

**enter**  
and  
**view**



**Cambridge Avenue Medical Centre**  
November 2015

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## What is Healthwatch North Lincolnshire?

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire is an independent consumer champion created to gather and represent the views of the public on health and social care. Healthwatch North Lincolnshire plays a role at both a national and local level, making sure the views of the public and service users are taken into account when reviewing service provision.

## What is Enter & View?

The Health and Social Care Act allows representatives of local Healthwatch organisations to enter and view premises and carry out observations for the purpose of local Healthwatch activity. Visits can include hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. Enter & View visits can take place where people tell us there is a problem with a service, but they can also happen when services have a good reputation – so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well.

## Disclaimer

This report is based on the perceptions shared by patients, carers and staff at the time of the visit and as such these views are not able to be checked for factual accuracy. Our report relates to a specific visit to the service at a particular point in time, and is not representative of all service users, only those who contributed. A key characteristic of the Healthwatch Enter and View report is that it is based on a lay perspective rather than an expert assessment of the care provided.

## Acknowledgements

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire would like to thank the surgery, the staff, patients and carers for their contribution to the Enter & View programme.

## Service Details

Name and Address	Cambridge Avenue Medical Centre Cambridge Avenue Bottesford Scunthorpe North Lincolnshire
Type of Service	General Practice
Practice Manager	Stephanie Grant
Latest CQC Report	Not inspected yet

## Date of visit

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2015

## Authorised Representatives

Healthwatch North Lincolnshire authorised representatives carry out visits to health and social care services to meet patients, staff and carers and hear their views. The following authorised Healthwatch North Lincolnshire Enter and View representatives carried out this visit:

- Karen Cowan
- Denise Fowler
- Helen Kirk

## Purpose of the visit

- To gather feedback from patients about their experience of using Cambridge Avenue Medical Centre asking specifically about making an appointment and their overall experience of the service (good and bad).
- To find out if patients have any suggestions for improving the service provided at Cambridge Avenue Medical Centre

## Methodology

On arrival, Healthwatch representatives were greeted by a member of practice staff and then spent around 2 hours in the waiting room talking to patients and carers who agreed to be interviewed. Observations were made about the surgery environment including provision of information and physical access to the building.

## Findings

### The surgery environment

The Healthwatch team observed that the surgery building appeared well maintained and clean and tidy. Although the surgery car park is small, it was noticed that there was provision for additional car park through an agreement with the pub across the road.

Access to the surgery was on ground level with automatic doors provided. The reception was clearly signed and the offer of privacy for discussions with practice staff was displayed. Many patients were observed using the electronic check-in system at reception and this was clearly displayed and easy to find. Patients were called to appointments using a loudspeaker system. Current waiting times were not routinely displayed, although other information such as the number of patients not attending appointments was visible.

The small waiting area did not allow room for children's toys, however a number of magazines and leaflets were available to those waiting.

An NHS Friends and Family Test box was provided for people to express their views on the service. It was clear that a hearing loop was installed at the surgery, however information about access to translation services such as sign language, were not visible. Healthwatch representatives did notice that the display boards for information were close to where patients were seated due to the layout of seating in a relatively small area, so some information may have been obscured as the surgery was busy.

Healthwatch representatives spoke with 18 members of the public during the visit.

#### Awareness of procedure for booking appointments

Only two of those spoken to were not aware of the option to book appointments online at this surgery. When asked which method they would prefer to use for booking a routine appointment with a GP, half of the respondents said they prefer to use the telephone. This figure increased to 83% of respondents when asked about making an urgent appointment.

Roughly a third (33.3%) of those spoken to prefer the online booking system and only one person said they would use this to book an urgent appointment.

Most people would try and ring the surgery as soon as it opens (83%), however some commented on their experience of trying to make an appointment by ringing at 8am:

*I have found it difficult to make follow up appointments when I have phoned at 8am. By the time I am through to the appointments clerk they usually have no appointments left – only for emergencies.*

*I have to go into the surgery in person if I can't get through on the phone. This time I redialled 60 times constantly and had to come in in the end.*

Most people were able to get an appointment on the day they called (65%) or the following day (12%) and all those spoken to felt that the staff handling telephone calls were helpful.

#### What happens if you are unable to book a suitable appointment?

Healthwatch representatives asked people what they would do if they were unable to get an appointment at a time to suit them. Two people said they would visit a pharmacy for advice and seven people would take whatever was offered even if it wasn't at a time they had hoped for. Nobody said they would call NHS111 or visit A&E for treatment.

#### Online booking

There were 72% of those spoken to who had never used the online booking system. Of the five who had used it, they all said they found it very useful. Healthwatch asked people who didn't use online booking why they had not used it. Some people had a preconceived idea about what the system could do and how easy it would be to use:

*Sounds complicated*

*This option doesn't allow you to choose a specific doctor*

*It would be nice to be able to book online without needing to register and then remember usernames and passwords*

Only three people said they didn't use it because they didn't have access to the internet. Two patients didn't know the service was available, with a further two feeling they hadn't got time to set it up and two others simply hadn't yet registered.

### Opening hours

Of those spoken to, 75% were satisfied or very satisfied with the opening hours of the surgery. Only three people were dissatisfied. One person said they would prefer later opening, perhaps unaware that the surgery offers evening appointment on a Monday:

*Would prefer it if it opened later as I work until 5pm – even if this was just one day a week.*

## **Recommendations**

Overall, it is important to share with staff the positive feedback from residents and visitors following this Enter and View visit, and to celebrate the areas of good practice identified in this report. The following recommendations for improvement are based on the findings of the visit on the day:

- To consider ways to further promote the use of the online booking system, through information displayed in the practice and communications with patients and carers. The experiences of those who have experienced the benefit of booking online could be shared in a practice newsletter.
- To further raise awareness of the new extended opening hours of the surgery, highlighting the benefits of this for those who work during office hours.
- To consider whether providing information to highlight other roles within the practice, such as nurse practitioner, would help patients make the right choice and ease pressure on GP appointment booking.

## Response from Practice

We appreciate this lay perspective of the service we provide for our patients. It will be helpful in our future plans to improve our services. This report has been shared with both the staff at the practice and the Patient Participation Group.

We realise the limitations of the reception and waiting area and the impact it has on our patients experience, but unfortunately we were unsuccessful in obtaining funding from the NHS England General Practice Infrastructure fund last year, we are however in the process of developing a further bid from the Primary Care Transformation fund.

Unfortunately the practice has no control on how our online booking system operates as the developers of the clinical software have to comply with specific NHS guidelines.

Since the Enter & View visit the practice has displayed posters in the waiting room to inform our patients about translation services being available, Staff have undergone a Telephone training session which will enhance their handling of telephone calls further and a Patient Survey on 'Improving the Practice' has also taken place. The results of this survey showed an Overall Satisfaction of the Practice score of 87.57% for Cambridge Avenue and 90% for Messingham patients, which is slightly above the 87% on the most recent national GP Patient Survey.

In response to the recommendations we will:

- look at ways to further promote the use of our online booking system
- share the experiences of those who have experienced the benefit of booking online in our practice newsletter
- further raise awareness of the extended opening hours by means of a poster in the waiting room and word of mouth
- continue to highlight other roles within the practice to help patients make the right choice and ease pressure on GP appointments

The practice welcomes any feedback or suggestions from any of our patients.

Stephanie Grant  
Practice Manager  
Cambridge Avenue Medical Centre



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