

Research Note 7

Poems in General Practice settings

2014 Survey of Welsh surgeries in the PitWR scheme

Introduction

This research note reports on how the registered charity 'Poems in the Waiting Room' (Charity ref 1099033) used the generous grant of £9,000 provided by the Ashley Family Foundation over three years 2012 to 2014 to supply short collections of poems for patients to read while waiting to see their doctor.

The objectives of the grant were

- to expand the number of NHS General Practice surgeries in Wales that we serve
- to find a sustainable approach to funding this service in Wales in the future.

The note summarises the results of a postal survey of practice managers receiving the Poems in the Waiting Room poetry card service in 2012-14. Over 50% of respondents assessed that the poetry cards either perceptibly or noticeably added value to the patients visit.

Our objectives

Poems in the Waiting Room provides short collections of modern and classic poems for patients to read while waiting to see their doctor. The aim is to improve the waiting room environment. The poetry collections (generally 7 or 8 poems) are printed on A4 cards folded to make a leaflet. New collections are published four times each year and are sent to doctors waiting rooms in bundles of twenty cards. Patients are encouraged to take the cards with them. There is no charge to the NHS or to the patients.

At the time of the Ashley Family Foundation funded survey, Poems in the Waiting Room were supplying around 1,400 waiting rooms across the country, with a print-run four times each year of around 30,000 poetry cards.

Take-up of poetry card scheme by Welsh surgeries

The grant funded a mailshot and follow-up phone call to offer the poetry cards to all 465 NHS GP practice managers. 150 NHS General Practice waiting rooms in Wales joined the scheme. This is about one third (32%) of all NHS waiting rooms in Wales.

The grant then covered the printing and distribution costs for the poetry card scheme to in Wales. During the period of the grant each surgery received nine mailings of twenty poetry cards each to make available in their waiting rooms. In total 27,000 cards were sent out to Welsh NHS waiting rooms with Ashley Family Foundation sponsorship over the three years.

Survey of impact and value

The grant also covered the costs of a postal survey of the 150 surgeries to research the impact and value of the scheme. 59 responses were received. A separate report of the results is available. Full discussion of the results is presented below.

Key findings were:

- 37% of surgeries report that all the cards supplied are taken away by patients with the others reporting only a few are left.
- 80% of respondents agreed the supply of twenty cards per quarter is about right.
- 90% of respondents agreed the selection of poems - a mix of modern and classic poetry - is about right.
- Over 50% of respondents assessed that the poetry cards either perceptibly or noticeably added value to the patients visit. Only 1 in 20 thought they did not add value.

Beneficiaries

The main beneficiaries of the scheme were patients waiting to see their doctors.

Nearly 10,000 NHS Patients: Our 2014 survey suggests that at least 37% of the 27,000 cards we sent out over the three years to Welsh waiting rooms were taken away by patients. This suggests that at least 9,990 patients had their visit to the doctor enriched by reading the poetry cards sponsored by the Ashley Family Foundation. Many more may have read the card and left it in the surgery.

150 Doctors and their staff: The 150 General Practice doctors and their practice managers also benefited from the presence of the cards in the waiting room cards. 60% of comments received from NHS practices as part of the survey were positive. These include the following:

They are a valuable and unique resource. Thank you.

Thank you - I enjoy putting these out for patients.

We have lots of comments about these poetry cards and patients seem to love them.

Keep up the good work and thank you.

Patients enjoy reading them and take them home.

We think that PitWR is a good initiative. A calming influence and good alternative to reading magazines.

Lovely and enriching idea.

16 Poets: We also helped in a small way to benefit the poets whose work we publish. Over the three years of Ashley Family Foundation funding sixteen living poets have had their work promoted widely across the U.K.

Sustaining the scheme in Wales

Our main challenge, and second objective was to sustain the service we provide in Wales. We aimed to do this by promoting our 'Friends of PitWR' scheme in Wales. Friends of PitWR make regular donations sufficient to cover the costs of sending our cards to their local surgery. We see this as the most sustainable route to funding continuation of the cards in Wales.

Projected from experience in the national scheme we had hoped to recruit around 50 Friends. By the end of 2014 we had only recruited 12 far, but this still provides a useful long-term expansion of our poetry card scheme in Wales.

