



Enter and View Report

GP Access at Parkview Medical Practice

Visit: 30th 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 surgeries' staff, in particular Gillian Adamson (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 (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 Parkview Medical Practice, 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 Screeeton (Surveys) - Healthwatch Warrington, Authorised Representative

Esstta Hayes (Lead) - 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

Gillian Adamson (Practice Manager)

Description of the Surgery

Parkview Medical Practice belongs to the Central North GP cluster. At present, this surgery has approximately 5811 registered patients. As well as general consultations, the surgery provides a range of additional clinics and services, such as; Baby clinics, Childhood Immunisations, Cervical Smears, Family Planning, Antenatal and Postnatal, Counselling, Minor Surgery, Chronic Disease Management reviews (Asthma, COPD, Diabetes, Heart Disease, Cardio-Vascular Disease, Hypertension), Weight Management, Blood Tests, Smoking Cessation, Travel Vaccinations, Dressings, Stitch Removal, Well man/Woman, Ultrasound clinics, Midwife Visits and Holiday Vaccinations and advice and General Health Education.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) rated the surgery as overall 'requires improvement' in its April 2016 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

Signage on approach to the Orford Jubilee Hub building is easy to see and clearly displayed above the main doors. Paving and planted areas surrounding the facility are well maintained. Upon entrance, the Health Centre is to the right, marked with a large blue NHS sign, and small stainless steel plaques, with black text and a slightly larger steel sign over the door. For new patients, or those with sight impairments, the facility could be difficult to identify.

The surgery is accessible by a bus stop immediately outside the Hub, which is served regularly by the 20/21 Network Warrington buses. The exterior front and inner door of the Hub are electronic double width doors, for ease of access for those with buggies/wheelchairs. The inner door to the Health Centre is a wooden slow close door with handles, which opens outwards, and could pose issues for those with limited mobility or with wheelchairs. Parking spaces are plentiful and free of charge up to a maximum of 3 hours (however, the car park can be affected by flooding due to drainage issues, which is a problem for patients).

Waiting Room / Seating Area

The waiting area is shared across the three surgeries located in the building and is opposite the reception desk. The waiting room area was bright, clean and airy, but it lacked an electronic signing in point for the surgery.

However, seating was plentiful, comfortably upholstered and varied - some chairs had arms and some did not. In addition, some sturdy sofas were provided and low-level stools were also available, as well as high backed chairs with arms which one patient said was very helpful for her health and mobility needs. All chairs were wipe-clean, helping with infection control.

An electronic display board is sited opposite the seating area, with a bell and text announcements for patients' appointments (detailing the room they should visit). The screen also displayed NHS information, for example, NHS 111 and appropriate A&E use. Within the waiting area, there is a also small children's space; equipped with a small table and child-size chairs. Children's and adult's books are available for patients (provided by Livewire).

Some standalone displays were visible for leaflets and signs. However, displays on the wall of the waiting area were limited; posters were restricted to boards, and there are very few within the surgery. More information displays and signs could benefit patients and still work to maintain the aesthetic of the building.

Reception Area

Signage and areas around the reception desks located inside the Health Centre are clearly marked for each surgery; Park View Medical Centre's desk is yellow, while Eric Moore Partnership Medical Centre's is blue, and 4 Seasons Medical Centre Ltds' is green.

A prescription box and veteran support information is available to the immediate left of the reception desk. Patients waiting to be seen were often observed to be stood outside the colour marked areas, next to the desk; helping patient privacy during discussion at the desk. No ambient noise was provided, which could further help maintain the privacy of attending patients and those on the phones (as calls were also taken on reception). The desk also hosted leaflets about WIRED Carers, Warrington Disability Partnership, NHS Warrington Clinical Commissioning Group and Adult Social Care.

Additional Facilities

There are a number of additional features in place to support those patients and visitors with additional needs. For instance, a disabled toilet is available within the shared waiting area; fitted with washing/drying facilities, an emergency cord and support arm for the toilet. Although this toilet is not directly in the eye line of the reception, a side-on display sign is visible with text and images.

