CARE NAVIGATION

“I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky, And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by “

John Masefield
(from Sea Fever, Salt-Water Ballads, 1902)

The word ‘navigator’ derives from Latin navis - ‘ship’ - and agere - ‘drive’ – meaning ‘a person who steers a ship’.

Charting stormy uncertain seas requires good navigation – with purpose and direction. Similarly, most people at some point in their life may benefit from ‘navigation’ through encounters with different health services, agencies and professionals, across an often confusing seascape of health, social and community care. And it’s not just an issue for patients, there is broad consensus from healthcare professionals that such systems can be complex and difficult to navigate.

At Saxmundham Health we are proud to have introduced a system called Care Navigation which aims to get all our patients seen by the most appropriate person, first time, in good time.

It’s a fact that four out of ten patients who see a GP would have been cared for more appropriately and could have been seen more quickly if they had gone elsewhere, for instance, direct to a specialist nurse, physiotherapist or another clinician. That’s a waste of patient time and GP time and resources. If we can save that time and resources we can offer more GP appointments with shorter waiting times where they are really needed.

People with long term conditions often need to access different health services, with numerous assessments from multiple different professionals. This can be confusing and individuals and their families can encounter problems. Moving between different care settings can be an especially vulnerable time with the risk of ‘slipping through the gaps’. Care navigators assist patients in working their way through the complex health and social care systems to overcome barriers in accessing quality care and treatment. Care Navigators build relationships, problem solve and help locate resources, serving as a link between community, health and social services. A key purpose is to ensure patients experience seamless, joined up care and support.

Through specialist care navigation training, our handpicked team will be able to offer you more choice on who the best health care clinician might be and also help direct you to get to the right health clinician fast. Care Navigators will never offer clinical advice or triage; this new way of working is about offering the choice to see other specialists in the practice team. If they have the expertise to deal with the problem; it will often be quicker and you may not need to see the GP each time.

By working this way, it helps to free up time for GPs to care for patients with complex or serious health conditions that can only be managed by the GP. More importantly though, it means people are seen by the clinician that is best placed to manage your clinical problem. The choice is always yours though and you will never be refused a GP appointment but we hope that next time you contact your GP and speak with our Care Navigators you will see the value of seeing another health clinician if they are able to help.
When you call Saxmundham Health for an appointment you will get straight through to one of our team of Care Navigators. They will take some brief details from you about the nature of the problem and ensure you are signposted in the right direction to get the right help as quickly as possible.

A Care Navigator is there to personalise your care. They won’t just help you with which clinician to see and how best to get to see them, they can help you find support for living with long term conditions, or finances relating to disability of illness and they can help you find voluntary sector services.

We need our patients help with this. A Saxmundham Health Care Navigator is your ‘go to’ person. Please cooperate with them when they ask you for brief details. They are not being nosey, they are trying to help you access the best care quickly.