

External Review: Three-month interim progress update

Access and capacity of Riverside Medical Practice LLP and Associated services - February 2023

This briefing note is intended to provide an update regarding progress of the recommendations made in the recent external review. This is an interim report carried out at three months. A fuller report will be presented after six months, in April 2023.

On behalf of the review team, I would like to acknowledge and thank Riverside Medical Practice (RMP), East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership (ELHSCP) and NHS Lothian for their significant efforts and commitments made, enabling us to share positive change and improvement. We recognise this comes at a time when pressure on health and social care services are considerable.

Highlights include:

- Planned improvements in telephony and messaging. Importantly this work was a result of a joint approach by RMP, ELHSCP and NHS Lothian working with BT. [Recommendation 1]
- A significant increase in Care When It Counts (CWIC) appointments made available to RMP patients since 9 January 23. The impact of this is being closely monitored. [Recommendation 3]
- Working with Healthcare Improvement Scotland's 'Primary Care Access Programme' to improve access and experience for patients receiving HRT [Recommendation 4]
- Excellent progress was evidenced by RMP and ELHSCP regarding communicating and signposting patients to the correct services. [Recommendation 6 & 9]
- Fewer complaints reported to RMP and via local MSPs [Recommendation 12]
- Setting up a VOiCEss Tool to record and assess quality of engagement with community members [recommendation 16] on improvements to the telephone system

In order to further progress the recommendations by the end of March 2023, additional improvements are in progress. In particular, a gradual movement to more patient pre-bookable GP appointments. Currently, pre-booked GP appointments are made for patients at the request of Riverside clinicians, or at the request of clinicians in other primary care or secondary care settings. Patients can currently pre-book appointments with a range of other health professionals up to 8-10 weeks in advance, including with Riverside's GP nurse specialists who provide care delivered by GPs in many other Practices. This includes chronic disease reviews for conditions including asthma, diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure), COPD, chronic kidney disease, coronary heart disease and stroke, if patients feel their symptoms aren't well managed.

The review team welcome RMP introducing a revised "road-map" to patient pre-bookable GP appointments being available for all patients. We consider this a significant step to enhance the patient experience at RMP and hopefully lead to a reduction in complaints. In addition, we have asked RMP to share telephone data such as wait times before the six-month review.

We also asked RMP to make clear to the review team the arrangements in place for patients who have specific health needs to be able to access appointments in more flexible and person centred ways including at reception.

In summary, we welcome the significant progress made by RMP, ELHSCP and NHS Lothian. We ask RMP to continue to work on improved telephony, messaging and increase in patient pre-bookable GP appointments. The complaints process and accessibility has improved including updates to the RMP website.

At the six-month review, we would like to see

1. more evidence of how the patients experience of accessing care has improved and
2. how the complaints process has been improved including, information demonstrating how RMP are complying with the NHS model complaints handling standards.

We would like to encourage patients of RMP who have complaints to ensure they bring their complaints direct to RMP: this can be done in writing, via filling in a form at Reception, by phone or by email. Full details about how to make a complaint are available on the RMP website at www.theriversidepractice.co.uk/feedback via Reception or by calling the Practice. The Review Team encourage patients to follow this process. If patients are dissatisfied with the response by RMP after they have completed the process, they may seek review at the [Scottish Public Services Ombudsman](#). We have also encouraged local MSPs to support patients to follow this process.

We look forward to continuing progress and to receiving further evidence around the implementation of the recommendations when we conclude our work in April 2023.

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