

North Yorkshire Council

Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee

6 June 2024

Modality GP Partnership

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update regarding their concerns over Modality run GP practices.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At previous ACC meetings, Members have raised concerns over Modality run GP practices and so representatives from Modality were invited to the 7th of March 2024 meeting to answer questions. Unfortunately, the representatives were unable to attend this meeting due to prior commitments, but a written update was provided and they agreed to attend the 6th of June 2024 meeting.
- 2.2 At the 7th of March 2024 meeting, having discussed the information provided, Members agreed that an invite to the 6th of June 2024 ACC meeting should be extended to representatives from Modality. Members raised concerns regarding patient confidentiality in reception / waiting areas and, following the meeting, Modality representatives confirmed there were private rooms that could be used. Members also queried whether GP practices have Service Level Agreements, or similar, and Modality representatives have directed them to the following link: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/gp/investment/gp-contract/>. (the arrangements for the GP contract in 2024/25 can be found at Appendix A).
- 2.3 The Modality practices that affect the Skipton and Ripon constituency most are Fisher Medical, Cross Hills, Silsden, and Steeton.

3.0 Modality Update

3.1 Who are Modality AWC?

Modality AWC is part of a national GP Super Partnership, operating across 10 regions of England. It is important to note that this partnership is not a corporate entity. As one of Modality's largest groups of GP Practices (divisions), Modality AWC provides care to over 87,000 patients, working across 10 sites. Governance is managed by the Modality AWC Board, which consists of GP Partners and the Senior Management Team. The GP Partners working in each practice location, are the same professionals who ran the practices before joining Modality. Each practice within Modality AWC maintains clinical governance and responsibility for delivering care to its specific patient community and location.

3.2 A new way of working

In April 2023 Modality AWC launched a new patient access system, inviting patients to contact each practice either by phone, using an online form or in person. Every medical request received is clinically assessed by a GP and care or advice provided within an appropriate timescale. No matter which contact method a patient uses, all requests are managed in the same way – meaning equal access for all. This was a big change for both

patients and staff.

To help our clinicians assess the medical need of a patient, we have been asking our patients to provide as much information and detail about their medical concern either via the online form or over the phone / in person. To maintain patient confidentiality, each practice location has a designated room or screened off area where the patient services team can help patients complete the form themselves, or complete the form on behalf of the patient.

We recognise, that although we completed an extensive patient engagement programme before going live, that ongoing support, education and improved patient information for our patients is vital. Our digital inclusion and education workshops that have taken place in 2023-24 in practice and communication locations will continue, along with our practice patient engagement drop-in sessions. Our new practice website will launch over the summer months, with better patient information, easier patient navigation and an accessibility friendly layout. An example of the new website standard NHS compliant layout can be seen here - <https://www.hardenblakenallfamilypractice.co.uk/>

3.3 What are we trying to solve?

Our objectives focus on several key issues to improve patient care and operational efficiency. We aim to reduce the 8am rush, ensuring a more manageable and less stressful start to the day for both patients and staff. By maximizing the capacity of appointments available, we strive to accommodate more patients safely and effectively. We are committed to providing equal access for all, ensuring that every patient has the opportunity to receive care within an appropriate timescale for their medical need. Meeting the medical needs of our patients is a priority, as is delivering high-quality care. Finally, we seek to offer the right care the first time, minimizing the need for repeat visits and ensuring optimal patient outcomes.

3.4 How are we performing?

Patient demand on all primary care providers continues to rise. We continue to strive to provide the maximum number of consultations possible for our patients. Since May 2023, we have consistently provided above the national and local ICB average number of appointments delivered per month. We continue to explore different operating models and types / methods of clinical provision to enhance this offering further. This includes employing additional primary care roles such as, Advanced Clinical Practitioners, Mental Health Practitioners, Social Prescribers, Physios and Health Coaches.

Since implementing the new patient access system, we have seen an over 40% reduction in the number of calls received to practices. Although the call wait time for patients has been reduced, we know we need to reduce this further (please refer to the following paragraph for the solutions that are being implemented to achieve this).

In October 2022, all GP practices were contracted to provide additional appointments outside of the usual GP Practice opening hours at evenings and weekends. This change has seen a decrease in the number of patients accessing A&E and the Out of Hours service. Since Modality AWC launched the new Patient Access System, there has been a greater reduction in Modality patients attending A&E and the Out of Hours services that patients from other non-Modality practices.

3.5 What could we do better?

During the last 14 months, we have continued to evolve the way we operate to try and meet the demands of our patient population groups. We listen to patient and staff feedback

received via:

- The Annual National NHS GP Survey
- The Friends & Family Test
- Comments, informal concerns and complaints received
- Comments received via Social Media
- Patient Participation Group / Patient Voice and Patient Engagement events
- Staff suggestion box

To improve our services, we have taken several steps. To reduce call wait times for those who are unable to access the online form, we have recruited additional staff and established a dedicated Patient Contact Centre in April 2024. To ensure patients are kept informed about the progress of their requests and are aware that they can still contact us over the phone or in person, we are enhancing patient information and communication, both verbally and through online and paper formats. To reduce and maintain the wait time for routine care to within two weeks where possible, we are continuing to maximize the capacity of appointments that we are able to offer.

3.6 What is next? How can you help us?

As we continue to evolve our patient access system, it's essential to stay adaptable. When we started planning, our patient access system powered by Klinik Healthcare Solutions was the market leader. However, two years on, that is no longer the case. Modality Partnership is currently piloting several other digital healthcare triage solutions in different regions of the UK, and this is something we are exploring in Modality AWC.

Our commitment to patient engagement and education remains steadfast. We will continue our rolling programme of events held in community and practice locations to help patients navigate the NHS App, SystmOnline Services, and our Patient Access System.

We invite you to join our Patient Participation Group (PPG) / Patient Voice to share your views and work collaboratively with us. Your input is invaluable in shaping the services we provide.

This summer, we will be launching a new patient website that is NHS accessibility compliant and offers improved patient information and navigation. Our Patient Participation Group will play a crucial role in reviewing the new website before it goes live. If you would like to be involved in this process, please let us know!

For more information or to express your interest, please contact us at bill.graham2@nhs.net. Ongoing collaboration with our patients and stakeholders is vital to improving the care and services we can offer.

- 3.7 For the full Modality report shared ahead of the 7th March 2024, please visit - <https://edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1146&MId=6513&Ver=4>

4.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not applicable as this report is for noting.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial, legal, equalities or climate change implications.

6.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 This report is just for noting.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

i) Note the report.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Modality presentation - <https://tinyurl.com/bdykk2zx>

Appendix B – Arrangements for the GP contract in 2024/25 (found at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/gp/investment/gp-contract/>).

Appendix C – The Focus on: GP Access report by Bradford District and Craven Health and Care Partnership to the Bradford Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Report Author – Modality Representatives and David Smith, Democratic Services Officer.

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.