



Enter and View Report

GP Access at 4 Seasons Medical Centre Ltd

Visit: 30th March 2017

Report published: 9th June 2017

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Background

What is Healthwatch Warrington?

Healthwatch Warrington is a Registered Charitable Organisation (RCN: 1172704) that 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 surgeries' staff, in particular Chris Cassidy (Receptionist), 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 (PPGs), 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 4 Seasons Medical Centre Ltd, Orford Jubilee hub, Jubilee Way, Orford, Warrington, WA2 8HE.

Date/Time

The visit took place on Thursday 30th March 2017, from 9:15am - 11:15am.

Authorised Representatives (Visiting Team)

Clare Screeton (Lead) - Healthwatch Warrington, Authorised Representative
Esstta Hayes (Surveys) - Healthwatch Warrington, Authorised Representative
Ildico Boden (Surveys) - Healthwatch Warrington, Authorised Representative
Jonathon Woodruff (Surveys) - Healthwatch Warrington, Authorised Representative
Pat Taylor (Surveys) - Healthwatch Warrington, Authorised Representative

GP Practice Staff

Chris Cassidy (Receptionist)

Description of the Surgery

4 Seasons Medical Centre Ltd belongs to the Central North GP cluster. At present, this surgery has 2,500 approximately registered patients. As well as general consultations, the surgery provides a range of additional clinics and services, such as; Asthma Clinic, Diabetic Clinic, Cervical Screening Clinic, Heart Clinics Childhood Vaccination Clinic, Travel Vaccinations, Blood pressure, NHS Health Checks, New Patient Checks, Over 75 Health Checks, Midwife, Citizens Advice Bureau, Pharmacy Reviews, Phlebotomy Clinic, travel vaccinations and a range of non-NHS services.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) rated the surgery as overall 'Good' in its 2015 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

The entrance to the Orford Jubilee Hub was clean, tidy and busy, as there are so many services located inside the building. The Hub is serviced by a very good bus route that provides access to and from the town centre.

Waiting Room / Seating Area

The seating area is large and is shared between used for all 3 GP practices based in the Hub. The area is fitted with plenty of seats and there is literature available for visitors to read. There were also some posters on the walls containing information for patients and visitors, but not too many as to appear cluttered.

Reception Area

Each surgery's reception area is distinguishable from one another; with plenty of signage in place and each service having different, brightly covered receptions. There are electronic screens displaying the patient's names and each one had the surgery's sign and logo underneath.

Additional Facilities

The surgery offers a range of facilities for patients with additional access needs, such as disabled parking and disabled toilet facilities (fitted with a safety chord). The receptionist, Chris, described the practice as ‘fully accessible’. The surgery’s website also has a Google translation feature in place for foreign language access.

There were no electronic booking system machines in place at the practice for patients to use. However, the surgery has a representative from Citizens Advice Bureau visit once a fortnight so that patients do not have to access this service via the town centre. Furthermore, a member of the drug and alcohol team that comes in once a week. The surgery also operates a ‘ring around’ service in place for elderly patients that are receiving care to check up on them. The practice contacts the patient on a Monday and Friday to see how they are feeling, or if they have any issues.

Dementia Friendly Approach

The whole medical centre was decorated in bright colours and clearly signed. The flooring is on a single level and remained the same colour throughout. The stairwell and exit are also secured by staff fobs.

Navigation around building

The surgery space was relatively small and was easy to access in all areas. All signage inside was clear. The stairwell to the Bloods Unit (located upstairs) was protected by the staff electronic fob system.

Cleanliness and Maintenance of Communal Areas

All spaces observed by were very clean. The visiting team were shown inside all of the rooms (apart from the 2 consultation rooms, as they were in use). There is a dirty utility room used for clinical waste and a separate clean utility room.

The specimen toilet is not visible from reception, which is good for the dignity of patients. There was a hand gel dispenser located in the main entrance for patients and staff to use.

