



Healthwatch Warwickshire  
GP Patient Experience Review 2015-17



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# Overview

## *In-depth review of GPs across Warwickshire, 2015-17*

Between February 2015 and March 2017, Healthwatch Warwickshire (HWW) conducted an in-depth assessment of patient experience at the 82 GP practices across Warwickshire.

Over the two year period, our Authorised Representatives conducted Enter and View visits to the 82 GP practices, as well as distributing patient surveys at the facilities.

HWW surveyed more than 2000 patients, obtaining valuable independent intelligence about their specific experiences and concerns.

The project followed and built on HWW's previous study, reported in June 2015, "Patient Access to GP Services, Survey Analysis and Report".

The review encompassed the whole of Warwickshire, comprising three Clinical Commissioning Groups:

- Warwickshire North
- South Warwickshire and
- Rugby (part of Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group).

**In our role as consumer champions for local health service users, Healthwatch Warwickshire needs to be actively engaged with patients, to fully understand their experiences of GP care.**

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# What we did

HWW supports local people to share their experiences and opinions of local health and social care services.

The majority of the local population will make use of their GP practice, it is a fundamental and critical element of health care provision.

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In 2015 Healthwatch Warwickshire started a programme of assessing all GP surgeries across Warwickshire in each of the three Clinical Commissioning Group (CCGs) areas, ie. South Warwickshire, Warwickshire North and Rugby (part of Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group).

The aim was to assess the patient experience from end-to-end, including making the initial appointment, the visit itself, and any additional services such as out-of-hours appointments and home visits.

## Enter and View

HWW is an independent consumer organisation with a statutory power to 'Enter and View' any premises where health and social care is provided and funded by the local authority.

Enter and View is an opportunity to:

- Listen to views and get feedback from service users
- Collect views of carers and relatives of service users
- Observe the nature and quality of the services provided

- Recommend changes which directly impact on service user experience
- Report findings and associated recommendations.

Visits are conducted by authorised representatives who are trained volunteers supervised by members of HWW staff.

More details about the Enter and View process is available on the HWW website [here](#).

There is a total of 82 GP surgeries in the county and the aim of the project was to build a complete picture of the patient experience in Warwickshire by visiting each surgery and obtaining local service users' opinions.

We did this by visiting all GP practices and undertaking an Enter and View assessment. We also spoke with relevant staff available at the time of the visit (in most cases this was the Practice Manager and Reception staff).

## Patient Surveys

During our visit to the GP practices, we also conducted over 2000 one-to-one surveys with patients in the surgery.



A copy of the survey is provided as an Appendix.

Subsequent to each visit we compiled a report and a series of recommendations based on service users' feedback which was then sent to the Practice Manager to check for factual accuracy and to add a surgery response (should they wish to do so).

All individual Enter and View reports from the project are available on the HWW website here: [GP Surgery Reports](#)

After each GP report was published, HWW awarded the practice with a certificate, commemorating their successful participation in the project.

Our Authorised Representatives reported that almost without exception the surgeries were welcoming and the Practice Managers went to considerable efforts to make themselves available.



# What we learnt

Specific assessments and recommendations for each GP practice are reported separately in the [GP Surgery Reports](#) available on the HWW website. Similar areas for improvement were noted in many cases, these are summarised below:

No. GP Surgeries	Area for improvement	Typical Recommendation
49	Appointment booking system	Many patients raised concerns about appointment booking systems. We recommended maximising the use of the online booking system to reduce the pressure on phone lines and providing information for patients on how to use this.
38	Communicate delays to patients on the day	Informing patients on the day of any delays which may impact their appointment. Recommending that a notice board is displayed at reception (or on the TV electronic information screen where applicable), so that patients don't have to keep asking receptionists.
16	Promoting the PPG	PPGs (Patient Participation Groups) are a group of patients who meet on a regular basis to look at how they can positively influence the development of the surgery and local health services. Each surgery is now contractually required to have a PPG. We recommended a range of measures around improving the visibility of the PPG and providing more information. These included providing minutes of the PPG meetings on a noticeboard or website. One surgery was recommended to establish a PPG.
14	Provide a comments and complaints box	Also an additional two recommendations around displaying complaints procedure and ensuring staff are trained on it.
10	Notice boards	To ensure the information on notice boards is up to date, relevant and less cluttered.
10	Fully advertise available services to patients	Including ensuring patients are aware of extended opening hours (7), general opening hours (3), hearing loop (1), translation services (2) and maternity appointments (1).
7	Reception issues	Recommendations included increasing staffing to address queues, advising against patients being asked for medical info by receptionists, and general communication by receptionists.  Also providing and promoting a space for patients to discuss private/confidential issues.

6	Improving waiting areas	Providing hand sanitiser, ensuring the tannoy is clear and easy to hear, décor/ layout / lighting etc. We also made accessibility recommendations which are listed separately.
6	Updating signage in the surgery	
9	Accessibility	These included issues around availability and demarcation of disabled parking spaces (5 recommendations) and around the premises, such as automatic doors or a bell and chairs suitable for people with mobility issues (4 recommendations).
	Sharing or noting good practice	A number of surgeries were encouraged to share good practice. Including: voluntary transport scheme, services to support the elderly, appointment booking system, triage system and electronic prescription service, answering telephones away from reception, signage including braille, community meetings held for patients with an informative/preventative focus.

