

Red Kite Health Solutions – Scheduled Triage Report

September 2020

Haygarth Practice

Aim

Following the introduction of the Nurse Triage service for on the day (unscheduled) appointments ACROSS South Powys, the Haygarth practice decided to extend this service to incorporate TOTAL TRIAGE for appointment requests for ALL appointments since February 2017 (i.e. requests for urgent AND routine appointments)

With 80% of the current GP partners in South Powys aged 50+ and with current low levels of interest when practices have tried to recruit new GPs, it is imperative that GPs only see those patients who need to be seen by a doctor. The practice identified that the same outcomes and quality improvements could be made for patients wanting to see a GP routinely.

TOTAL TRIAGE ensures that each patient ALWAYS sees the most appropriate clinician within a suitable timescale and that patients are:

- given a routine appointment with a GP within an appropriate timescale if required
- treated and/or given advice by the nurse
- encouraged to self-manage where appropriate
- directed to a Pharmacist (practice or community)
- directed to Optician, Physiotherapist or other healthcare professional

Method

An EMIS Web report was created to identify:

- The number of triage appointments where the clinical template had been used
- The type of triage encounters – urgent or routine
- The outcome of the triage encounter
- Manual collection of the clinical outcome of each triage consultation where the template had not been used

Clinical Supervision

- Setting up the service took an inordinate amount of clinical time for the practice. From developing clinical pathways to ensuring that ALL members of the practice team knew about the system. It was imperative that it was NOT seen to be a barrier to accessing the service but rather ensuring that the patient accessed the appropriate clinician within a clinically appropriate timescale

- GP clinical time continues with ongoing support to the nurses and daily clinical review of the clinical outcomes to ensure the appropriate pathways have been followed
- The GP input was also required to support the managerial staff with the difficult job of rearranging the clinical Rota to ensure the appropriate clinical staffing levels were available to support the new service
- The practice have invested in a 0.5 WTE Salaried GP to support the service with a further 0.5 WTE from August 2017
- The practice have invested in an Advanced Paramedic Practitioner to support the service from August 2019

Preparatory Measures

- Intranet – an organisational network has been set up to identify, signpost and provide easy access and contact details for other care agencies and support groups to which a patient could be appropriately directed e.g. optician, dentist etc.
- Local magazine – before the service started we placed an article in the “Wye Local” magazine to advertise the new service, to explain its purpose and how the service could be accessed
- Patient Survey – a patient satisfaction survey was devised and is given to patients for feedback



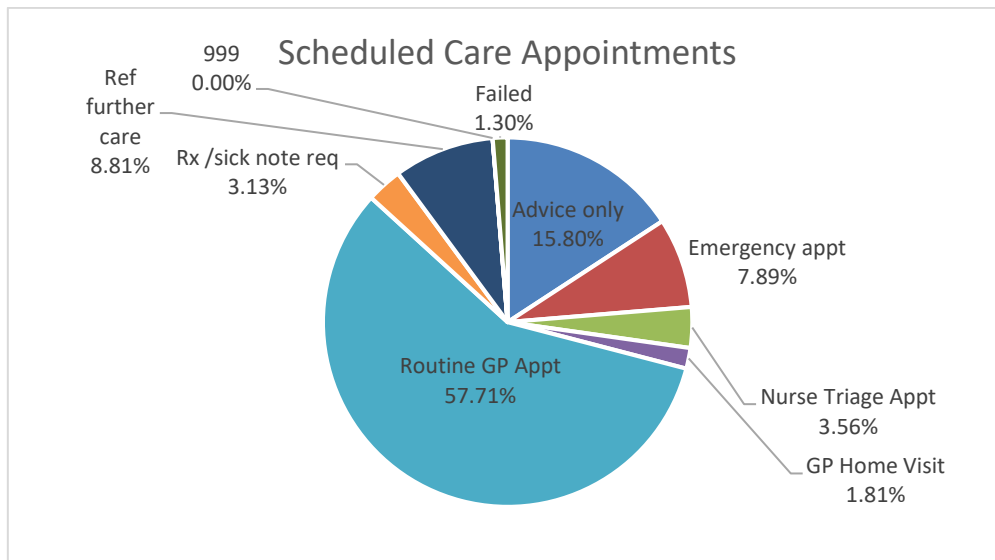
FINAL VERSION - HG
Red Kite Patient Satis

Activity September 2020

Telephone Triage

A total of 21,438 telephone triage encounters have been recorded during the months of March 2017 to September 2020. Clinical outcomes have been recorded for 100% of these encounters;

57.71%	12,371	Routine GP Appointment
15.80%	3,387	Advice Only
8.81%	1,888	Referral for further care (bloods, urine etc. or optician/dentist etc.)
7.89%	1,691	Emergency GP Appointment
3.13%	671	Prescription
3.56%	763	Nurse Appointment
1.30%	278	Failed encounter (patient could not be contacted when telephoned)
1.81%	388	House Visit
0.01%	1	Advised to contact 999



We have highlighted the **Routine GP Appointment**, which shows **57.71%** of patients requesting to see a Doctor routinely actually required a GP appointment.