There are several disabled accessible parking bays, sited directly outside the Hub entrance. The surgery's reception desk height is staggered, which means that it is accessible for people in wheelchairs. Lifts are also available to transport visitors to the upper areas in the hub building.

Furthermore, the surgery has access to British Sign Language support, which is available through telephone/typing service and the surgery also provides a hearing loop and this is clearly indicated at reception. The surgery's website also offers a translation the website offers online translation through Google Translate for over 50 language and foreign language leaflets are also available upon request in the surgery.

Dementia Friendly Approach

Flooring inside the waiting area was all on one level, easy to clean and comprised of a uniform wooden laminate, with rubber/coloured areas around each surgery. However, no clocks are visible on the walls of the surgery's waiting area or reception.

Navigation around building

Signage to the side of the stairs in the waiting area offered information about other services on the next level of the building (for example, Bridgewater Community Healthcare, Phlebotomy, Lifestyles). Signage within the surgery space was clearly displayed, but limited. Again, this signage was black text on steel signs (which could present difficulties for patients with limited vision, or sight impairments).

Cleanliness and Maintenance of Communal Areas

The surgery was clean, well-maintained and orderly. Leaflets and information were well-stocked, but there were not many displays or wall mounted leaflet holders provided (given the limitations of wall space).

Patient Voice and Feedback

The surgery's PPG meets quarterly, with support from the staff team (the Practice Manager, Secretary and Nurse are usually in attendance). The PPG is active and has around 8 members. The PPG have helped the surgery in the past with activities such as advising patients during flu clinics, which helped the surgery to run well and more smoothly. However, PPG information was not clearly displayed (due to the limitations of wall displays in the surgery). The PPG could be better promoted and patient participation encouraged if this information were provided, placed at eye-level and in a prominent spot in the waiting area.

Though Friend and Family Test information is available at the main desk and promoted on the display screens, perhaps moving the response box to somewhere out of the immediate eye line of the reception staff would help patients feel more confident about responding to the F and F Test and raising issues.

Safety

All floors were clear of obstructions and trip hazards. Upon arrival, the Team were asked to sign in as visitors, which an indicator of good security practices being in place.

Staffing, Leadership and Promoting Positive & Respectful Attitudes

At present, the surgery has 2 GPs, 4 x Locums (part time), 1 Nurse Prescriber (another nurse prescriber will be in post in late April 2017), 4 reception staff, 1 x Administrator and 1 Secretary/Receptionist.

During the visit, the main reception desk was manned by two members of staff who were busy, but friendly, and helpful to all patients who called or approached in person. The staff that the visit team spoke with all said they felt well supported and able to discuss issues with the Management team.

Appointments

The practice advertises its opening hours and booking procedures on its website. However, opening times were not visible upon arrival at the surgery, and were not clearly displayed within the surgery itself.

The surgery's opening hours are Monday 8:00am - 6:30pm, Tuesday 8:00am - 6:30pm, Wednesday 8:00am - 6:30pm, Thursday 8:00am - 6:30pm and Friday 8:00am - 6:30pm.

Patients are able to book appointments by phone, online, in-person (by visiting reception) and via written correspondence, as required (for example, if a patient were unable to use other methods).

Patients are able to book same day appointments, every day (3 appointments per clinic are available each day) and patients can also book 1 week in advance. The surgery also makes patients aware of the Out of Hours service, if needed, by displaying notices, providing information leaflets, posting information on its website and reception staff inform patients directly.

When asked about any changes that could be made to improve access (from a service perspective), the Practice Manager commented that more appointments would help accessibility of the surgery (for example, if the surgery had more GPs and nursing staff. The Practice Manager also suggested that patients should also be encouraged locally and nationally to make best use of other available services (such as pharmacists) to alleviate pressure on GP surgeries.

Furthermore, the surgery records over 100 patient Did Not Attends (DNAs) per month, which again impacts upon the availability of these missed appointments for other patients. These issues relate to patient awareness and behavioural changes that could help to improve GP access.

