



Details of visit

Service address:	The Health Centre, Church Street, Dunstable, LU6 3SU
Service Provider:	Priory Gardens Surgery,
Date and Time:	31st May 2017 – 10:00-12:30
Authorised Representatives:	Dave Simpson, Den Fensome, Linda Harrison Dee Dillistone (Observer) Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire
Contact details:	Capability House, Wrest Park, Silsoe, Bedfordshire, MK45 4HR Tel: 0300 303 8554

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire would like to thank the service provider, patients and staff (clinical and non-clinical), for their contribution to the Enter and View Programme.

Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all patients and staff (clinical and non-clinical), only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.



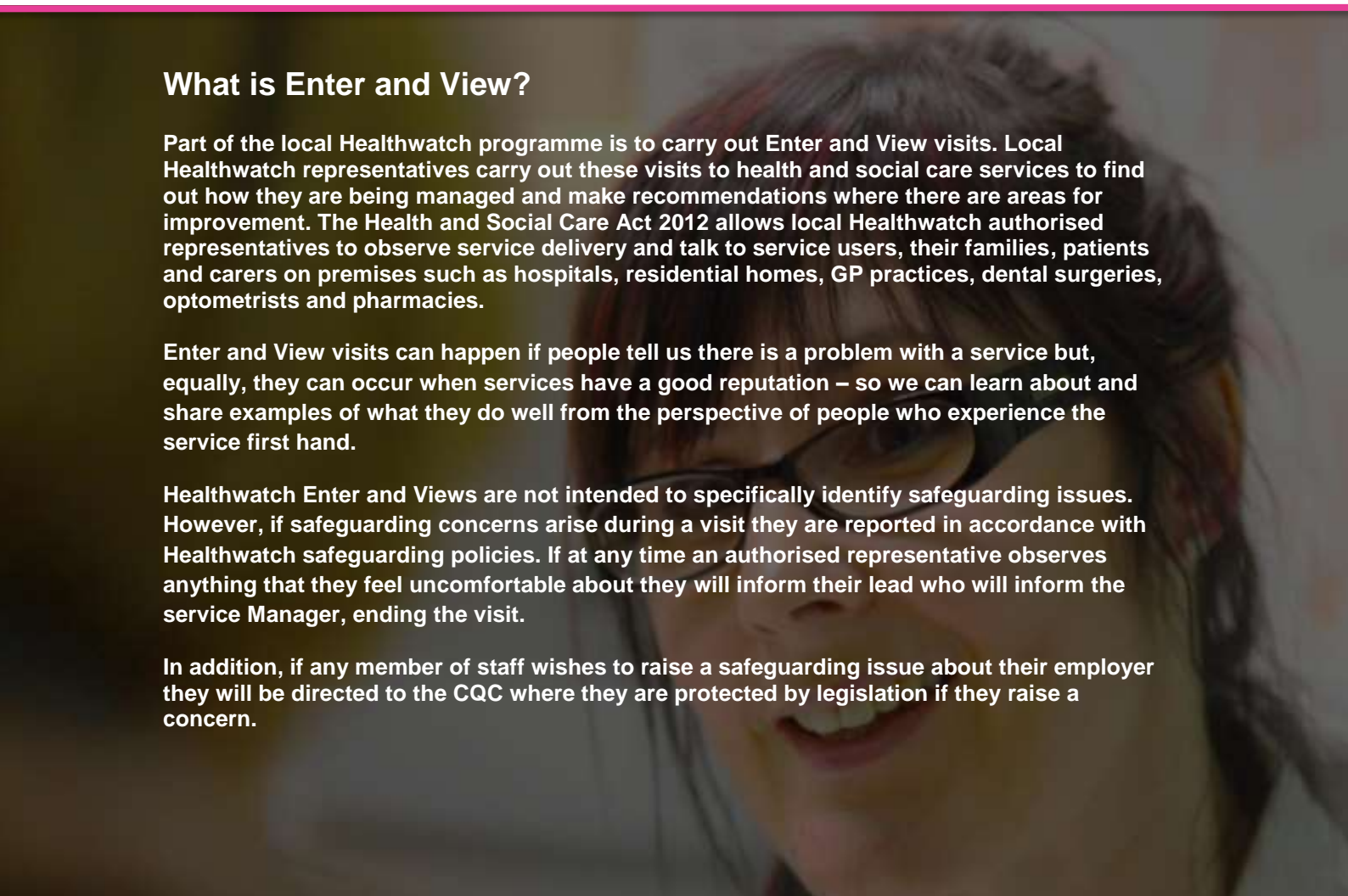
What is Enter and View?

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out Enter and View visits. Local Healthwatch representatives carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being managed and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families, patients and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies.

Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation – so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch Enter and Views are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies. If at any time an authorised representative observes anything that they feel uncomfortable about they will inform their lead who will inform the service Manager, ending the visit.

In addition, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer they will be directed to the CQC where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.



Purpose of the visit

- To engage with patients of GP Practices and understand how dignity is being respected;
- Identify examples of good working practice;
- Observe patients engaging with staff (clinical and non-clinical), and their surroundings.



