



Enter and View Report

GP Access at Padgate Medical Centre

Visit: 7th March 2017

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Background

What is Healthwatch Warrington?

Healthwatch Warrington helps the residents and communities of Warrington to get the best out of local health and social care services. We gather the views of local people and make sure they are heard and listened to by the organisations that provide, fund and monitor these services.

What is Enter and View?

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out *Enter and View* (E&V) visits. Local Healthwatch representatives, who are trained volunteers, carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement.

The Health and Social Care Act (2012) allows local Healthwatch representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, care homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. *Enter and View* visits can happen if people identify a problem but equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation. This enables lessons to be learned and good practice shared.

Healthwatch *Enter and View* visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. If safeguarding issues are raised during a visit Healthwatch Warrington has safeguarding policies in place which identify the correct procedure to be taken.

Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to the findings observed on the specific dates set out below. This report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Warrington would like to thank the staff, in particular Andrea Catterall (Practice Manager), for taking the time to show the visiting team round and for answering their questions. We would also like to thank our trained volunteers for their contributions.

Background and Purpose of the visits

Healthwatch Warrington made the decision to visit GP practices within the borough; with a focus on access and the general environment of surgeries. This is because access to primary care services (mainly GPs) has been identified as a recurrent theme within the public feedback data collected by Healthwatch Warrington.

GP access is often highlighted as a problematic aspect of patient experience, with common issues including; difficulties encountered when booking appointments, a lack of appointment availability and communication problems. However, public service reviews also hint at areas of good practice that could be highlighted and shared. Therefore, our authorised representatives visit GP practices in different clusters to gather feedback directly from patients and conduct specialist Enter & View visits.

Healthwatch Warrington engages with local Patient Participation Groups, GP practices and partner organisations to share our findings and help make improvements through recommendations.

Details of the Visit

Location

The visit took place at Padgate Medical Centre, Station Road, Padgate, Warrington, WA2 0RX.

Date/Time

The visit took place on Tuesday 7th March 2017, from 9:15am to 12:15pm.

Authorised Representatives (Visiting Team)

Jim Sinnott - Healthwatch Warrington, Authorised Representative

Pat Taylor - Healthwatch Warrington, Enter & View Lead

GP Practice Staff

Andrea Catterall, Practice Manager

Rebekah, Receptionist

Hilary, Patient Participation Group Representative

Description of the Surgery

Padgate Medical Centre belongs to the East GP cluster. At present, the surgery has approximately 7,000 registered patients. As well as general consultations, the surgery provides a range of additional clinics and services, including; minor surgery, baby immunisation clinics, female family planning clinics, travel vaccinations, seasonal flu vaccinations. Patients also have access to Practice Nurses for a wide range of services (e.g. well person screening, smear tests, travel vaccinations/advice, dietary advice asthma, diabetes and other chronic disease management) and a midwife (the practice provides child health surveillance, minor surgery and advice on healthy living). In July 2016, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) rated the surgery as overall 'good' in its inspection report.

Results of the Visit

Wherever possible the reports below are in the words of the E&V team members who were present at the time of the visit. The reports have been collated by a member of the Healthwatch Warrington team and some text has been formatted to allow for easy reading; however the essential facts of the visiting team's reports have not been altered.

Observations from the Visit

External Access and Appearance

There are plenty of car parking spaces available to the right of the surgery building. However, care is needed when accessing these (especially for wheelchair users), as there are quite a few pot holes and no reserved spaces for disabled patients visiting the surgery. The Practice Manager clarified that this car park is not owned by the surgery and the surgery is not responsible for its maintenance. In terms of public transport, there is a bus route nearby in Padgate Lane (although it was not clear where the bus stop was in relation to the surgery). The Practice Manager later informed the team that there is a bus stop located in front of the surgery.

The surgery building is in a good state of repair and had clear signage. The immediate area outside the surgery was neat, tidy and litter free.

There was good access to surgery through a nice entrance foyer, containing some up-to-date information posters (including a Healthwatch Warrington poster and a patient suggestion box). There were also a couple of chairs allowing patients to be seated whilst completing the feedback forms. The foyer area is a well thought out, additional small area. The surgery has wide, inward opening entrance doors and a light, airy and warm waiting area (with a clean, neutral smell).

Reception Area

The visiting team announced themselves at reception to a member of staff who was expecting them. The reception desk was positioned at a high level, with no low level section available for wheelchair users. The surgery's receptionist answered the phone promptly and was welcoming with patients on their arrival.

The team were met at reception by Andrea Catterall, Practice Manager and invited into to one of the doctor's rooms for a chat. Andrea was cheerful with a very positive and open disposition. The team asked Andrea about having an electronic booking in system in place at the surgery. Andrea told the visiting team that the surgery has had an electronic system in place for a number of years and that the surgery is looking to expand the number of appointments available using this system, probably around May when the Easter holidays are over.