Patient Survey Responses

The visiting team received a total of 11 survey responses from patients at the surgery, with the survey questions focusing on their access experiences and their suggestions for making access improvements at the practice.

Patients were asked about their awareness of the various appointment booking methods available to them at the surgery. 9 out of 11 respondents mentioned phone access, which suggests that this remains the most popular and well known booking method. Just over 1/3 of respondents knew about booking online and just under 1/3 of respondents mentioned the option of visiting reception and booking in person.

Patients were also asked how long, on average, it took for them to reach reception when booking appointments via phone calls. Just under 1/3 of respondents stated that they could get through in less than 5 minutes, with the remainder telling us that they waited around 5-10 minutes. None of the respondents stated that they had to wait more than 10 minutes, or couldn't get through due to busy lines.

When asked how frequently they could get an appointment time and date that suited them, over 1/3 of respondents stated 'always' and around 1/3 stated 'often', with the remainder indicating they could 'sometimes'. When asked to confirm how often they could get to see a named doctor of their choice, around 1/3 stated that they 'always' could, 1 respondent indicated that they could 'often', with around 1/2 of respondents 'sometimes' able to secure this type of appointment.

The survey questions asked patients how satisfied (overall) they were with the surgery's booking system. Over 2/3 of respondents stated that they were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied', with 2 respondents feeling 'neutral' and 1 being 'not satisfied'.

Patients were also asked for suggestions that could help to improve access and their general feedback about the surgery. Most respondents were very happy with the surgery and did not have any suggestions to make, for example: "No - quite happy", "Absolutely fabulous - reception keep us running".

However, some respondents did offer some constructive feedback; "Saturday (AM) [appointments] would be helpful"; "Don't like phone system as had 9 attempts to get through, but not always like that".

The above suggests that, in general, phone line capacity, appointment availability and staff availability is not causing any major problematic issues at the surgery. It was also encouraging to find that one patient told the team that they had been referred to the neighbouring Eric Moore Partnership Medical Practice for specialist treatment; indicative of good partnership working.

Summary

Following the visit, the team gained the impression that the surgery was well run, that staff were courteous and professional and that generally speaking, access to at the surgery was relatively good. The patients that shared their feedback were mostly happy with the services they received.

However, there some adjustments were identified that could help to further improve access at the surgery and this is reflected in the recommendations outlined in this report. The surgery's management team also recognise that there are areas of success, as well as aspects that could benefit from change.

For instance, from the Practice Manager's perspective, surgeries within the Orford Jubilee Hub and the wider cluster work well together. The surgery would like to implement improvements in some areas, for example, by enhancing display space and improving signage. The surgery would also like to use electronic check in at reception, to help reduce waiting times for patients and release time for staff at reception. These improvements are not currently available as they have not been permitted (displays/signage) or signed off (e-booking) by the building's management.

Recommendations

- 1. *Signage and Doorway Improvements:*** In certain areas (such as the main entrance), signage is limited and displayed with black text on steel signs with smaller font (this could present difficulties for patients with limited vision, or sight impairments). The surgery should consider changing this signage format and increasing signage in target areas. Furthermore, the non-automatic doors should be upgraded to have push button access, to improve patient navigation. These changes would involve conversations with the building management about taking patient feedback on board.
- 2. *Improved Patient Information and Signposting Displays:*** the surgery could benefit from the installation of more wall displays to encourage patient involvement in the PPG and help to improve patient awareness of available support and encourage the use of alternative services and resources, for example, pharmacies.
- 3. *Encourage Greater Levels of Patient Feedback:*** the surgery should consider moving the Friends and Family Test response box out of the immediate line of site of reception, as this could give patients more confidence to leave feedback. PPG information should also be more clearly displayed in the surgery to encourage greater participation.

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

Healthwatch Warrington offered the provider an opportunity to provide a formal response to the draft report, for inclusion in the published version. However, the provider did not submit a formal response to the report.

your voice counts

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