

Dr Perrott & Associates, Brackley Health Centre

Patient Experience Survey Report

1. Introduction

In December 2014 Healthwatch Northamptonshire visited Brackley Health Centre which is in south west Northamptonshire as part of a countywide survey of GP practices. The survey aimed to find out about access to services, the patient experience, good practice and what pressures there are within the practice. A summary report of the findings from the county-wide survey, including good practice and recommendations, is available on our website¹.

We spoke to nine patients at Brackley Health Centre about their views, experiences and satisfaction. By speaking to patients face to face we could add depth to the findings of the National GP Patient Survey². We also spoke to the practice manager to find out about services currently being provided, how they are accessed, what they felt worked well and what pressures there were. The questions used are in Appendix 1 and 2.

2. Practice information

2.1 Practice size and staffing

Brackley Health Centre is a small-sized practice (approximately 4,600 patients) with four doctors (two female, two male), three practice nurses, one health care assistant, plus a wellbeing worker and a midwife. There are currently no staff vacancies.

It is based in larger health centre which provides Speech Therapy, School Nurses, Family Planning, Podiatry, Community Dentistry, Paediatrics, and Adults and Older Persons Mental Health.

The practice operates a part-time satellite surgery for three sessions per week in Kings Sutton.

Brackley Health Centre (Dr Perrott and Associates) and Washington House Surgery (Dr Stevens and Partners) have announced their intention to merge and operate as one practice from April 2016. The decision has been made in anticipation of the development of a new Primary Care Centre.

2.2 Services provided

The practice provides a range of services and clinics, including: Diabetes, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), Asthma, minor surgery, Chronic Heart Disease, hypertension, health checks, blood tests, Cytology, and family planning.

¹ www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/about/docs

² <http://gp-patient.co.uk>

Specialists: One of the GPs does injections into joints (knees, etc.) and other specialist services are delivered by other providers in the same building (such as Speech Therapy, School Nurses, Family Planning, Podiatry and Community Dentistry). Doctors also undergo dementia training.

Shared services: A Saturday morning out-of-hours clinic is shared with Washington House surgery.

Extended opening: The practice opens from 7.30am to 7.30pm on Mondays. Telephone appointments are also offered on Thursday mornings between 7.30am and 8am.

Home visits: Patients phone in and are usually triaged by a GP. Home visits are then made when appropriate.

2.3 Appointment booking system

Appointments can be booked in person, by telephone or online, although the latter is not used by many people. A number of slots are held back for on-the-day and urgent appointments and routine appointments are usually available within 48 hours. The practice does not turn away children or urgent appointments, and if they run out of slots then a doctor, not a receptionist, will phone to triage and appointments are then added to the end of the day. Temporary residents are seen by the Brackley practices on a three week rota.

2.4 Patient Participation Group (PPG)

The PPG is a group of six patients who meet every two to three months and there is a wider group who receive information. Issues are discussed and fed back. The PPG, which is funded by the practice, is advertised in the waiting room and online.

2.5 Complaints system

The complaints system is advertised in the waiting room. Complaints packs and forms are available at reception. There are also leaflets and forms for third-party complaints, and also a poster about the ombudsman.

2.6 Equality and diversity

We asked the practice about their equality and diversity policy and how the practice met additional needs of patients. The following were mentioned:

- ramps and automatic doors
- Pearl Linguistics system for translation
- website available in other languages
- local Mind group meets at the surgery

3. Patient experience

3.1 Appointment system

Most patients we spoke to (eight out of nine) found it easy (five) or very easy (three) to get an appointment when they needed it. One thought it was 'OK' and no patients found it difficult.

Most positive experiences of getting an appointment mentioned being able to see someone on the same day (six). For example:

- Four patients said they were usually seen straight away on arriving at the surgery and one said that they had never had a long wait.
- Two patients said that the phone system works well.
- One patient liked being able to book online.
- One patient said that they had not had a problem in the 16 years as a patient.

The patient who found it 'OK' said that the appointment times offered were not always convenient.

