

Skelmersdale Family Practice

Patient Engagement Day

Contact details:

Skelmersdale Family Practice
Digmoor
Skelmersdale
Lancashire
WN8 9BW

Date and times of visits:

Wednesday 16th November 2016 – 9am to 1pm
Tuesday 22nd November 2016 – 3pm to 6pm

**Healthwatch Lancashire
representatives:**

Ilyas Patel (Lead Project Officer)
Amanda Higgins (Project Officer)
Aysha Desai (Project Officer)

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Healthwatch Lancashire Patient Engagement Day Report

Introduction

Healthwatch Lancashire is committed to listening to patients and members of the public in Lancashire and making sure their views and experiences are heard by those who run, plan and regulate health and social care services.

On Wednesday 16th November and Tuesday 22nd November 2016, three members of staff from Healthwatch Lancashire gathered survey responses from patients at Skelmersdale Family Practice in Skelmersdale, to obtain the views of people using the service and to observe the environment.

This report summarises the reviews of 36 patients.



DISCLAIMER

This report relates only to the service viewed at the times of the visits, and is only representative of the views of the patients who met members of the Patient Engagement Day team on those dates.

General Information

Skelmersdale Family Practice has approximately 13,500 registered patients and is currently accepting new patients. The surgery opening times are usually 8.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday with a late finish on Tuesday at 8.30pm. There are online facilities including booking appointments and ordering repeat prescriptions. The Practice Manager is Kim Cowell.

Methodology

These visits were arranged as part of Healthwatch Lancashire's schedule of Patient Engagement Days. From September 2015 to May 2016 these were undertaken in hospital settings and revealed the value of speaking with the public within the health setting being discussed. This enabled the public to influence hospital services through Healthwatch Lancashire discussing the findings with hospital trusts, and requesting responses and action plans where necessary. As such a new phase of Patient Engagement Days began in June 2016, focusing on patients' experiences of GP surgeries.

The focus of this phase of Patient Engagement Days is to gather patients' views on the accessibility of their GP surgery, the quality of care provided and the awareness of patient involvement via Patient Participation Groups. The team of project officers and volunteers speak with patients in the waiting room and record their feedback. The team also collates observations of what is seen on the visits.

The team compile a report reflecting these observations and the feedback gained. The report is sent to the manager of the facility for validation of the facts. Any response from the manager is included with the final version of the report which is published on the Healthwatch Lancashire website at:

healthwatchlancashire.co.uk/reports

This report reflects the views of 36 patients that we spoke with at the surgery, however, not all surveys were completed in full. This is often due to the patient being called in to their appointment during the questionnaire. As such, the total number of people that answered each question will be detailed in brackets under the results of each question.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Lancashire would like to thank the patients for taking part in this survey. We would also like to thank the Practice Manager, Norma Barlow, together with the staff at the surgery, for making us feel so welcome during the visits.

Patient Engagement Day Observations

Location

The surgery is based in Skelmersdale and there is a pharmacy across the road. The surgery is located close to the town centre and is accessible by bus.

External Environment

All patient services are located on the ground floor. The car park has limited parking spaces and one designated disabled parking space.

Internal Environment

On the days of the visits the surgery appeared clean and in adequate condition. On arrival, the staff introduced themselves to the reception and were welcomed by the staff who were very friendly and welcoming. The seating in the surgery appeared adequate and we did not see any patients struggling to find a seat.

Reception

On the days of our visits the self-check in machine was out of service so all patients had to report to the reception. This caused a slight delay and sometimes led to patients queuing. Patients were alerted to their appointment by a beep and their name appearing on a screen telling them which room to go to. When patients had been alerted they had to ask reception to allow them entry to the clinical room.

Patient Involvement

There were information boards in the surgery which displayed leaflets and posters about local activities and support groups. The noticeboards were well presented with plenty of useful information.

The latest Care Quality Commission report from April 2016 was not displayed. The surgery received overall score of "Good".



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Healthwatch Lancashire Patient Engagement Day Report

The Patient Engagement Days at Skelmersdale Family Practice took place on Wednesday 16th November 2016 and Tuesday 22nd November 2016. 36 patients shared their views.