Strategic drivers

- Care Quality Commission dignity and wellbeing strategy.
- GP Surgeries are a Local Healthwatch priority.

Methodology

This was an announced Enter and View Visit carried out at Priory Gardens Surgery in Dunstable.

A letter and posters announcing Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire's visit were previously sent to the practice. A questionnaire was also sent to the Practice Manager to complete prior to the visit. Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire also delivered 30 copies of a questionnaire for patients to fill in, together with a 'response box', to post their completed questionnaires prior to HWCB's visit. The purpose was to minimise disruption and inconvenience to patients during the visit.

On the day of the visit, the Practice Manager arranged for HWCB representatives to talk to several GPs and members of their administration and clinical staff. This was in addition to speaking to patients in the waiting area. Representatives also undertook a tour of the premises to observe accessibility, including disabled access, the availability of patient information and condition of the building.





Summary of findings

The Practice is housed on the ground floor of The Health Centre, a 40-year-old two storey building close to Dunstable town centre. The building is owned by NHS Property Services, and from the outside looks 'tired and unwelcoming', with a covered walkway adjacent to the entrance, behind large iron railings.

On arrival HWCB Representatives, after signing-in, were met by the Practice Manager. Following introductions to the team, the lead representative briefed the Practice Manager about Healthwatch generally and HWCB in particular, the purpose and format of the visit, and the post visit actions.

The team subsequently visited various different areas within the practice and spoke with staff, both clinical and administrative, and to patients when and where convenient. General observations were also conducted which included access to the building, signage etc.

HWCB's lead representative spoke at length to the Practice Manager who stated that he felt the practice was not very well supported by BCCG and the NHS. The Practice is operating at 100% room capacity and had asked for help to obtain more rooms, without success. The practice currently has 11,128 patients registered, with an imminent influx of 400 or more expected when another local surgery closes down.

Results of visit

Staff

The Practice has the following members of staff:

- 6 GPs – 3 male and 3 females, 3 are Partners
- 3 Practice Nurses
- 2 Nurse Prescribers
- 2 Healthcare Assistants (HCA)
- 11 Admin staff
- 5 other staff
- 1 Practice Manager

Specialist Services provided:

- INR
- Maternity
- Minor Operations, including newly trained senior nurse
- Phlebotomy – limited service
- DVT – service offered for the Chiltern Vale Locality
- Stop Smoking Service
- NHS Health checks
- Minor Illness Clinic
- Asthma Clinic
- Diabetic Clinic
- Baby Clinic

Surgery Hours

Monday	8:00 am to 6:30 pm
Tuesday	8:00 am to 6:30 pm
Wednesday	8:00 am to 6:00 pm
Thursday	8:00 am to 6:30 pm
Friday	8:00 am to 6:30 pm
Saturday	8:30 am to 12:30 pm
Sunday	Closed



Environment

Other observations included:

- On entry, the ambient atmosphere was stale, stuffy with an unpleasant odour.
- The general décor throughout is in need of attention and redecoration.
- The carpet in the foyer is worn and threadbare – possibly the source of the stale smell.
- The SystmOne terminal is not at a height suitable for wheelchair users.
- There is no Hearing Loop available.
- There are no photographs of Practice staff displayed by their names, nor on the website.
- The waiting area has no access to drinking water for patients.
- There is a lack of children's play equipment and/or reading materials.
- Apart from the HWCB Poster on the ballot box, no information about Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire was on display.
- Patients are called in for their appointments by the GP or other practitioner coming into reception to ask for them.

Car Parking

Two dedicated Disabled Parking bays are situated adjacent to the surgery; all other spaces are reserved for GPs and Practice staff. There is a public Pay and Display car park very close by.

Patient Information

A selection of information for patients is on display in the waiting area including two noticeboards.

Registration at the Practice

The Practice Manager informed representatives that new patient registration forms are available at the reception desk and online.

The Practice operates a policy whereby they will see all patients who visit the surgery, including transient patients with 'immediate and necessary needs' for up to 14 days before they need to register with the Practice as temporary residents.

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

The PPG meets bi-monthly, and consists mainly of retired or semi-retired patients. The PPG is advertised in the waiting room, on the website, in the Practice handbook, Newsletter and on their Facebook page which has 550 users. There are also 60 'virtual PPG' members.

The PPG newsletter is also published on the website.

Patient Consultation

Patient opinion is gathered via the PPG, and from SystmOne feedback. The NHS Friends & Family questionnaire was clearly not being promoted with no returns received.

Appointments System

The Practice Manager informed representatives that patients can book appointments in person, by telephone or online using SystmOne. The normal appointment slot is for 10 minutes, but patients with more complex conditions may ask for longer.

Patients who do not need a face-to-face consultation may ask for telephone consultations, which the reception staff will direct to the appropriate health professional.

The surgery also operates a 'Sit & Wait' clinic between 9:30 – 11:30 Monday to Friday and 3:30 – 5:30 on Monday and Friday afternoons. The average wait time is 45 minutes, but on occasions it may be over one hour.

