

In continuing to look at pressing matters of the day, this week cwg turns its attention to waiting times within our beloved NHS and particularly those experienced by outpatients.

We have been fortunate to see a leaked document from NHS England which reveals how its hospitals up and down the country are going about reducing outpatient waiting times and simultaneously enhancing the outpatient experience for all those finding themselves in need of NHS care.

## **NHS England**

### **12 Point Plan**

#### **to reduce waiting times and enhance outpatient experience**

1. Going forward Hospital Trusts will endeavour to be more 'user friendly'. For example our flagship London Hospital at Guys will be known as 'Guys and Dolls NHS Foundation Hospital Trust' so as to lend a 'feel-good factor' to what we offer our patients there. (Please note however that this is not a Dolls' Hospital so do not bring broken toys here to be repaired. Take them to 'The Repair Shop' on BBC 1 where they will be mended and everybody cries but in a good way).
2. In the unlikely event of staff shortages sophisticated puppets will be employed in place of human beings. (Think 'War Horse' but of course the puppets will not look like horses).
3. We will adopt a new NHS theme tune to be played in all Outpatient Waiting areas. After extensive public consultation we have chosen 'Every Body Hurts' by REM. We hope you like it.
4. The NHS logo of green letters on a white background (too clinical) will be replaced by a pinky purple one to reflect a gentler approach to the service we offer patients and enable all patients to get in touch with their more 'feminine side'.
5. We are instituting a 'raffle ticket' approach to appointments to acknowledge that we have more patients than appointments. We hope this will provide fun as patients wait to see if they have got lucky each week.
6. On arrival all outpatients will be offered a complimentary glass of wine and a copy of the Metro.
7. Receptionists will be trained to greet outpatients with less formality than previously so expect to hear something like,

'Hiya, great to see you, grab a pew.' Or  
'You look terrible today but we'll have you fixed in a jiffy.' Or  
'Sorry you've got a bad back/leg/heart (or as appropriate') I know just how you feel love'. (Practical empathy).

8. Whilst waiting to be seen we intend to make the time more productive and will be offering a selection of classes that you may wish to participate in. Select from the following:

Choral Singing. You will be able to join a choir, learn a few songs, nip off to the Royal Albert Hall, perform them and get back in time for your appointment.

Sewing Class. Make a matching coat and dress/three piece suit according to preference to wear to your appointment if you so choose.

Salsa class. (Not recommended for those with bad backs or two left feet and attending orthopaedics).

Language classes Become fluent in French, Spanish, Italian or German or gain proficiency in Russian, Mandarin or Ancient Greek.

9. We want our outpatients to manage their own waiting times so will be offering a choice in how you wish to be seen that will impact on how long you have to wait.

(a) Seen by a Sixth Former on work experience who 'would like to be a doctor'. Seen immediately.

(b) Seen by a First Year Medical Student with a minimum of GCSE Biology. 30mn wait

(c) Seen by a Junior doctor who has been on call for 72 hrs with no sleep. 60mn wait

(d) Seen by a Senior Registrar. You are advised to bring your own lunch and an afternoon snack

(e) Seen by a consultant. Come prepared for a sleepover.

10. After your appointment you will be invited to fill in a questionnaire as to how you feel your appointment was managed.

How satisfied are you with your appointment today?

Very satisfied. *I would like to come back again tomorrow.*

Quite satisfied. *The salsa class was good.*

Neither satisfied or dissatisfied. *Make your mind up. We are trying to conduct a survey here.*

Quite dissatisfied. *I did not become proficient in Ancient Greek in the time allowed*

Very dissatisfied. *The Senior Registrar turned out to be a Sixth Former and my copy of the Metro was out of date.*

Not sure. *This may be the most usual response for those in the initial stages of attending a self-assertion clinic .*

11. You will be given a party bag on leaving the hospital with a selection of out of date medications which may still come in handy and a set of PPE equipment that the Government bought at the beginning of the pandemic and which turned out not to be fit for purpose but might be useful if you catch Monkeypox.

12. We have run out of points.