Results - Access and Booking Appointments

1. We asked: 'How do you usually book your appointments?'

Telephone	Online	At reception	Repeat appointment
69%	10%	21%	0%

(36 patients answered)

69% of the patients we spoke to booked their appointment by phone whilst 21% booked at the reception.

2. We asked: 'Do you use online booking?'

25% said Yes

72% said No

3% Said Sometimes

(36 patients answered)

Just over 70% of the patients we spoke to said they do not use the online booking service:

"Using online booking service is unsuitable for me as you cannot book urgent appointments and it is awkward. The surgery hold the appointments back and then make them available on the system."

"I try to see what's available online and then ring if necessary."

3. We asked those that answered No or Sometimes to Question 2: 'why is this?'

Don't use a computer	Don't want to	Unaware of it	Don't have log in details yet	Can't book urgent appointments using it / unsuitable
14%	46%	25%	4%	11%

(28 patients answered)

Just under 50% of the patients we spoke to did not use the online booking service because they did not want to, whilst 25% were unaware of the service:

"I have tried booking online but there does not seem to be anything on it."

"I often come to reception to book whilst also telephoning them."

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4. We asked: 'Did you get a reminder for your appointment today?'

11% said Yes

22% said No

67% were Not Applicable

(36 patients answered)

The majority of patients either booked their appointment on the day or day before so did not get a reminder.

5. We asked: 'Do you find it difficult to get urgent appointments on the same day?'

86% said Yes

8% said No

6% said Not Applicable

(35 patients answered)

The majority of patients said they had difficulty getting urgent appointments on the same day:

"I go to the walk-in centre usually because I can't get through or cannot get appointments here. The walk-in centre had to phone for me today to get an appointment. I am thinking of changing to a different practice.

When I phoned the practice, they told me to ring the pharmacy, but the pharmacist is not a doctor.

"I can't get through on the phone, there's no chance after 8am. I struggle to walk here as well as I have high blood pressure."

"I go to the walk-in centre now because I cannot get appointments here. I went there before and they said I had to see my doctor."

"Waiting outside before 8am is my way of getting an appointment."

"Getting an appointment is a nightmare."

"The telephone lines are always busy."

"It costs me £2 on average to phone the surgery to try and book an appointment."

"I am constantly on hold, sometimes the waiting time is up to 15-20 minutes."

"When you telephone, there is no answer. It is a ten-minute walk to surgery for me so I just walk to book appointments."

"It is really difficult, there is always a long wait. I had to wait in the queue this morning to get an appointment."

"Sometimes I get an appointment same day but other times I do not."

"I managed to get a triage appointment on the telephone today."

"I can't get through on the telephone."

"Can never get through on the phone. I struggle to get to the surgery as I have children so I have to get people to look after my children."

"Extremely, it is so difficult. I have only managed to get an appointment due to my baby daughter being ill (less than 12 months old)."

"There are too many patients and not enough doctors. Telephone line are always busy. I came in to book an appointment and stood in the queue from about 8.10am."

"For emergency appointments, the phone line opens at 8.30am. After five minutes, all the appointments are gone."

"I managed to get an emergency appointment today after the GP phoned me back."

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"It takes two weeks to get an urgent appointment. I have ended up seeing a nurse instead of a GP."

"You wait outside from 8am. You're fourth in the queue. When the surgery opens and you try to book an appointment (fifth in the queue) you are told there are no appointments left. People are queuing before the opening times. There have been two occasions when I have needed an urgent appointment on the same day and as there were no appointments left, I ended up being taken to hospital."

"This is my first appointment here as I have just registered with the surgery as my previous surgery said that since my change of address, I no longer fit in their catchment area and gave me 30 days to find an alternative GP."

"There is nothing available."

"Getting an appointment is impossible."

"If you need one, you have to queue outside from 7.30am."

"It is very difficult to get any appointments. I have to walk to get here but I have high blood pressure and it is quite far."

"I had an abscess which I was told needed dressing every day. Reception wouldn't let me book in here so I had to go to the walk-in centre and queue every day for a few hours."

"I had to wait six weeks for an appointment. I ended up giving appointment to my daughter as she needed an emergency appointment. Fortunately, when I saw the GP both my daughter's and my symptoms were discussed."

