



Press release

Salford GP practice rated 'outstanding' by quality watchdogs

A pioneering Greater Manchester GP practice – which guarantees same day appointments for patients who need to be seen – has become the first in the country to be ranked as 'outstanding'.

Salford Health Matters is one of the first two practices to be rated by the Quality Care Commission (CQC), under a new Ofsted-like inspection regime for general practice.

"We are absolutely delighted and very proud of this achievement," said Salford Health Matters Chief Executive Neil Turton.

"Over the last seven years we have worked extremely hard to improve the quality of care provided by our practices, turning them around into what is now recognised as one of the best practices in the country."

Salford Health Matters provides high quality health services at three practices covering 15,000 people in some of the district's most deprived areas.

Alongside core GP services, it also runs a homeless drop-in centre, a social prescribing project and specialist children services. As a not-for-profit social enterprise, any surplus is reinvested back into frontline services.

CQC inspectors who visited Salford Health Matters pointed to the fact that all patients are given same-day appointments with a GP if they need or want to be seen, and appointment lengths vary according to patient need.

After struggling to cope with increased patient demand, the practice adopted the **Doctor First** system, which combines doctor-led phone assessment and consultations with dedicated software that accurately predicts patient demand.

People can ring at any time and if, after a phone consultation, an appointment is needed or requested by the patient they are seen on the same day or at a time to suit them.

Salford Health Matters is helping 13 per cent more patients each week, missed appointments are virtually nil, attendance at over-stretched A&E departments has fallen, patient complaints have plummeted and doctors and practice staff are less stressed.

Neil Turton said: "We recognised the need to improve access. It's just not acceptable for people to be waiting up to two weeks for an appointment".

"So we have changed our entire approach and introduced **Doctor First** which is delivering a much safer and effective system that we can be proud of."

Salford Health Matters was ranked outstanding across the CQC's five key areas (safe, effective, caring, responsive, and well-led) as well as in all service areas for specific groups of patients.

CQC inspectors stressed the practice took excellent care of vulnerable people including access to GPs for homeless people without appointments, and patients unhappy with their treatment were contacted to discuss ways the practice could improve.

Neil added: “This is recognition of the seven years of hard work we have put in as a brand new social enterprise to improve the quality of primary care for the people we serve”.

“We have achieved this by having a fantastic team of well trained and motivated staff, good strong leadership, and a commitment to quality, excellence and continuous improvement - when things don’t go right, we learn, fix them, and improve”.

“We are particularly proud that we are a social enterprise, with a focus on good quality patient care, not profits. We have created a special place to work that harnesses all our talents, given us a shared purpose and a common set of values.”

The Irlam Medical Practice in Salford, was the second in the country to be CQC ranked and was also judged to be ‘outstanding’. Over the next two years, the CQC hopes to have inspected and rated all 8,000 general practices across England.

Released on behalf of Productive Primary Care Ltd by Pivot PR, The Portergate, 257 Ecclesall Road, Sheffield S11 8NX. For more information please contact Kim d’Arcy on 0114 209 6222 or email kim@pivotpr.co.uk

Notes for Editors

- Productive Primary Care Ltd, the market leader in patient demand management systems, has developed the innovative doctor-led phone consultation system, **Doctor First**.
- The system is currently used by over 70 practices across the country covering more than 730,000 patients.
- Clinical data gathered from participating practices reveals:
 - ✓ 50% increase in number of patients helped
 - ✓ Patient satisfaction levels much higher
 - ✓ Do Not Attends (DNAs) reduced to virtually zero
 - ✓ Reductions in A&E attendances of around 20% which if replicated nationally could save the NHS around £1billion
 - ✓ Reduction in stress for clinical staff