Development, a community interest company (CIC) formed of GP practices in Smethwick, Quinton and Cape Hill. Pathfinder provides services in primary care that had traditionally been provided in acute care. These services include dementia and older people’s care, and pain management.

Under Rowley’s plans to become an integrated care organisation (ICO), patients will enjoy better care, delivered in a community setting by the most appropriate agency. The ICO group will tackle inappropriate interventions and hospital admissions to achieve savings, which it will invest in providing more primary care services.

Innovation is not restricted to clinical care – management is also under redesign. Plans for the ICO include employing one business manager for all Pathfinder practices who will manage the practices’ budgets. A customer service manager will work at reception and focus on further improving patient satisfaction.

**STAFF CHALLENGES**

When Rowley Healthcare changed hands in 2004, the practice inherited the existing staff. Many have continued working there and helped deliver the changes to services. To help them adapt to the new demands of the practice, staff have been given training and freedom to innovate.

There is no staff hierarchy, which allows easier communication and improves relationships. Many staff live locally and their knowledge and understanding of the local community is invaluable.

Staff are given the freedom to widen their area of expertise. In particular, nurses are encouraged to use all their skills in, for example, first contact, public health, palliative care and managing long-term conditions, regardless of their job title.

Nurses at Rowley Healthcare are encouraged to abandon the ‘silo’ effect of disciplines (lack of communication) and geographical restrictions on where they can visit. This allows them to work more efficiently and respond to the new demands of the practice.

Training is key. All staff are encouraged to develop their skills by completing courses, which are sponsored by the practice. All clinical staff are undergoing further training.

**REFERENCES**


Department of Health (2008) GP Extended Opening Hours Data. tinyurl.com/GP-opening


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In addition, a junior member of the administrative team is completing a diploma in management studies at a local college to develop her business planning, management and customer service skills. Such skills are vital in supporting the delivery of good-quality clinical care.

**CONCLUSION**

Rowley Healthcare has adopted an entrepreneurial, patient-focused approach to GP practice that delivers high levels of patient satisfaction.

Staff are given the freedom to develop their expertise to respond to the new demands placed on them.

Rowley Healthcare Patient Survey 2007: How do you rate how well the doctor listened to what you had to say?

**FIG 1. NUMBER OF PATIENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient Satisfaction</th>
<th>Number of Patients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIG 2. PERCENTAGE OF PATIENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient Satisfaction</th>
<th>Percentage of Patients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Department of Health (2008) GP Extended Opening Hours Data. tinyurl.com/GP-opening


InTheNews.co.uk (2008) Public: large support for more opening hours. InTheNews.co.uk; poll 6 July. tinyurl.com/gp-open-hrs

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