"I often go to the walk-in centre as I struggle to get an appointment here, but they wouldn't see me today- they said I had to see my GP."

6. We asked: 'Do you find it difficult to get routine appointments?'

18% said Yes

29% said No

53% said Not Applicable

(34 patients answered)

29% of the patients we spoke to said they had no difficulties when booking a routine appointment, although 18% did have difficulties:

"The appointments (four weeks in advance) is a waste of time and telephoning for appointments is no use."

"There is false advertising on the digital screen which says you can book appointments for up to four weeks - in reality you cannot get these appointments."

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7. We asked: 'Overall, how would you rate your experience of booking appointments at this surgery?'

12% said Excellent

41% said Could Be Improved

47% said Poor

(34 patients answered)

47% of the patients we spoke to said the experience of booking an appointment was poor, whilst 41% said it could be improved:

"More help should be provided at reception."

"Telephone lines are always busy. Even when you queue outside the surgery, it can get very busy."

"It's too busy, I can't get to see my doctor of choice."

"I could not get an appointment yesterday for my son."

"Lately, it's been bad. At one time, the service of booking appointments was good."

"Every time you call, there are long queues and when you get through there are no appointments left."

"The telephone lines are always busy. I have never got an appointment on the same day."

"I really need to see the same GP because of my condition but you can't always get to see the same GP."

"I have seen elderly people stand outside in the cold and wet conditions trying to get an appointment."

"I am in the process of registering to book appointments online. There should be more slots with appointments and more reception staff to answer calls."

"The telephone line is mad. It's constantly engaged. Once you get through all the appointments are gone."

"You have to telephone so many times and redial before you can even get through."

"Having more people answering the phone would be an option."

"You can never get through on the phone."

"Can't get through on the telephone and when you do there are no appointments left."

"I am not happy. When I telephone, I am told that I am tenth in the queue. When I get to third or fourth in the queue I get cut off. That is not acceptable."

8. We asked: 'Are the opening times here convenient for you?'

79% said Yes

12% said No

9% said mostly

(34 patients answered)

79% of the patients we spoke to said the times of the surgery were convenient, although 12% said they were not convenient:

"There should be longer opening times and the surgery should be open at weekends."

"I work full-time. Later opening hours would be better."

"Evening appointments would be better."

Results - Quality of Care

9. We asked: 'How do you find the staff?'

58% said Happy with staff **36%** were Happy with Most Staff **6%** were Unhappy with Staff

(33 patients answered)

58% of the patients we spoke to said they were happy with staff whilst 36% were happy with most:

"I don't like the attitude of staff. They don't listen."

"I haven't had a problem with attitudes of staff but I think it's because of how I look. My partner looks like a scally so they judge him. They do not know about the community work he is involved in. They should not judge anyone."

"Staff are friendly."

"Sometimes the receptionists can be a bit off. I can't get an appointment to get a "Back to work" certificate. I tried to make an appointment on Monday for Friday but the receptionist said that I had to book on the day. I will have to queue on Friday from 8am to try and get an appointment."

"The nurse is really nice."

"The nurse clinician is really good."

10. We asked: 'Do you tend to feel listened to during your appointments?'

59% said Yes **15%** said No **26%** said Most of the Time

(34 patients answered)

Almost 60% of the patients we spoke to felt listened to during their appointment, although 26% said they felt listened to most of the time and 15% said they never felt listened to.

11. We asked: 'Do you tend to find the information you receive in your appointments helpful?'

50% said Yes **6%** said No **44%** said Most of the Time

(34 patients answered)

50% of patients said that they tended to find the information they received in their appointments helpful whilst 44% said they mostly found information helpful and 6% said they never find information helpful.

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12. We asked: 'Overall, how satisfied are you with the care provided?'

35% said Very Satisfied

50% said Satisfied

15% said Unsatisfied

(34 patients answered)

50% of the patients said that they were satisfied with the care provided whilst 35% said they were very satisfied. 15% were unsatisfied with care provided:

"The doctor seemed like he cared in my appointment today, but all other appointments have been rushed. You are just a number, they want you out as quickly as possible."

"Some day's appointments are good and on others they are terrible."

"Sometimes you get rushed."