Out of Hours Care

This service is currently provided by CareUK; patients ring the surgery's answerphone and are directed to the out of hour's number.

More urgent care is accessed by the NHS 111 telephone service and is provided by Herts Urgent Care Service (HUC). There is also a walk-in centre in Chapel Street, Luton.

Medication & Prescriptions

Medication reviews are carried out six-monthly, usually with the patient. Repeat prescriptions can be ordered online, in person, or by using the 'post box' in reception. These take three working days to be prepared.

Patient Questionnaire Results

Patient questionnaire surveys were delivered to the surgery two weeks prior to HWCB's visit, for completion by patients. Practice staff were asked to encourage patients to complete the surveys when registering at reception however disappointingly, only three questionnaires were completed prior to the visit. Clearly the results will not show a true representation of patient opinion however, results are detailed below:

1. Did you find it easy to register at the Practice? - Two answers were positive, one negative.
2. When registering at the Practice, did you receive a Practice Leaflet/Handbook? – Again, two positive, one negative.
3. Are all staff at your Practice (Reception/Practice Manager etc) polite, helpful and sensitive to your needs? – Once again one negative with two positives, one of whom commented 'Very!'
4. How do you book an appointment at the surgery? – Two used the Online booking system, one uses the telephone.
5. If there is a recorded message when you call the surgery, is this clear, easy to understand and pleasant? – All three answered 'No', with one comment that *'It is being looked at!'*
6. Are there appointments available in unsociable hours? (e.g. before 8:00 am or after 6:30 pm) – One patient responded 'Yes', but two said 'No'.
7. Can you get an appointment at the surgery when you need one? – Two said they could, one said 'No'.
8. Do you receive a reminder text message about your appointment on your mobile? – One said 'Yes', one 'No' and one does not use this service.
9. When booking an appointment are you given a choice of Doctor, Nurse or other Health Practitioner? – Two said they were; one said they were not.
10. What do you do if you need out of hours care? – One responded, 'Dial 111 – questionable result', two did not answer the question.
11. Do you feel you have enough time with the GP, Nurse or Healthcare Assistant (HCA) to discuss your issues? – Once again, two replied 'Yes' and one 'No'.
12. At your appointment, do you feel the GP, nurse or other Healthcare Assistant listens to you and considers your opinion? – Only two answered this question and both said 'Yes'.
13. Would you recommend your surgery to other people? - Only two answered this question and both said 'Yes'
14. Do you know how to make a complaint about the surgery? – Only two answered this question and both said 'Yes'
15. Are you a member of the Patient Participation Group (PPG) at this surgery? – One respondent is a member of the PPG.

General comments received from patients included:

- *'The phlebotomy service could be improved, if I have to have a full set of bloods done I have to go to the L&D which is inconvenient.'*
- *'My GP has referred me for services I hadn't even thought of, and have been really helpful to me.'*
- *'Nurse appointments are only available by calling in, you can't book these online. When calling they are never intrusive, and they call you back when they say they will.'*
- *'I would like more appointment times to be available.'*
- *'Would like to have weekend appointments.'*

Interaction between Patients and Staff

HWCB representatives observed interactions between patients and staff, both administrative and clinical, and saw that all of these were carried out in a courteous, professional and friendly manner'

Clinical and non-clinical staff

Six of the nine various members of staff interviewed by Representatives were not aware of the existence of Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire nor of its functions and duties.

The general consensus expressed to HWCB Representatives was that whilst clinical staffing levels were adequate at present, there was a need for more administrative staff, particularly in light of the increase in patient numbers being experienced.

Some members of staff also commented on the lack of access to drinking water in the reception/waiting area, and also commented on the frustrations patients felt about the phlebotomy service.

Concerns/Complaints Procedure

The Practice scored two out of five on HWCB's Mystery Shopper report 'Investigating the Complaints Process – General Practice' in 2015, and representatives can report that some remedial action was taken and that the Practice now scores four out of five.



Recommendations

Although the names of clinical and administrative staff are displayed in the surgery and on the website, photographs are not displayed of members of the team. Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire recommends that photographs of the team are displayed in the building and on the website to assist all patients to recognise members of the Practice.

HWCB further recommends that drinking water facilities be made available in the waiting area, and that tissues are also made readily available for patients.

Prior to the visit, HWCB Representatives attempted to ring the surgery within working hours and received the answerphone message. Unfortunately, HWCB felt that the message is harsh and not 'user-friendly' and is likely to cause frustration among patients. HWCB would therefore recommend that this message be reviewed (by the PPG?) and changed to a more user friendly and informative message.

HWCB would further recommend that all surgery staff encourage patients to complete the NHS 'Friends and Family' test and information is displayed in the practice, including on their website, about Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire.

It was noted that the surgery environment and décor is in need of redecoration and updating. HWCB would therefore recommend that the surgery consider redecoration as a priority to create a more pleasant atmosphere for patients visiting the surgery.

Finally, Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire recommends that this report is shared with the patients and staff (clinical and non-clinical) of the Practice and to advise that if they should wish to contribute any additional comments about the report, to contact Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire direct.

Service Provider response