Survey of impact - the results

In the following tables, the results from the 2014 survey of Welsh surveys are presented first, with the comparable percentage data from the 2004 survey, 'Poems in the Waiting Room Research Note 4', for comparison.

Commentary on the results is given after each question, with follow-up actions for our charity.

Section 1: the surgeries

Q1. How many doctors work in the practice or centre where PitWR poetry cards are displayed?

Doctors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+	Total
2014	5	7	10	6	6	4	21	59
2014 %	8%	12%	17%	10%	10%	7%	36%	100%
2004 %	2%	14%	17%	16%	16%	14%	21%	100%

Q2. How many patients are registered on your practice/centre list?

Thousand	<5	5-8	9-12	13-16	>16	No data	Total
2014	19	16	14	3	3	4	59
2014 %	32%	27%	24%	5%	5%	7%	100%
2004 %	26%	39%	24%	6%	2%	3%	100%

Commentary:

Q1 and Q2 Confirm the finding from 2004 that the poetry cards most frequently are taken up in larger surgeries with several GPs, though the trend is slightly less strong.

Follow up:

Concentrate future promotional mailing on larger surgeries.

Section 2 The supply of cards

Q3. Is the supply of poetry cards used up by the end of the quarter (before our next delivery of cards)?

	Yes	No	No data	Total
2014 responses	22	34	3	59
2014 %	37%	58%	5%	100%
2004 %	73%	25%	2%	100%

Q4. If Yes, how many weeks after first display is the stock finished?

	2 weeks	4 weeks	6 weeks	8 weeks	10 weeks	12 weeks	No data	Total
2014 responses	2	4	3	3	3	1	6	22
2014 %	9%	18%	14%	14%	14%	4%	27%	100%
2004 %	17%	19%	14%	8%	15%	N/A	27%	100%

Q5. If No approximately how many remain?

	About 5	About 10	About 15	About 20	>20	No data	Total
2014	14	5	4	1	1	9	34

responses							
2014 %	41%	15%	12%	3%	3%	26%	100%
2004 %	35%	33%	10%	8%	2%	12%	100%

Q6. Is the quarterly supply of twenty cards about right?

	Yes	No	No data	Total
2014	47	10	2	59
2014 %	80%	17%	3%	100%
2004 %*	67%	29%	4%	100%

*at the time of the 2004 survey the standard supply was thirty cards.

Q7. If 'No' about how many would you wish to receive?

Suggested no. of Cards	5	10	15	20	25	40	45	50	60	60+	Total
2014	2	4	1			1		2			10
2004			5	13	2	6	4	16	15	6	67

Commentary:

Q3-7 suggest that the cards are not being taken away in the surgeries surveyed as frequently as in the 2004 national survey. This could be due to the 'Yours to keep' message not being clear enough to prompt patients to keep the card, or simply that fewer patients were visiting surgeries in the late Summer, when the 2014 survey was run, as opposed to December to January when the 2004 survey was run. There is clear support (80%) for the number of cards included in our packs.

Follow up action:

Make the 'Yours to keep' flash clearer on the card. (This was introduced in issue 68 - Winter 2014).

Q8. How are the PitWR poetry cards placed on display?

	Leaflet rack	In a special holder	On a table with magazines	Beside reception	Other	Total
2014	25	9	25	9	6	74
2014 %	34%	12%	34%	12%	8%	100%

2004 %	31%	14%	36%	15%	4%	100%
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Commentary:

The 2014 survey supports the 2004 results that 'on a table with magazines' and 'in a leaflet rack' are the two most frequently used ways to display the cards.

Follow-up action:

We will mention this as the best approach in our welcome letter to new surgeries joining the scheme.

Section 3 - the selection of poems

Q9. Looking at the poem in any of our poetry cards, can you name one that you feel is particularly appropriate for patients to read while waiting to see their doctor?

Q10. Again from any of our poetry cards, can you name a poem that you feel is less suitable or even unsuitable for patients to read while waiting to see their doctor?

2014 responses	Q9. Particularly appropriate	%	Q10. Less / unsuitable	%
Days of White	2	3%	-	
Seeds	1	2%	-	
Garden	1	2%	-	
May is building her house	1	2%	-	
Christina Rosetti	1	2%	-	
No comment	37	62%	40	67%
Not read by staff	2	3%	2	4%
All suitable / none unsuitable	14	24%	17	29%
Total	59	100 %	59	100%

Q11. Can you suggest a particular poet or poems you feel might be especially suitable for our cards?

