

# Progress in Practice

## Enhancing a Primary Care Environment – Bedminster Family Practice

**This GP practice recognises the importance of factors such as active travel and the built environment on the health and well-being of the patients and staff.**

### Summary

Bedminster Family Practice is keen to act as a good corporate citizen, and has taken measures to reduce the negative environmental effects of travel by car and increase levels of active travel. Recognising the importance of community engagement, every effort was made when relocating premises to involve patients and staff in the design of the new surgery environment.

The health and environmental benefits of active travel are promoted to staff and patients, and showering facilities have been provided to encourage staff to get on their bikes. Four doctors at the practice have abandoned their cars and now cycle to work every day – and more are planning to join them next year.

*“I love cycling as it makes me feel great in the morning, and keeps me in good shape. Patients seem to enjoy talking about the doctor arriving to see them on his bike, and laugh at me when it's pouring with rain!”*

Dr Chris Dykes, Bedminster Family Practice

In order to reduce travel to and from the surgery a weekly ward round is run at the local nursing home and doctors often cycle to home visits.

*“We all need to be aware of the significant effects the surgery environment can have on the well-being of patients and staff.”*

Dr Gillian Rice, Bedminster Family Practice



In designing the interior of a new surgery for the practice, every effort was made to involve staff and patients and a wide consultation was carried out. Important factors for patients and staff included increasing space, light and air movement. Feeding from this consultation, seven pieces of art work were commissioned to help create a calming, non-clinical ambience.

Dr Gillian Rice wanted to fully investigate the effect of the built environment on patients and staff, and NHS Estates awarded funding to carry out a detailed research study comparing the effects of the old surgery environment with that of the new enhanced surgery.

Questionnaires, interviews and focus groups were carried out and the results demonstrated that the built environment can have significant effects on patients and staff. In the new surgery there was evidence of lower patient anxiety, increased patient and staff satisfaction, and improved patient perception of doctor-patient communication.