Waiting Room / Seating Area

The team's first impressions were that the waiting area was spacious, with a good selection of well organised posters and up-to date-pamphlets; including a Friends and Family survey box. However, there were no survey sheets available and this was later rectified by the Practice Manager, when the team pointed this out.

Patient Participation Group (PPG) information was displayed and there was a clear poster showing the 'Did Not Attend' (DNAs) rate for Feb 2017 (41 DNA's, amounting to 8h hour, 41 minutes of wasted surgery time).

The waiting area had plenty of comfortable seating. There were a mixture of standard seats and those raised with arms for disabled/infirm. The Patient call out was via reception. There was a video screen showing good information about physical and mental health issues.

Additional Facilities

The surgery offers a number of facilities for patients with additional access requirements, including; foreign language information (an electronic display system within the building), a translation service, British Sign Language support and a hearing loop. All of the signage was clear on doors and toilets. There were 2 separate toilets; a standard toilet and a spacious disabled toilet - both facilities were spotless with pleasant smell. However, there were no emergency pull cords in either. A really nice touch is a baby changing pod just outside the toilet suite - again spotless. Corridors were nice and wide for good wheelchair access. All areas were clean and tidy with no clutter or obstructions observed.

Dementia Friendly Approach

The surgery had clear signage, but there were no reminders of where you were inside the surgery. Also, there was no clock or calendar. However, the surgery did have a contrasting plain floor covering (carpet with no repeating pattern) - against door colouring, which was good.

Navigation around building

The surgery had spacious uncluttered access to all areas. It was also clear which door to enter.

Cleanliness and Maintenance of Communal Areas

Internally, the surgery building was in a good state of repair throughout. However, the visiting team could not see any hand sanitisers in place (the Practice Manager has since confirmed that these are in place on the wall near reception desk and in all consultation rooms). The surgery's flooring was in good condition - all on one flat plane, with no trip hazards and no sills to encounter. The visiting team also had the opportunity to see inside a doctor's consulting room, which was tidy, well-organised and safe. There was also with no apparent sound from any direction in the immediate area, which was good for confidentiality purposes.

Patient Voice and Feedback

The visiting team noticed a Healthwatch Warrington information poster on display in the foyer.

The surgery has a reasonably active PPG comprising 5 members, 3 of which are the mainstay. The PPG meets 4 times a year with a doctor, nurse, administrator and receptionist in attendance. The surgery is looking to strengthen PPG involvement and recruit more members to strengthen the group's role in the surgery. As such, Andrea will ensure that information about the PPG is prominently displayed in the surgery's waiting area.

Andrea also provided the visiting team with information on the surgery's complaints policy. There is well-positioned patient suggestion box within the surgery; providing the practice with a quick method of acquiring patient feedback. The patients that the visiting team spoke with were well satisfied and felt positively about the practice; as recorded in the face to face surveys carried out.

One patient was a critical about the doctors using Google to check issues in their consulting rooms, but commented that they did not have a problem with the practice in general. The patient then spoke to the team on their way out, after an appointment for their baby and was super positive about how much time and the detail the doctor had gone into during the visit. The visiting team also briefly met one of the PPG members (Hilary) on her way into the surgery and Hilary emphasised how much she appreciated the surgery and was very positive about being a patient there.

Safety

The visiting team did not observe any obvious safety concerns at the surgery.

Staffing, Leadership and Promoting Positive & Respectful Attitudes

At present, the surgery has 3 GP partners and 1 salaried GP, 1 Nurse Clinician, 7 Receptionists, 2 Administrators and a Practice Manager. The visiting team gained the impression that the surgery has good staffing level for all patient needs; with a calm and well organised atmosphere.

Appointments

Until recently, the surgery operated a 3 month forward appointment system; which had the negative drawback of a high DNA rate. However, since reducing the time to 2 weeks, the DNA rates have fallen dramatically.

The practice displays its opening hours and booking procedures both onsite and on its website. Patients are able to book appointments by phone, in person (by visiting reception) and online (via the surgery's website).

The surgery's opening hours are as follows; Monday 8:30am - 6:00pm (evening hours are 6:30pm - 8:15pm), Tuesday 8:30am - 6:00pm, Wednesday 8:30am - 6:00pm, Thursday 8:30am - 6:00pm and Friday 8:30am - 6:00pm. When necessary, the surgery makes referrals to the Out of Hours service, with information leaflets and information displayed on its website about this option.

The surgery offers 3 different types of appointments each day (pre-bookable, book-on-the-day and urgent appointments). If all of these appointments are booked, the GP will contact patients. Appointments are released up to 2 weeks ahead. Routine non-urgent appointments can be booked in advance. Patients can also ask to see a named GP, if they wish.

Patient Survey Responses

The visiting team collected a total of 7 patient survey responses at the surgery. The survey questions focused on patient's access experiences at the practice.

When asked which booking methods were available at the surgery, 100% of respondents stated that they could book by phone (suggesting that this is still the most popular means of getting an appointment), with 57% also being aware of online access and 29% being aware that they could book in person.

