

Surgery Receptionist (Patient Services) Case Study

A Workforce Development Approach

Provides an overview of the EDEN programmes to support workforce development and examples of where it has been used.

Novo Nordisk has provided sponsorship to Leicester Diabetes Centre (EDEN) to deliver a workforce development webinar, best practice examples & 'do-it' tools. Novo Nordisk has had no influence over the webinar agenda, arrangements or accompanying materials.

What is the Need?

Receptionists are the first point of contact and are expected to deal quickly with a constant stream of calls from patients with a plethora of conditions. They are essential to the smooth running of the practice and are often working under pressure. Receptionists have a complex and often difficult role.

During a discussion with them, they asked for help with the triage element of their duties; what issues need to be dealt with quickly, what could wait, and which clinician would be the most appropriate to deal with that situation. They were keen to receive any education on diabetes, feeling that their training needs in this area had been overlooked.

What did EDEN do to meet that need?

Eden created a single page infographic entitled 'Assisting Patients with Diabetes'.

It helps reception staff to direct patients with diabetes or suspected diabetes to the right HCP in the most appropriate time frame. The infographic uses traffic light colours to suggest

1. Which situations need dealing with urgently, the same day and by whom (red).
2. What needs dealing with as soon as possible, but not necessarily the same day (amber).
3. What issues are non-urgent but should be booked with an appropriate HCP (green)

The Receptionists were provided with the 'Assisting Patients with Diabetes' infographic, the content was explained fully by an Eden Educator, along with a full explanation of how to use the guide. Eden also provided reception staff with the 'Foundation Diabetes' recorded lesson to watch at a time convenient to them. The lesson provides essential information to ensure that staff had a solid basic foundation in what diabetes is; associated conditions and how we can prevent or delay and minimise adverse outcomes.

How does Eden training offer benefit?

By providing the receptionists with a time saving and simple access resource. The following points were reported:

An increase in knowledge and confidence. Not only when dealing with patients but also dealing with requests from GPs.

- A decrease in anxiety was reported. Receptionists reported that previously they would become anxious due to being unsure whether they had done or said the 'right thing' to the patient
- A reduction in wasted appointments due to inappropriate bookings
- Greater confidence when dealing with people living with diabetes, they felt that they were now ensuring the patient's safety

The receptionists were delighted to be given training in an area they felt would improve their performance. They felt valued as essential members of the workforce. Patients with symptoms needing urgent attention were protected and given the appropriate appointment, first time. This will potentially prevent hospital admissions, adverse outcomes and even deaths. Having seen how enthusiastic and hungry for knowledge reception staff are, we have been encouraged and are offering all reception staff the 'Foundation Diabetes' recorded lesson, the 'Assisting Patients with Diabetes' infographic and also access to the Eden 'Tool Kit'.

Going forward we would like to include reception/patient service staff in any appropriate future Eden training programmes according to their need.

Best Practice Example

We chose two large practices within Leicestershire to pilot our Receptionist Diabetes Training.

Ensuring patient safety and offering the best care to people living with diabetes is our aim. A combination of Foundation Diabetes and Assisting Patients with Diabetes training helps the right staff (first patient contact staff) to facilitate this.

Example:

Joel, aged 20, is a university student. Felt unwell for several days. He phoned the surgery asking for an appointment. The receptionist asked him to briefly describe his symptoms. Joel informed her that he felt ill and tired. The receptionist asked him if he was thirsty or going to the toilet more and if he had lost weight. When Joel answered yes, she asked could he get someone to bring him into the surgery with a urine sample as soon as possible. He did so and was referred to the diabetes specialist nurse within the hour. Joel said that he and his parents have been so grateful to Susan the receptionist for taking prompt action, rightly suspecting that he had developed type 1 diabetes.

This story inspired us to develop diabetes training and appropriate resources for all receptionists. There could have been a very different ending to this story had Susan not been aware of the symptoms of type 1 diabetes and the possible consequences.

Here is some of our feedback:

Practice Manager:

You helped our reception team feel valued, investing time in them and showing trust in them has really given them a boost, thank you.

Receptionists:

The video was so informative, and easy to watch. I've wanted to know more for a long time as the more knowledge the better!

We love the infographic! We now have guidance on how to prioritise calls and which clinicians to book patients with, long overdue!

I found the infographic extremely reassuring, great to have it handy to refer back to when needed.

** Permission has been received for all quotes to be shared within these best practice examples*

For further information please contact the Eden team: eden@uhl-tr.nhs.uk