## ***Examples of good practice observed***

During the project, we observed numerous examples of best practice, a few examples are detailed below. More information is available in the individual GP reports published on our website.

### **Arden Medical Centre, Stratford-upon-Avon**

The Surgery is part of the South Warwickshire GP Over 75s Project. An administrative assistant works at the surgery and maintains contact with patients who are 75+. She monitors their care and is able to suggest suitable clubs and activities. We were informed that the doctors at the surgery feel this significantly reduces the number of visits patients in this group need to make to the surgery.

### **The Arrow Surgery, Alcester**

The overall experience reported by patients on the day of the visit was exceptionally positive. This was endorsed by the Authorised Representatives who found the surgery to operate a very smooth and efficient service. In particular, feedback from patients in regard to the appointment booking system at this surgery was excellent. The Surgery operates a full appointment system to try and ensure that there are enough appointments each day to meet demand and to enable patients to pre-book, usually up to several weeks in advance.

### **Riversley Road surgery, Nuneaton**

It is also recommended that the Surgery look at sharing information with other practices regarding their triage system, which has seen a reduction in ‘no shows’ and provides continuity of care, as well as the results of their pilot for the EPS (electronic prescription service).

### **The Cole House Surgery, Bedworth**

During our visit we were advised that the Surgery would shortly be introducing a text message appointment reminder system. The Surgery also telephones mothers the day before a baby clinic is due to take place. These are encouraged as an effective way of reducing non-attendance. Additionally, we were advised that the Surgery has a dedicated mobile phone number for terminally ill patients or their relative, aimed at supporting these patients.

### **Woodlands Surgery, Bedworth**

The surgery has implemented a number of services to support their elderly and vulnerable patients. These include: community visits to support those over 75 with dementia/heart/frailty concerns, home care plans to reduce hospital admission, a chaperone system, daily phone calls and open surgery access to end of life patients, and a designated phone number for care home patients.

### ***Other observations***

Our Authorised Representatives commented on the wide variety in the situation of Practices across the County. Warwickshire encompasses significantly different areas socially and environmentally. Wide differences in population density and ethnic diversity as well as economic affluence were observed. This included differences in GP premises, with some having been purpose built whereas others were in older, re-furbished premises and at least one in a listed building.

Interestingly the number of GPs varied considerably as well, several single GP practices were visited whereas others had eight or more GPs.



# *What changed?*

HWW collected the opinions and experience of local GP patients across the County, as described above. These opinions and experiences were used to produce recommendations for change, summarised above in “What we learned”.

A report was produced for each GP practice, based on the findings of the Enter and View visit and the patient surveys. These reports were provided to the practice in advance of publication on the HWW website, for review and comment. The reports contain recommendations for improvement, specific to each GP practice.

We have revisited a number of the GP practices to assess the implementation of our recommendations and are working with the others to assess improvements made there.

**Of the 42 revisits made:**

- 40 surgeries had improved (implemented at least one recommendation)
- 25 surgeries had implemented all recommendations

**A total of 208 recommendations were made across the county, of which to date 53% (110) have been implemented.**

HWW will continue to work with GP practices across Warwickshire to help work towards improving the patient experience.

The project also provided HWW with stronger relationships with GP practices and PPGs across Warwickshire, enabling more effective working together for the future.

Anyone visiting a doctor's surgery throughout Warwickshire should now reap the benefit of these improvements, which have been made as a result of the consumer voice being heard.

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# Next steps

Each GP practice received a copy of their individual report as part of the project.

HWW will share the findings of the project with key parties, including Practice Managers, CQC, the relevant CCG, NHS England, Public Health Warwickshire, Healthwatch England and Healthwatch Warwickshire volunteers/board members by distributing a copy of this report to them by e-mail.

Copies will also be provided to the Joint Commissioning Committee in Warwickshire North, Primary Care committee in south Warwickshire and Primary Care Quality Group in Coventry and Rugby.

All HWW reports are published on our website so that service users can access the information relating to their own individual GP surgery.

HWW will continue to work with our colleagues in the GP practices across Warwickshire, to help monitor improvements.



# Contact us

[www.healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk)

t: 01926 422823

e: [info@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk)

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Healthwatch Warwickshire

4-6 Clemens Street

Leamington Spa

CV31 2DL









































**healthwatch**  
Warwickshire



# Appendix 1

## Copy of the Patient Survey:

How would you rate your GP Surgery on the following:

		Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Comments
1	Appointment booking system?					
2	Surgery opening hours?					
3	Ease of access? E.G. Parking, Public Transport Links					
4	Cleanliness/hygiene of your surgery?					
5	GPs?					
6	Nurse/s?					
7	Reception Staff?					
8	Punctuality of appointments?					
9	Involving you with the decisions about your care?					
10	The overall quality, care, treatment and service from your surgery?					

Any other concerns/comments?



# Appendix 2

Example of Certificate awarded:

