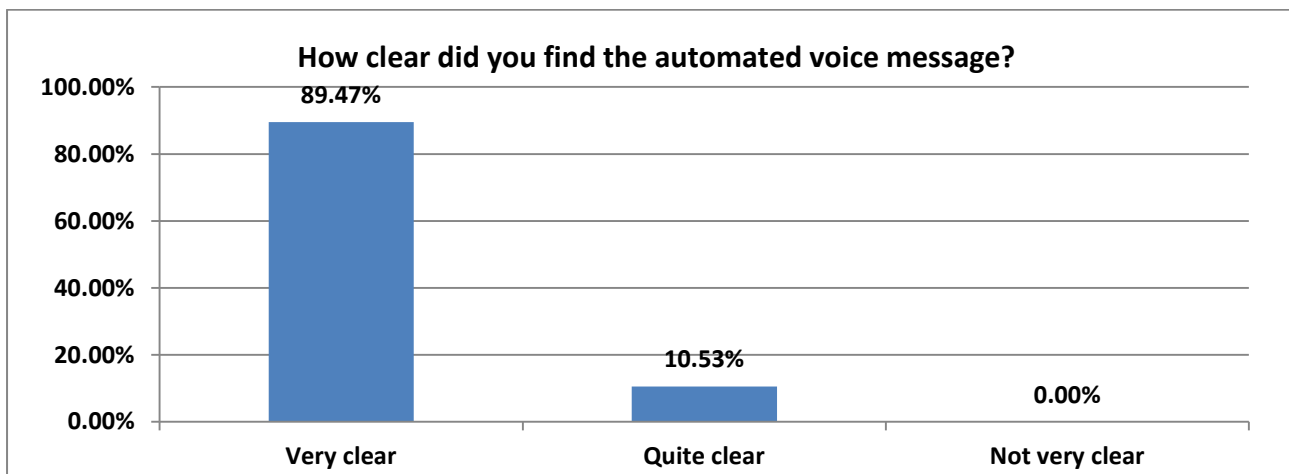
Ninety-five per cent of the patients who responded had booked an appointment with the doctor or nurse in the last year, ie since we introduced our new telephone system which provides assurance that the respondents can feedback on the new telephone system.



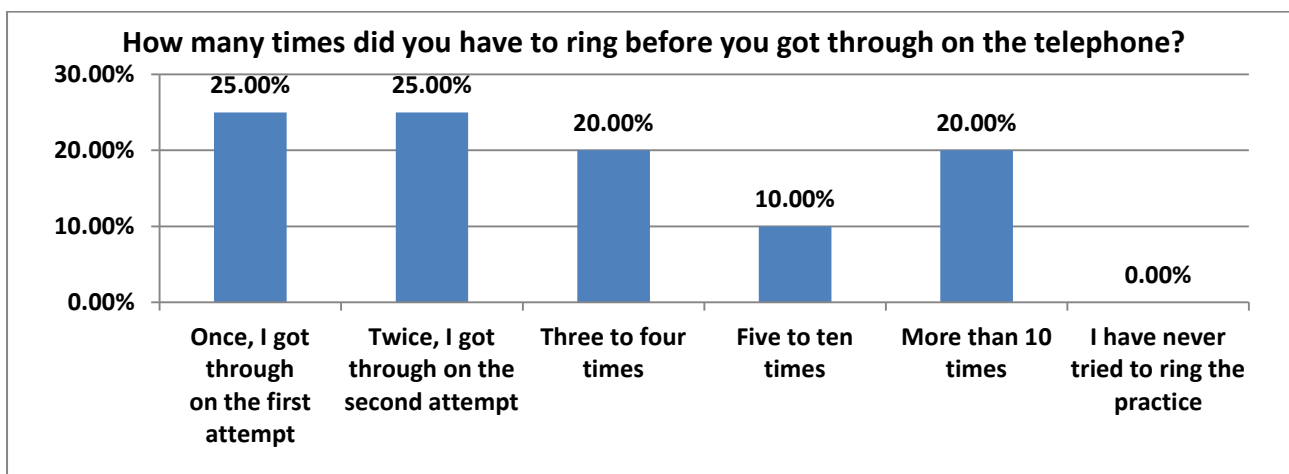
It is very pleasing to note that nearly 90% of respondents found the new automated information and choice system on the telephone very helpful or helpful with the remainder finding it neither helpful not unhelpful.



