AHP Suffolk CIC - Operational Leadership Team

Allied Health Professionals Suffolk CIC

Clinical staff sickness and unplanned leave can lead to last minute cancellations of patient appointments, which can cause poor patient experience, economic detriment through loss of income, and could present a clinical risk due to the delay in treatment. Rescheduling booked appointments urgently caused 'bottle necks' and staff/site availability adversely impacted routine delivery capacity. The process for same day clinician absence involved an administrative Patient Services Team texting and calling all patients to inform them of cancellation and adding the patient to a waiting list for contact and rebooking within 5 days.

For some patients, pathologies change quickly while waiting, and without further triage, did not represent optimal care delivery for clinical outcomes, patient satisfaction, expense to patient's time, finances and inconvenience. The team trialled, a new 'duty manager' process, which found by rescheduling 'low priority', pre-arranged tasks, capacity could be released to create an on the day 'duty manager'. The duty manager would act as a lead contact for all queries including rebooking of cancelled appointments, clinically triaging patients according to their urgency and potentially either seeing patients face-to-face or telephone calling the patient to offer a 'virtual appointment' on the same day as their initial booked appointment. Following triage, over 56% of patients accepted a virtual assessment instead of a cancellation, with 4% having a face-to-face appointment, usually on the day. A further 0.75% of patients were escalated to see to a senior physiotherapist and 0.75% resulted in an onward referral. Compared to the previous year, there were 45.3% fewer patients cancelled by the service.