A review of the clinical outcomes for the pilot period have identified the following highlighted areas of interest:

	Total Triage Encounters	Routine Appointment	Refer Further Care	Advice Only	Seen as GP Emergency
<i>Period Total</i>	21,438	12,371	1,888	3,387	1,691

Of particular interest are the patients who attended an **Emergency GP appointment**, which stands at 1,691 patients (**7.89%**). These patients had telephoned for a routine GP appointment but when the Nurse triaged the patients identified that they needed to be seen more urgently. This activity, which was prioritised by a nurse, was considered appropriate by the GP who saw these patients and these patients were seen much more quickly than if they had just been given a routine appointment under the access arrangement before Total Nurse Triage was introduced, therefore improving the quality of care received.

Positives

- **Improved access.** Prior to the introduction of Total Triage, the wait for a routine appointment was in excess of 2 weeks. Waiting times are down to within 48-72 hours for most GP appointments
- **Improved quality of care.** All routine appointment times have been increased from 10 minutes to 15 minutes, allowing GP's to spend more time with complex and co-morbidity patients
- Length of the appointment time can be increased further if there are a number of clinical problems to allow for all issues to be discussed
- **Improved patient experience.** New system encourages continuity of care with patients being able to have follow up appointments with the same practitioner in a timely fashion
- Patients are positive about the new service now it has been running for some time. They feel they are getting a quicker and appropriate service
- **Reduction in waste.** The level of DNAs for routine appointments reduced from 5.5% to 2.9% since the service commenced. We believe this is because the patient does not have to wait so long to be seen

- A number of patients were requesting an appointment for the GP to **re-refer** the patient to a consultant following a previous secondary care appointment. Where the consultant letter had specifically said that he/she would be happy to see the patient again the patient did not need to see the GP for this to be arranged
- **Improved access** A number of patients requesting to see a GP routinely have been identified as requiring more urgent care by the triage Nurse and given a fast-tracked appointment
- **Practice morale** Positive feedback from the Nursing and practice teams on how they enjoying their extended roles. They are having an opportunity to use their skills and knowledge and to further build on and extend that knowledge. GP's are finding it easier to spend time with the complex and co-morbidity patients and Reception staff report a more pleasant working environment as patients are better able to access services
- **Professional development** Practice staff have upskilled and extended their previous roles. Nurses are currently undertaking both short course and degree based learning with one Nurse currently qualifying as an independent prescriber in the practice
- The Total Nurse Triage project has proven that access to quality and timely care can be provided to ALL patients who require health care urgently or routinely
- **Multi-Disciplinary team working** The introduction of the triage system has encouraged and developed the relationships between all members of the clinical, practice, community and third sector teams. Urgent appointments, pathways and referrals have been introduced and built upon to encourage timely and efficient patient pathways to appropriate services

Negatives

- Some patients still refuse to give the relevant information to enable the nurse to triage the patient, and or refuse appropriate signposting
- Face to face patient contact can still be reduced for Triage Nurses, it is therefore paramount that they are given the opportunity to work on other clinics in addition to telephone triage

Summary of Total Triage Encounters March 17- September 2020

- A total of **21,438** scheduled triage encounters have been recorded in addition to the unscheduled triage since the project commenced
- Of these, **12,371** (57.71%) resulted in a routine GP appointment

- A total of **9,067 (42.29%)** of *Routine* GP appointments have been avoided for the accumulative period

In summary, the introduction of Scheduled Telephone Triage as an addition to urgent unscheduled Triage has seen **42.29%** of patients requesting non-urgent GP appointments signposted to other appropriate services. Historically, these patients would have traditionally seen a GP routinely prior to the introduction of the service. Also of particular clinical significance, **1,691 patients (7.89%)** have been clinically prioritised to see the GP on the same day as opposed to wait for a routine appointment.

The Nursing and practice Teams have developed and responded to the challenge of a different system magnificently. They continue to be motivated to self-learn and deserve the recognition for their hard work, dedication and willingness to take on this new initiative. Five of the Nurses across the South Powys cluster are now undertaking or have completed training to extend their skills. This includes minor illness training and Independent prescribing. This includes a Nurse in the Haygarth practice who has completed her independent prescribing qualification and is now undertaking unscheduled care clinics alongside the triage Nurses and the employment of an advanced Paramedic practitioner In August 19. It will be interesting to see the impact this will have on the Triage outcomes going forward as the non-GP Clinicians increase their capacity to see patients.

Outcome reports show the confidence of the clinical team has grown and that both the access and quality of care for the South Powys patients has improved. Patients who require GP input are able to access appropriate and quality services in a timely fashion and are able to spend longer with their GP if they have complex issues.