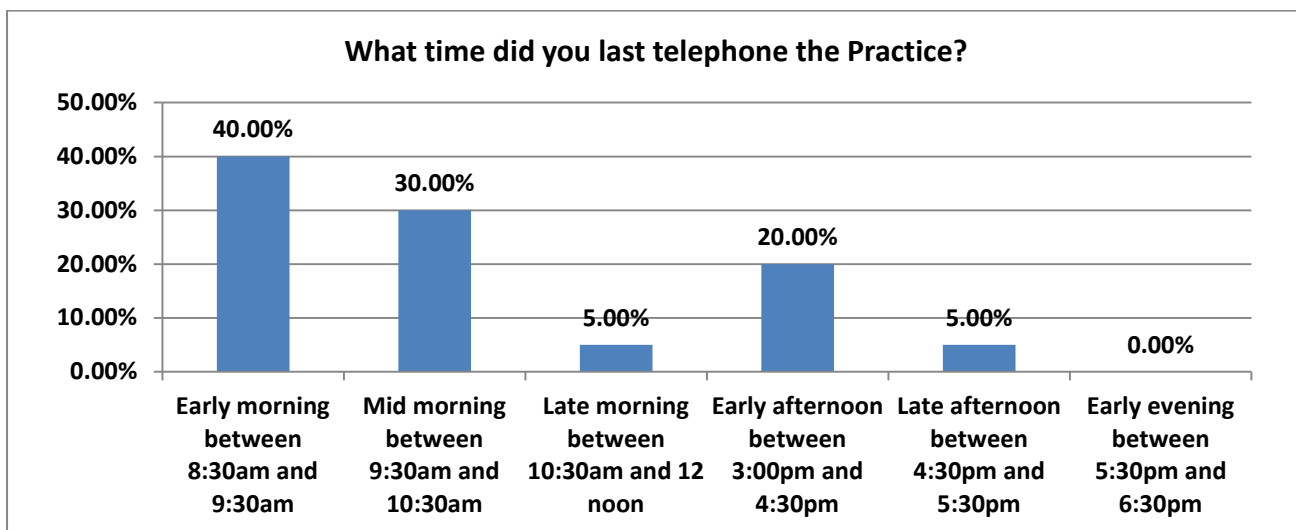
Over 89% of patients who completed the survey found the automated voice message very clear and the remainder found it quite clear.



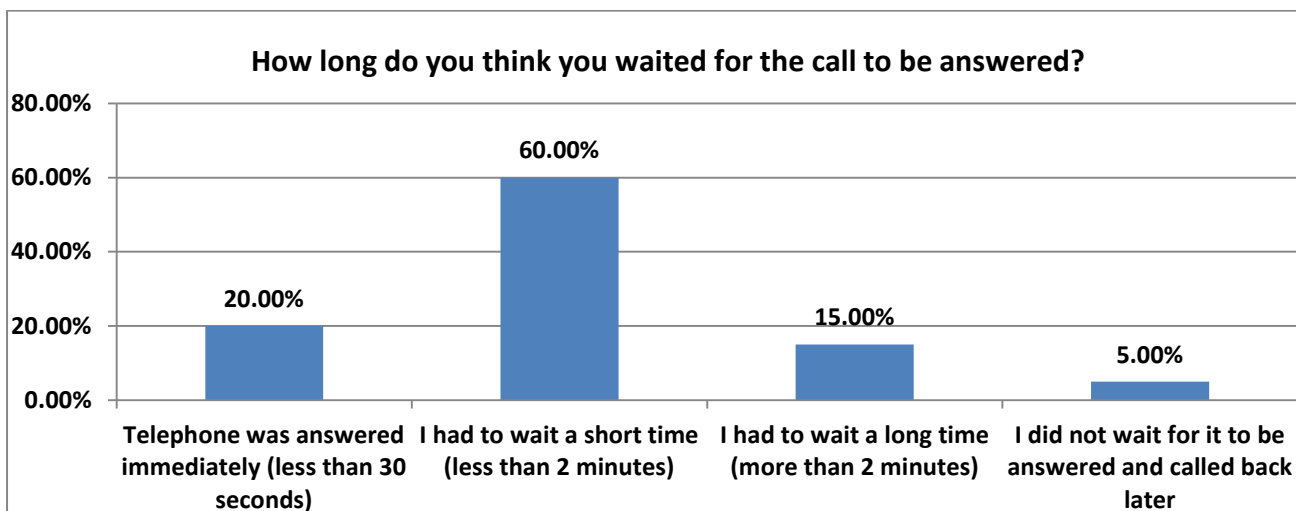
While 50% of respondents stated that they got through on the telephone on the first or second attempt, it is perhaps disappointing that 20% advised that they had called more than 10 times before getting through.