When asked about the average length of phone waiting times at the surgery, 57% respondents stated that they were usually able to get through in less than 5 minutes, with 29% waiting between 5-10 minutes, with the remaining respondents stating that it took longer than 10 minutes to get through. One patient commented that they had: "Made 10 calls by phone to get appointment today, my mobile was on speed redial and I counted number of times I called surgery".

Encouragingly, 71% of respondents told the visiting team that they could 'always' or often able to book an appointment for the date and time they wanted, with the remainder stating that they could 'sometimes' get a suitable appointment. When asked how often they could get an appointment to see the named GP of their choice, 43% of respondents stated that they could 'always' or 'often' obtain such an appointment, with a further 43% stating that they could 'sometimes'.

71% of respondents indicated that they were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' overall with the surgery's booking system, with the remaining respondents answering that they were 'not satisfied'.

Respondents also said that the surgery had referred them other services for specialist treatment, including CAMHS (Hollins Park) and Orford Hub for blood tests.

Respondents were also asked for suggestions that could help to improve access at the surgery and for general feedback. Some patients requested weekend and evening appointment access, due to work and family commitments.

A number of patients also wanted to share positive comments about their experiences at the surgery: “Been with Padgate about 20 years and satisfied with the surgery - receptionists are helpful”; “Excellent doctors and staff are very helpful and accommodating”; “Happy with surgery” and, “great care, different doctors have different skills. I know who to go to for what”.

Summary

The team spoke with the Practice Manager about the surgery in general. Andrea told that the team that Padgate Medical Centre is the larger of two surgeries in a practice group (with Woolston Hub being the other) and has been open since 1991. Andrea said that the surgery outgrown the facility and she would ideally like to have a new building to meet the practice’s size requirements and improve access. However, there would be difficulties in choosing a suitable location and gaining sufficient funds to make this happen.

Overall, the visiting team would be happy to patients at Padgate Medical Centre. Staff, especially Andrea, came across as genuinely warm, upbeat and very open. Rebekah (on reception) was responsive, courteous, positive and helpful in the way that she interacted with patients on the phone and in person. There were no major concerns from patients about the appointment booking system and the majority that the team spoke with had in fact made emergency - same day appointments. However, when asked how long they had been waiting to see the doctor, some patients replied that they had waited as long as half an hour; again, one added that this was not a problem as they understood that doctors had high workloads.

Recommendations

- 1. *Responsible Parties to Work with the Surgery and Review Disabled Parking:*** The visiting team appreciate that the car park does not belong to the surgery and it is not within the surgery's remit to make changes in this regard. However, the team would recommend that responsible parties should work with the surgery and support access by making sure that at least a couple of parking spaces are re-designated as disabled spaces (these were present in the past, but lost their yellow markings); including kerb modifications to allow for better wheelchair and buggy access.
- 2. *Upgrade Suggestions:*** the surgery could benefit from the installation of safety chords in its toilets.
- 3. *Strengthen the Surgery's PPG and Patient Voice:*** the visiting team commend the Practice Manager's focus on building the capacity of the surgery's PPG and empowering the voice of patients (this would include regularly checking the stock of patient feedback forms available in the building).

Distribution List

This report has been distributed to the following:

- *Warrington Borough Council*
- *NHS Warrington Clinical Commissioning Group*
- *Care Quality Commission*
- *Healthwatch England*

Appendices

Appendix A

Many thanks for sending the report and I am pleased with the content. However there a number of factual things in there that are either not correct or need tweaking as it is not what I reported.

I have attached below what I think needs changing and would welcome your comments feedback to these.

1. **External Access & Appearance.** - The first paragraph talks about the carpark adjacent to the surgery and about the state of disrepair. For anyone reading the report who is not familiar with the surgery would assume that the car park belongs to the surgery. The car park is not owned by the surgery and we have no control over the maintenance of the car park or spaces. I would be grateful if something could be added to the report to clarify this. With regards to public transport. The bus stop is directly in front of the surgery and I am unsure why this has not been put in the report.
4. **Cleanliness & Maintenance of communal areas.** - the report state the visiting team could not see any hand sanitisers in place. There is a hand sanitiser available in the reception area for patients. This is on the wall adjacent to the reception desk. Hand sanitisers are on the wall in every consulting room also. Please can this be amended.
5. **Patient voice & Feedback.** - the report states Andrea will ensure PPG info is prominently displayed. I feel the information is already prominently displayed.

Recommendations

1. Review of disabled parking - I have tried and tried speaking to the council over the past three year to try and get the disabled spaces marked out and the kerbs. I have also enlisted the help of the Longbarn residents associations help with this but all attempts have been unsuccessful. The car park does not belong to the surgery and this recommendation needs removing as I have not influence over its review.
2. I will speak to the Landlord about the installation of safety cords. As previously stated we are unable to have children's toy due to infection control procedure. In the past I have bought wipeable children's books. The last lot bought (12 books), were all stolen within a month of purchase.
3. Agree with point three this is an ongoing objective of the surgery.