"If you say it's an emergency, then the surgery will always try and help you."

"As long as I get to see my GP, I am satisfied. My doctor always listens to me. It's a pity he is always booked up."

"No problems, the care is over and above."

"Depends on who you see. You cannot hear one of the doctors, it sounds like they are mumbling."

"The service depends on which GP you see."

"Depends on who you see."

Results - Patient Involvement

13. We asked: 'Have you heard of the surgery's Patient Participation Group?'

7% said Yes

93% said No

0% said they were already a member

(28 patients answered)

93% of the patients we spoke to said that they had not heard about the Patient Participation Group.

14. We asked those that answered No to Question 13: 'Is this something you would be interested in?'

11% said Yes

79% said No

10% said Maybe

(28 patients answered)

79% of the patients we spoke to said that they were not interested in joining the Patient Participation Group, although 10% said they may be interested and 10% said they were interested:

"I have not got the time. It is not because I am not interested."

"I am too busy."

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15. We asked those that answered Yes or Maybe to Question 14, 'How would you like to be involved?'

Attend regular meetings only	Online only	Attend both meetings and online
20%	80%	0%

(5 patients answered)

Healthwatch Lancashire Summary of Findings

Here is a summary of findings from the visits to Skelmersdale Family Practice:

- 69% of the patients we spoke to booked their appointment by phone whilst 21% booked at the reception.
- Just over 70% of the patients we spoke to said they do not use the online booking service.
- Just under 50% of the patients we spoke to did not use the online booking service because they did not want to whilst 25% were unaware of the service.
- The majority of patients said they had difficulty getting urgent appointments on the same day.
- 29% of the patients we spoke to said they had no difficulties when booking a routine appointment.
- 47% of the patients we spoke to said the experience of booking an appointment was poor, whilst 41% said it could be improved.
- 79% of the patients we spoke to said the opening times of the surgery were convenient.
- 58% of the patients we spoke to said they were happy with staff whilst 36% were happy with most of the staff and 6% were unhappy with all staff.
- Almost 60% of the patients we spoke to felt listened to during their appointment.
- 50% of the patients we spoke said that they found the information they received in their appointment helpful whilst 6% said they did not find the information helpful.
- 50% of the patients we spoke to said that they were satisfied with the care provided.
- 93% of the patients we spoke to said that they had not heard about the Patient Participation Group.
- 79% of the patients we spoke to said that they were not interested in joining the Patient Participation Group.

Response from Provider

Action Statement

No.	Issues raised by patients	Response or action from provider	To be addressed by	Name of manager responsible
1.	Self check-in machine out of service	We have now been informed by our provider that it is not possible to fix this so we are purchasing a new one	Paula McIlroy	Kim Cowell
2.	CQC Report	As we have recently changed our Practice Manager this has been an oversight which has now been corrected	Kim Cowell	Kim Cowell
3.	On-line booking – the surgery holds the appointments back	This is not the case. The appointments shown on-line are exactly the same as those available in the surgery. We do encourage on-line involvement and have a large number of patients who use this service for ordering prescriptions		
4.	Did you get a reminder for your appointment	This has now been addressed as we have recently signed up for a reminder service		
5.	Difficulty getting urgent appointments on the day	We were aware of this and have recently changed our booking system and now have an emergency doctor on call who sees the patients on the same day. We have also employed an extra nurse clinician to help with the same day demand.		
6.	Difficulty booking appointments	We are limited with the number of appointments we have. As you are aware we have to keep taking new patients but we only have a limited number of clinical rooms and a limited number of clinicians		
7.	Opening Times	We do have a limited number of appointments available of an evening up to 8.30 pm		
8.	Patient Participation Group	We do have an on-line group but the take up by patients when we put out surveys etc is very poor		Kim Cowell

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Additional questions:

1. Have you learnt anything new about the experiences of your patients as a result of this exercise?

We were already aware of most of the problems quoted above but do thank you for your feedback and time. We are always trying to improve things but unfortunately the demand on the service is such that we like many other GP practices struggle to cope with the demand but nevertheless we are trying our best to meet the demand and find innovative ways of working.

2. What was your impression of Healthwatch Lancashire during this exercise? Do you think they could have done anything better?

Very polite and friendly – thank you