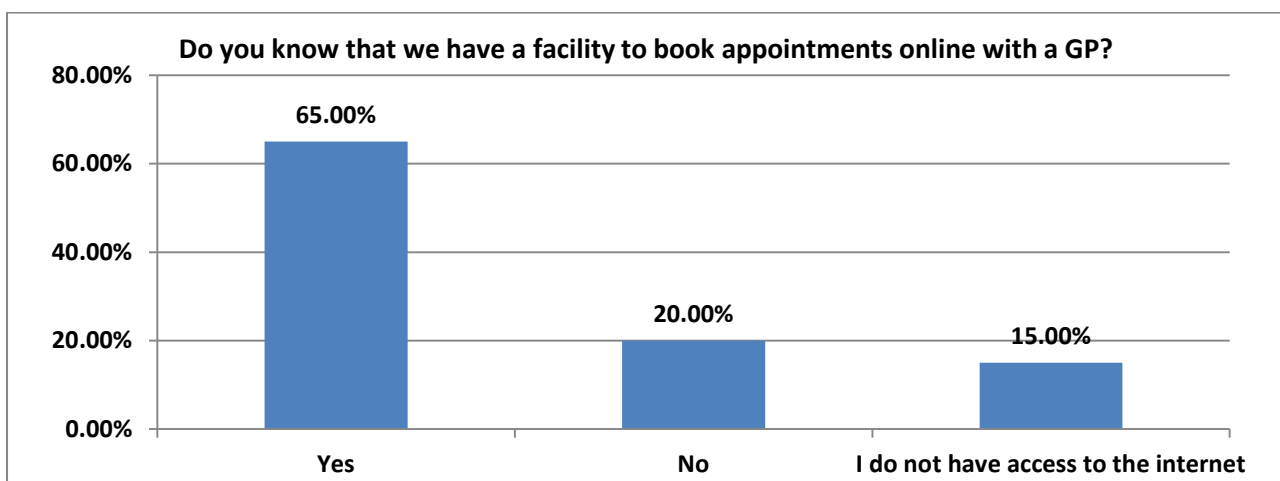
That said it is probably relevant to note that 60% of respondents called the Practice during the busiest periods ie early morning between 8:30am and 9:30am and early afternoon between 3:00pm and 16:30pm.



It is pleasing to note that 80% of patient surveyed reported that they had waited less than 2 minutes for the telephone to be answered once they obtained a ringing tone and only 15% waited a long time (more than 2 minutes).



Our final question asked patients if they were aware of our online facility to book an appointment with a GP. It is encouraging that 65% were aware of this facility. Fifteen per cent of respondents advised that they do not have access to the internet.



## Conclusion

It is very pleasing to note that nearly 90% of respondents found the new automated information and choice system on the telephone helpful, with no-one finding it unhelpful. One hundred per cent found the message clear.

Eighty per cent of patients waited less than 2 minutes before the telephone was answered, once they obtained a ring tone. Our Receptionists on the front desk are very busy as they greet and check in patients, as well as take queries and send patients in to the clinicians but they are clearly managing to answer the telephones in a timely fashion for the majority of the time.

The uptake of the use of our online services for booking and cancelling appointments as well as ordering repeat medication is disappointing at a little over 10%. It is not, therefore, surprising to learn that 70% of patients who completed the survey advised that they usually book their appointment by telephone.

Fifty per cent of respondents stated that they got through on the telephone on the first or second attempt. However 10% stated that they called between 5 and 10 times and 20% stated that they rang more than 10 times. This may be because 60% of respondents rang the Surgery during the two busiest periods of telephone usage, ie between 08:30 – 09:30 and 15:00 – 16:30.

We have to acknowledge that it is not possible to increase the number of incoming lines but hopefully if more patients make use of booking appointments in advance rather than on the day, then they can ring the surgery at a less busy time of the day. Similarly a greater use of online booking would free up the telephone lines and patients would see that they can book their appointment on-line with a GP of their choice at a time that may suit them better. Unfortunately clinical time is not a limitless resource and accessing our doctors and nurses needs to be managed appropriate to clinical need.