- One patient said they'd like the surgery to open on Saturday mornings.

3.2 Choice of doctor

Most patients (six) said they usually saw the doctor of their choice, and the other three said that it did not matter to them.

- Four patients preferred to see the same doctor or nurse for continuity of care.
- One patient would like to be able to specify gender.

3.3 Treatment and quality of care and service

All the patients we spoke to said they were either always (five) or usually (three) satisfied with the treatment and service they received (one didn't answer). When asked to tell us more:

- Four patients mentioned good communication.
- Two patients said that the staff were very helpful.

We asked people what they thought could improve the quality of care. Eight people commented.

- Three patients said that the surgery could do with larger premises (a new building is under construction).
- Two patients thought that the reception area lacked privacy.
- One patient would like access to test results online.
- One patient would prefer longer opening hours.
- One patient preferred not to have a touch screen to sign in.

We also asked patients what works well. Seven patients commented:

- Two patients thought the reception bell allowed staff to get on with other work.

- Two patients thought everything at the surgery worked well, and one patient thought the NHS worked well.
- One patient appreciated the time the doctors gave them for consultations.
- One patient would prefer to have a touch screen to sign in.

3.4 Communication and additional needs

None of the patients said they had a problem communicating with the doctors and practice staff.

We also asked patients if they had any additional needs that required support (such as hearing or visual impairment, learning or physical disabilities, English as a second language) and whether their needs were met. One person did have additional needs and these are being met.

3.6 Additional comments

We asked patients if they had any other comments to make about the practice. Four people made additional positive comments and two made additional negative comments - for example:

Positive:

- Four patients thought it a good practice.
- One patient said the practice was “friendly and easily accessible”.
- One patient appreciated having screening services at the practice.

Negative:

- One patient felt that consultations were not long enough.
- One patient thought that more parking spaces are needed at school times.

We also asked the Practice Manager if they were any more issues, pressures or examples of good practice that they wanted to tell us about:

Issues/pressures

- Pressure on the surgery is increasing but this has more to do with changes made by the Department of Health than patient numbers.

Works well

- The appointments system is working well and patients seem very happy.
- The new health care assistant has taken pressure off the treatment room, particularly for dressing changes.
- Moving to a new building and integrating care with Washington House surgery is expected to improve services provided.

4. Highlights

According to the results of both our patient survey and the National GP Patient Survey the practice has both a good online booking system and telephone system to book appointments and patients seem to be satisfied with the way both of these work. Patients were usually seen by the doctor they wished to see and found the practice to be easily accessible and provided a range of beneficial services. Some patients believe that the practice should have extended opening hours.

5. Recommendations

1. The practice could alter its opening hours and have one or two days where extended opening hours are available, for example on the weekends and an extra evening mid-week.
2. The practice could further plans to expand their premises and cordon off an area of reception to give more privacy to patients when they speak to a receptionist.
3. We carried out deaf access mystery shopping at 5 of the 25 practices we visited across the county and have found the access and provisions for deaf and hard of hearing patients could be improved. Whilst we did not specifically assess this practice for deaf awareness and access we recommend that the practice carries out a self-assessment of their deaf access and shares the findings with Healthwatch Northamptonshire and Deafconnect with a view to improving deaf access and awareness.

6. Thanks and acknowledgements

Healthwatch Northamptonshire would like to thank the Practice Manager of Brackley Health Centre for taking the time to talk to us and facilitate our visit, all the patients who were willing to take part in our survey and the Healthwatch Northamptonshire volunteers who visited the practice.

7. Response from the Practice

“The practice does now offer telephone appointments on Thursday mornings between 7.30am and 8am. When the practice has merged with Washington House there will be a wider range of extended opening hours available for our patients.

Firm plans are now in place for a new purpose built surgery which will open in 2017. In the meantime the practice will always offer a confidential conversation in a closed room if the patient requests it.

We will be carrying out a deaf awareness audit.”

