

# The Park Surgery, Littlehampton

August 2015

## Introduction

Healthwatch West Sussex presented the patients' voice to the Adult Health and Social Care Select Committee in June 2015, drawing out the key themes patients were telling us. The committee also heard from the clinical commissioning groups and NHS England about what is being done locally to understand the pressures in general practice and to 'future-proof' practices to cope with the year-on-year increase in demand.

We were invited to spend a morning in The Park Surgery at Littlehampton to see what this practice is doing to support its patients and local population. This is a practice which currently has approximately 7,500 registered patients.

Littlehampton has a mixed population, with three areas in Ham and River Wards in Littlehampton that fall in to the top 10% of most deprived areas nationally.

## Observations



Whilst this was a planned visit which took place on 28<sup>th</sup> July, it was obvious throughout the visit regardless of who we spoke too, that this was a calm environment; with a compassionate and dedicated group of people.

We were impressed to see that the practice put the patient first and that all care and business support systems worked to ensure the patient had a good experience.

This practice benefits from having a stable team but it is clear the partners and doctors work positively to create an inclusive environment that staff enjoy working in. This has the added value that staff know patients well and can recognise changes in their needs. We heard how the Business Manager had recently gone to speak to a patient sitting in the reception area as they had not looked right and immediately sought out the doctor. The patient was found to be having a stroke and action was taken promptly so there was a better outcome.

There is an 'open door' policy and two way communication, which enables staff to respond promptly and flexible on behalf of patients' when needed. This is not to say, the staff do not encourage patients to use appropriate community services (such as pharmacies) and/or to manage their needs appropriately. We heard how the culture within this practice enables clinicians to confidently share knowledge and expertise.

This practice, now more unusually, operates a personal list which means each patient is allocated to a doctor. The doctors feel this creates efficiencies, as they know their patients well and what results are expected which reduces time in researching records.

The surgery asks patients to call between 8am to 12.00 for access to own doctor appointments. From 12:00 onwards patients have access to the duty doctor. The patients we spoke to on the day had called in the surgery in the morning and were able to get an appointment that day.



This is a training practice, and through this, they have been able to work collaboratively with the County's Ambulance Trust (SECamb). For the last 18 months' Tor, a Paramedic Practitioner, has been supporting the practice with 1 to 2 days of surgeries per week. Patients who want to see a clinician promptly are offered the choice to see Tor and told her role. We witnessed the quality of support she is able to offer patients and the way in which she manages risks.



Tor is also able to provide home visit to support the practice but in turn, she told us how important it was to her and the patient, that she is supported. The practice ensures she has telephone access to a doctor, if required, when visiting the patient.



The practice appears uncluttered and we were shown the record storage facilities, which is not a new idea but an efficient way of storing paper information. This investment has also enabled the staff to lock away records and provides much easier access to an individual file when needed.

The practice currently offers its patients minor injury support. The practice's ambitions is to develop the site and resources, so they can offer people access to localised urgent treatment, as an alternative to travelling to A&E (at Worthing, Chichester or Haywards Heath). This is subject to realising the funding agreed in principle through NHS England.

Opposite the surgery is a care home, whose residents are mainly registered as patients at the surgery. The practice has established a weekly visit to the home, which creates both efficiency for the doctor (as appointments can be clustered) and offers residents the opportunity to consult with the doctor even if an appointment has not been made for the day. This arrangement also should provide an additional safeguard for residents as the doctor can observe changes quickly.

We would like to thank the patients, clinicians and staff for taking the time to tell Healthwatch about their work and ambitions.

We would encourage patients to share their experiences either directly with the staff or through us. So together we can continue to have conversations in support of primary care services for local people.

## Get in touch

By email: [helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk](mailto:helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk)

By phone: 0300 012 0122

Or by filling in one of our sealable forms you can find in the surgery

For more information about Healthwatch

If you are interested in supporting this surgery, or having a say in how its services are developed why not consider joining the Park Medical Support Group. For more information please speak to the reception staff.