Patient Voice and Feedback

The surgery has an active PPG group that meets regularly.

Safety

No apparent safety issues were noted during the visit.

Staffing, Leadership and Promoting Positive & Respectful Attitudes

At present, the surgery has 2 GPs, 2 Nurses, 5 Receptionists / Administrators, 1 Nurse Prescriber, 1 Healthcare Assistant and a Pharmacist (visiting once a fortnight). All the staff that the visiting team spoke with were happy working in the practice and felt supported. It was evident that they all work together as a team. This was reiterated by Chris during the visiting team's interview; she said that the practice had a dedicated and caring team that all pull together and genuinely care about the patients in the surgery. This was reflected by the way the receptionist interacted with the patients in a friendly and respectful manner.

Appointments

The practice advertises its opening hours and admissions procedures both on site and on its website. The surgery operates the following opening times; Monday 8:00am - 6:30pm, Tuesday 8:00am - 6:30pm, Wednesday 8:00-am - 6:30pm, Thursday 8:00am - 6:30pm, Friday 8:00am - 6:30pm. The surgery offers same day appointments and also makes patients aware of the Out of Hours service (by informing patients directly at reception and displaying notices).

Patients can book appointments online and by calling the practice. The surgery also operates a 'Dr First' phone triage system on a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Chris said that the system works very well at the practice. Chris said that if a patient requests an appointment with a certain Doctor, they will always see that Doctor.

Patient Survey Responses

The visiting team received a total of 3 survey responses from patients at the surgery, with survey questions focusing upon their access experiences.

Patients were asked about which appointment booking methods they were aware of being in place at the surgery. All 3 patients mentioned the phone booking method (which would appear to be the most popular method of booking), whereas 1 out of 3 patients mentioned online booking, the 'Dr First' system and visiting in person to book.

Patients were also asked about the length of time, on average, it takes for them to reach reception when booking an appointment via the phone. All 3 patients stated that it took less than 5 minutes to get through, which is excellent.

In terms of getting an appointment at a suitable time and date for them, all 3 patients responded that they could 'always' secure this type of appointment. 1 patient stated that they could 'always' get an appointment with a named GP of their choice. However, 1 patient told us that they could 'never' get an appointment with their named GP (and 1 skipped this question).

1 patient also told the team that they had been referred to a specialist service by the surgery (at the Halliwell Jones Stadium), which is indicative of the surgery's proactive approach to working with other services. This is also reflected in Chris' comments about the strong working relationship that the surgery has with the other practices in the building (they maintain an email information group).

When asked how satisfied they were (overall) with the surgery's booking system, all 3 patients told the team that they were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied', which is very encouraging.

Patients were also asked for their general feedback and suggestions for improving access at the surgery. Most of the patients were satisfied and did not wish to see any changes at the surgery. However, one patient did comment that they felt the "NHS is under-resourced" and one patient wanted more "set doctors", to benefit from continuity of care.

Summary

The visiting team were impressed with the surgery's facilities, the attitudes of staff and there were no major concerns around patient access identified during the visit. This is mirrored in the patient feedback received and Chris' comments. There were areas of good practice that it would be useful to share and adjustments that could help to further improve access at the surgery. This is reflected in this report's recommendations.

Recommendations

- 1. *Electronic Booking Machines:*** The surgery should consider the benefit of installing electronic check in systems within the surgery; this would be especially helpful for patients that may require translation services.
- 2. *Share Good Practice:*** The practice has received good patient feedback around access that it would be useful to share with other GP surgeries, such as the 'ring around' service in place. This could be achieved in partnership with Healthwatch Warrington.

Distribution List

This report has been distributed to the following:

- *Warrington Borough Council*
- *Warrington CCG*
- *Care Quality Commission*
- *Healthwatch England*

Appendices

Appendix A

Response from Provider

Hi

The only comment I had was the check in screens are ordered with IT and we are awaiting them to liaise with the building to enable cabling to take place.

Thanks

Christine Brierley
Practice Manager

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