Appendix 1 - Patient survey questions

Q1: How easy is it to get an appointment when you need it? (Please tick one)				
Very easy	Easy	OK	Difficult	Very difficult
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q2: Please tell us more about your experiences of getting an appointment, <i>including how it is easy or difficult, how long you have to wait to get an appointment, and whether the system works well for you:</i>				
Q3: Do you usually get to see the doctor/nurse/health professional of your choice?				
Yes	No, but I'd like to	No, but it doesn't matter to me		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Please tell us more about how this is important to you or not:				
Q4: Are there any problems when communicating with staff or doctors?				
Yes		No		
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Please tell us more:				
Q5: Are you satisfied with the treatment and service you receive here?				
Yes, always	Yes, usually		No	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Please tell us more:				
Q6: What do you think could improve the patient experience at your GP practice and what do you think works particularly well?				
Improvements:		Works well:		
Q7: Do you have any additional needs that require support? Such as hearing or visual impairment, learning or physical disabilities, English as a second language, etc.				
Yes		No		
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		
If so, are they met?				
Yes	No		Don't Know	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Please tell us more:				
Q8: Is there anything else you would like to tell us?				

Appendix 2 - Practice Manager survey questions

<p>Q1: What is the staff makeup of the surgery (+ see briefing)? Do you have any nurse practitioners / prescribers and do you provide a mental health service? <i>E.g. Have there been any changes to the surgery staff since the briefing? What are they?</i> <i>E.g. Which staff provide mental health care and advice?</i></p>
<p>Q2: Have you any GP or staff vacancies? How long have these posts been vacant?</p>
<p>Q3: How does your appointment booking system work? (only need to ask about what is different to the briefing) <i>E.g. the role of the receptionist, whether there is online booking, how far in advance patients can book appointments, how much choice patients have over time and GP, whether they use an 0845 number, how many phone lines they have, telephone triage?</i> <i>What do you do with temporary or unregistered patients?</i> Have any significant patient criticisms of the appointment system been reported by the PPG and how have these been addressed?</p>
<p>Q4: Does the practice conduct home visits? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> How are these organised?</p>
<p>Q5: What additional facilities does the practice have? (only need to ask about what is different to the briefing) (E.g. specialist clinics, counsellors, blood tests, specialist doctors, dressing changing facilities, drop in sessions) Do you share facilities with any other GP practices in your locality? Or does your practice or GP cluster have any specialisms/clinics or specialist doctors? If so, what and is this working? Would you like to see any more? Is there anything else working well in your locality? Are there any plans for further sharing of resources?</p>
<p>Q6: Does your practice have any extended opening hours or do you plan to (if not mentioned in briefing)? Has this been requested by your PPG?</p>
<p>Q7: Is the 111 Service prominently advertised by the Practice and does the service provide adequately for your patients and for their out of hours requirements? (Also see PPG and Patient Surveys and Reports)</p>
<p>Q8: Do you have an active patient engagement group? How is advertised and how can people join? Is it funded by the practice and how often do they meet? (Other than what is mentioned in the briefing)</p>
<p>Q9: Where is your complaints system publically displayed? <i>E.g. Is it in the patient information leaflet, noticeboard, reception desk?</i> How are complaints dealt with?</p>
<p>Q10. How else do you communicate with patients? <i>E.g. noticeboards, leaflets, website, guidelines about best times to call</i></p>
<p>Q11: What is your equality and diversity policy? How is it implemented? E.g. How provide access for those with physical, visual, hearing, and/or learning disabilities and autism and non-English speakers. BSL/interpreters? Is there staff training or understanding of obligations?</p>
<p>Q12: What other staff training does your practice have? <i>What decision aids/training are receptionists given?</i></p>
<p>Q13. Are there more patients attending your practice than there used to be? Have you any thoughts on why that is or why there is pressure on GP practices?</p>
<p>Q14: Is there anything else you would like to tell us about? E.g. things that are working well, challenges the practice faces, additional support needs they have, thoughts about A&E attendance, etc.</p>