



**GP Surgery Feedback : Woodside Surgery, Loftus  
September 2015**

## What is Healthwatch?

Healthwatch is an independent organisation which seeks to listen to the experiences and views of people who use health and social care services. We use this information to influence how services are planned and delivered in the future to make sure they meet the needs of those people using them.

Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland is steered by a Board of volunteers, is commissioned by the Local Authority and accountable to the public. We strive to work effectively with local health and social care providers to ensure the needs and preferences of service users are at the heart of the delivery of health and social care services.

## You said ....

Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland initially received intelligence in April 2015 suggesting that there was an issue with the appointment system at Woodside Surgery. Following on from this Healthwatch staff carried out engagement work over a 6 month period with a cross section of the community to see if other people had similar experiences. In order to do this Healthwatch attended local group meetings and held one of its routine drop-in sessions in the Old Co-op Building in Loftus.

The main areas of concern raised by patients were:

- Appointments
- Staff Attitude
- Services and equipment available within the surgery

## We did ....

Healthwatch collated the information received and forwarded it to the Practice Manager, Tracey Abbott at Woodside Surgery, Loftus and requested an opportunity to discuss the issues in greater detail.

We received an immediate response from the Surgery and Healthwatch Staff and Board Members met with the Practice Manager.



The Practice Manager welcomed the feedback that Healthwatch had provided and expressed concern at the comments received, especially since the Surgery has actively encouraged patients to contact the Practice Manager if they have any concerns by advertising in the Loftus Town Crier.

### Appointments

The Practice Manager informed Healthwatch that there had been some staff changes and this may have caused difficulty for some patients in making an appointment. However staffing issues have now been resolved and the Surgery has 3 GPs, 2 nurse practitioners, 3 practice nurses, a healthcare assistant and a specialist mental healthcare worker. The Surgery has 6,500 registered patients and covers Loftus, Lingdale, Moorsholm, Brotton, Easington, Liverton Mines and Carlin How.

The Surgery has a number of bookable appointments which can be booked at least one month in advance. A number of appointments per day are released at 8 am for patients to book on the day. A GP is always on call to deal with any urgent appointments which are needed. Patients are also able to book appointments on line.

The Surgery has listened to patient feedback and changed the telephone answering system so that patients no longer have to listen to a long recorded message. Callers to the Surgery now go straight through to a receptionist and staffing levels have been increased at peak times. The Surgery also have a telephone line for prescriptions only, however the Practice Manager informed Healthwatch that this was not being used by patients as it should be. Patients should not be ordering prescriptions on the telephone line unless they use the prescription line.

***Despite these measures Healthwatch Redcar & Cleveland recommended that further patient awareness and education was needed and suggested that the Patient Participation Group be involved in this. It was thought that more information regarding the Surgery and services available should be displayed within the waiting room. It was also suggested that the Patient Participation Group carry out a patient satisfaction survey to highlight any issues or concerns and find out how patients would like to receive communication. Some patients told Healthwatch that they thought it would be useful for the Surgery to hold open meetings at the local community centre twice a year to engage with patients and residents.***

## Staff Attitude

Some patients expressed concerns over staff attitude and Healthwatch received comments that staff on occasion were rude, arrogant, asked too many personal questions and acted in an unprofessional manner.

The Practice Manager informed Healthwatch that staff received regular customer service training which was usually carried out during Time-Out sessions. The Practice Manager also explained that staff were only required to ask personal questions when patients are booking urgent appointments as some degree of triage is necessary to ensure these appointments are used appropriately.

***Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland suggested that the Practice Manager share this feedback with the staff to highlight where improvement is needed. The Practice Manager invited patient representatives from Healthwatch to attend the next training session for staff members to give an insight into customer service from a patient's perspective. This session was carried out on 6<sup>th</sup> October and was received in a positive manner by the staff and the Practice Manager. Healthwatch also suggested that staff be reminded of patient confidentiality.***

## Services and Equipment

Healthwatch received comments suggesting that there was not sufficient services available at the Surgery and that it was struggling for space. Comments suggested holding clinics in community buildings. The Practice Manager informed us that re-providing services would not benefit patients as they would have to release staff from the Surgery and there are also several IT and health and safety issues surrounding this suggestion. The clinics and services available at the Surgery are as follows:-

Chronic disease management

Midwifery services

Mental health services

Minor surgery

Phlebotomy

Sexual health services

Flu clinics

GP services

Dressings

Travel vaccinations and advice



Childhood immunisations

Joint injections

CVD monitoring

Treatment of minor injuries

***Healthwatch suggests that in its public awareness campaigns the Surgery highlights the services available to patients.***

### **Other issues**

A patient informed Healthwatch they had to go to James Cook University Hospital for a cut to be 'glued', a service which they thought would be available at the Surgery. *The Surgery informed us that they do not offer a gluing service.*

Healthwatch were also informed by a patient that their blood pressure has not been taken as the Surgery does not have a suitably sized cuff. *The Surgery confirmed that they do stock all sizes of blood pressure cuff.*