Response	2014 responses	2014 %
More for children	3	5%
Named poet	1	2%

No comment	44	75%
No	11	18%
Total	59	100%

Q12. PitWR published a selection of classical poems from the canon of English language verse plus a few new poems by living poets. Would you prefer:

	2014 responses	2014 %	2004%
a) The mix as presently adopted	53	90%	92%
b) Only classical poems from the canon	1	1%	nil%
c) Only new contemporary poetry	0	Nil%	3%
d) No comment	5	9%	5%
Total	59	100%	100%

Q13. Would poems with a stronger emotional impact be suitable for PitWR?

	2014 responses	2014 %	2004%
Yes	4	7%	25%
No	15	26%	31%
Cannot say	39	67%	44%
Total	59	100%	100%

Commentary:

Though respondents in the 2014 survey commented less frequently, these questions provide clear evidence that the current selection of poetry - a mix of traditional and new, with careful consideration and the advice of a professional psychotherapist taken on subject matter and emotional impact - is the correct mix.

Follow up action:

Reinforce this approach, and cite this evidence in future fund raising and grant applications.

Section 4: Impact of the poetry card

Q14. In your opinion do the PitWR pamphlets enhance the patients visit to the surgery?

	2014 responses	2014 %	2004 %
Yes	27	46%	83%
No	3	5%	1%
Cannot say	29	49%	16%
Total	59	100%	100%

Commentary:

Noticeably more respondents answered 'Cannot say' in the 2014 survey, and the number saying 'Yes' is significantly less as a result. Though disappointing it is clear that the proportion answering 'No' remains very small.

Follow-up action:

Provide more encouragement to comment in the wording of future surveys.

Q15. If 'Yes' in your opinion, does reading the PitWR poetry card enhance the value of a patient's visit to the surgery:

	2014 responses	2014 %	2004 %
a) Perceptibly, 1 - 2 %	6	22%	16%
b) Noticeably, up to 5%	10	37%	24%
c) Significantly, up to 10%	1	4%	9%
d) Substantially, over 10%	0	0%	4%
e) Cannot say	0	37%	47%
Total	27	100%	100%

Commentary:

For those who did respond 'Yes' in Q14 the degree of value added is noticeably higher in 2014 than 2004. More than 50% of those who agree that the cards enhance the value of the patients visit ranked this as Perceptibly or Noticeably.

Following the practice in the 2004 survey the 'value' of a patients visit can be assessed in monetary terms from published research. The 'Unit Costs of Health and Social Care' survey for 2013 assessed the cost of a GP surgery visit to be a minimum of £34. (Curtis, L Unit Costs of Health and Social Care 2013, Personal Social Services Research Unit University of Kent Page 191, Table 10b).

Taking a median figure between 1-2% and up to 5% of say a 3% added value from the survey suggests a benefit equivalent to 3% of £34 or £1.02 from use of the PitWR poetry card.

This compares favourably with the actual cost of putting the card into the surgery of 10.3 pence per card, suggesting a ten-fold return on investment.

Follow up action:

Use the 'ten-fold return' as a headline statistic in PitWR communications and grant applications.

Q16. Have patients ever made any comment to you about PitWR pamphlets?

	2014 responses	2014 %	2004 %
Yes	21	36%	66%
No	36	61%	33%
No data	2	3%	1%
Total	59	100%	100%

Q17. If yes were the comments mainly:

	2014 responses	2014 %	2004 %
a) favourable	20	95%	99%
b) unfavourable e.g. waste of money	1	5%	Nil%
No data	Nil	Nil%	1%
Total	21	100%	100%

Q18. Are there any comments you would like to make about the PitWR poetry cards.

25 comments were received. 15 (60%) were positive, 9 (36%) neutral and 1 (4%) negative.

Commentary:

The smaller number of practices reporting that patients have commented is noticeable, though those that have received comments are overwhelmingly positive.

Follow up action:

Amend letters to new surgeries signing up to the scheme to encourage practice staff to let us know any comments they receive about the cards.