



Long Barn Lane Surgery: findings from a Healthwatch Reading visit

Where: Long Barn Lane Surgery, 22 Long Barn Lane, Reading, RG2 7SZ

When: December 17, 2015; and January 7, 2016, for two hours in the morning on each visit

Who: 27 people (10 on Dec 17, and 17 on Jan 7), spoke with a trained Healthwatch Reading staff member

Why: Healthwatch Reading is visiting all local GP surgeries to get patient views

How: Healthwatch used 'Enter and View' powers to visit on a pre-agreed date



What patients like

- All 27 patients were satisfied with the surgery's opening hours
- 17 out of 27 were satisfied or very satisfied with the care, treatment and service they received



What patients dislike

- 23 out of 27 patients found it hard to get through on the telephone to make an appointment
- Waiting times to see a doctor/nurse



Healthwatch observations

- Access is difficult as two doors into surgery are not automatic
- Effort made to support carers through dedicated notice board
- A radio is used to help overcome privacy issues of patients talking to admin staff at reception, which is situated in waiting area
- No patients had booked online; so may need more promotion



Patients' suggestions

- Improve telephone service
- Enable patients to see same GP for continuity of care
- Improve waiting times in surgery

'Reception very helpful. Doctors are good and listen - I have been at the surgery for 16 years.'

'I've been on hold for 25-30 minutes countless times, just to be told no appointments left, so I just walk down now to make an appointment.'

'Definitely not [able to get same-day urgent appointment] - told to go to walk-in centre.'

'I would like to see a permanent doctor so I could get to know them, like I did Dr Slater.'

Turn over to read the surgery's response to the feedback



How the surgery has responded to the patient feedback

'As a provider of primary care, it is imperative for the surgery to receive feedback from our patients - negative and positive - so that we are able to constantly assess the services we offer, enabling both the clinicians and staff to better address patients' needs in an attempt to deliver the best possible care. Access to and lack of GP appointments is a recurring national theme. We try hard to work the appointments available to suit the majority of our patient needs. We have a number of pre-bookable appointments available up to a month in advance; on-the-day appointments are released at 9am and 2pm; and we offer two, pre-bookable, late-night clinics per week. We have often discussed appointments with the surgery's Patient Participation Group and it has consistently been concluded that the current system of availability best suits the surgery demographic and resources. The surgery is always looking to recruit new PPG members; please ask at reception about joining. In addition, the NHS Walk-in Centre [at Broad Street mall] offers local surgeries additional capacity on a non-appointment basis. We also remind patients to register for on-line services - a convenient, alternative route to booking an appointment, requesting a repeat prescription and viewing your health records. Please ask at reception for more details. Over the past 18 months, Longbarn Lane has faced huge challenges recruiting new partners and has tried to stabilise the situation by employing long-term, regular locums to offer continuity of care. We hope, however, that we will be able to bring you a positive update on the situation soon.'

More information about Long Barn Lane (supplied by surgery)

Number of patients: 5,557 ethnically diverse population; 30% of patients aged under 25; 55% aged 25-65; and approx. 10% aged over 65

Number of female GPs: 2 (1 is a locum), both full-time

Number of male GPs: 2 (1 full-time locum and 1 part-time locum)

Open times: Mon-Fri 8am-6.30pm; third Saturday of every month 9.30am-11am; pre-bookable late evening clinics, 2 days per week

Appointment booking: Selected routine appointments can be booked online up to one month in advance

Blood tests: Phlebotomist in 3 x week

Healthwatch Reading thanks patients for giving their time to share their views. We also thank practice staff for their assistance. Enter and View findings are only a 'snapshot' of services on a particular day/s, so they are not a comprehensive judgement on the overall quality of the service.

Healthwatch Reading is an independent charity with some statutory powers. We can take your feedback in confidence, help you make complaints, and refer serious concerns to other agencies. Phone us 0118 937 2295, email info@healthwatchreading.co.uk, visit our website www.healthwatchreading.co.uk or visit us on the 3rd floor, Reading Central Library, Abbey Square Reading, RG1 3BQ.