

St Marks Medical Centre.

Enter and View Report.

Results, Recommendations and Response.

Contact Details: 42 Derby Road. Southport, PR9 0TZ

Date & Time of the Visit: Wednesday 23rd November 2016. Healthwatch Sefton visited the practice during the morning Surgery (starting at 9:00).

Healthwatch Sefton Authorised Representatives: Betty Boner
Brian Clark



Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Sefton would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff at St Marks Medical Centre for their assistance. We would also like to thank patients for taking the time to speak to us and for their contribution to this Enter and View visit.

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 service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.



Purpose

We visited the practice to speak with patients about their experiences of accessing services at St Marks Medical Centre. The above service had been selected as part of the Healthwatch Sefton work plan to look at feedback relating to GP access, experiences being shared by patients about issues in contacting the Medical Centre to make an appointment and access to appointments.

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 run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, opticians 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 need to 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.

How we planned for the visit.

The visit undertaken was an announced Enter and View visit. Prior to the visits we were in contact with the practice manager, Joyce Lloyd. On arrival, we were greeted by Joyce, practice manager and deputy practice manager Annette Cooper. We were made to feel welcome at the practice and were offered a hot drink on arrival together with a secure place to leave our personal possessions. All reception staff were accommodating and friendly. We worked through the process with both Joyce and Annette and shared a copy of the questions and observation sheet which we would be using. A questionnaire was left with Joyce to gather information from the practice. We asked if there was a private area in which we could speak to patients if needed. Although there were no spare rooms available, the way in which the practice was laid out provided an area for this with a table

for our use if needed. Both Joyce and Annette offered their time if needed throughout the morning. We spoke with patients in the waiting area.

Authorised representatives spoke with patients informally asking them about their experiences of being a patient at the practice. We spoke to 17 patients who attended the morning surgery, 16 patients getting involved on the day, with 1 patient sending back their comments in the post.

We explained to everyone we spoke to why we were there and gave out information about Healthwatch Sefton and how they could get in touch with us after the visit if they needed to.

An important role of 'Enter and View' is to observe what is going on during a visit including the physical surroundings. We used an observation checklist/sheet to help us record anything we saw.

Information from the practice manager at St Marks Medical Centre.

Annette Cooper, Deputy Practice Manager filled out the staff survey and we found out the following about the practice:

- There are 15,135 patients registered with the practice.
- There are 118 Carers registered with the practice.
- 8 GPs work at the practice (4 full time and 4 part-time). There are 3 male GP and 5 female GPs.
- The practice has a patient reference group and the group is advertised on the website and in the practice newsletter.
- The practice is a registered training centre.
- The practice has practice nurses, nurse practitioners and health care assistants working at the practice.
- We asked 'are there any areas that you/staff feel could be improved in the service that the practice provides? The answer we received was; ***"we strive to provide an excellent service to our patients"***.
- We asked 'do you feel your work as an employee is valued by your employer and do you have any views about how this could be improved, if appropriate? This question was answered: ***"Yes, I feel very valued as an employee, the partners are very supportive"***.
- We asked 'is there any other information you would like to share with Healthwatch Sefton? This question was not answered.

You will find more information from the survey which Annette filled in throughout this report.

Summary.

During the visit to St Marks Medical Centre, our Enter and View authorised representatives were greeted by staff and made to feel welcome. Open access was given to the waiting area.

We carried out the Enter and View visit to find out what patients and staff at the centre thought about the services the centre provides and in particular how they find the appointments system and access to appointments.

Patients who we spoke to told us that they were treated with dignity and respect by staff and we observed this positive staff attitude during the visit. Patients who we spoke to were overall happy with the services provided however negative experiences related to the appointment booking system, particularly when contacting the centre by telephone and how busy the practice was.

Healthwatch Sefton would like to thank the Medical Centre for working in partnership in ensuring patients are heard and listened to.

What we found from talking to patients registered at St Marks Medical Centre.

We spoke to 17 patients. The following information provides an overview from those 17 patients and the questions which they chose to answer;

Gender	Male	Female
Number of patients	8	9

Age	15 - 24	25 - 44	45 - 64	65 - 74	75 - 84	85 - 94
Number of patients	0	3	3	3	5	2

* 1 patient did not answer this question.

Ethnicity	British	English	Irish	Portuguese	UK	White British
Number of patients	10	1	1	1	1	3

Are you a Carer?	Yes	No	No Longer
Number of patients	3	13	1

Information.

Does the surgery have a practice leaflet which tells you about its services? If it does, is the leaflet available in different formats?

Yes	No	Unaware
8	3	6

47% of patients who answered this question told us that there is a practice leaflet, with **35%** not sure if there was a practice leaflet.

If yes, do you know if the leaflet is available in different formats? For example Braille, easy read, large print?

Yes	No	Unaware
3	2	3

Of those patients who told us that there was a leaflet, **3 (37.5%)** told us that leaflets were available in different formats, the same number of patients not sure if they were.

The practice manager sent us a copy of the practice leaflet which includes information on opening hours, how to register with the practice, the practice team and lots of other important information.

Do you know if the medical centre has a leaflet about making a complaint?

Yes	No	Unaware
9	6	2

53% of patients we spoke to told us they were aware of the leaflet, with **35%** telling us that there was no leaflet.

Have you seen a complaints poster displayed in the Medical Centre?

Yes	No	Unaware
6	5	5

38% of patients who answered this question told us that there was a complaints poster displayed. **31%** told us they had not seen a poster, with the same number of people being unaware.

The practice manager told us that there is a notice displayed in reception and there are details about how to make a complaint on the website and within the practice leaflet.

Have you ever been asked to pay for a certificate or asked to pay for a referral to another service?

Yes	No	Unaware
5	11	1

65% of patients we spoke to had not been asked to pay for a certificate or to be referred to another service. **29%** of patients had been asked to pay.

We observed plenty of information leaflets in the practice, including information about; Access Sefton, Healthwatch Sefton, Flu vaccinations, Shingles vaccinations and Asthma.

There were 2 large information boards within each of the waiting rooms. One of the observations made was that some of the information higher up on the board was a bit too high and the text too small for patients who are sat in the waiting area. The boards held a lot of information for patients including; general information, opening times, What to do if you were waiting for longer than 30 minutes, Help to complain, What to do if you miss an appointment, Saturday appointment times, Evening appointment times, Website address, Patient Participation Group, Prescriptions, Consultation room availability, Health checks and much more.

Getting to the surgery

When did you last see your GP?

Within the last 2 weeks	Between 2 weeks and a month	Between 1 and 3 months	Longer than 3 months
5	3	3	6

Can you get to the Medical Centre easily?

Yes	No
17	0

100% of patients spoken with could get to the surgery easily.

How do you travel to the Medical Centre?

Walk	Train	Bus	Taxi	Own Transport
5	0	0	5	10

*A number of patients identified more than 1 method of transport

Is there parking available near to the Medical Centre?

Yes	No
15	1

94% of patients who answered this question told us there was parking available near to the Medical Centre

Would your GP do a home visit if necessary?

Yes	No	Unaware
7	0	9

56% of patients were not sure if their GP would do a home visit.

We found information within the practice leaflet about access to home visits and the practice manager confirmed that they are available. If patients think they need a home visit they need to ring in the request before 10am.

Making an appointment.

How do you make an appointment?

Phone	Call in	Online	Other
10	5	4	2

*A number of patients identified more than 1 way they made an appointment



Other comments shared with us about making an appointment are below:

“Will use online system in the future”

“Called in and reception fitted me in”

“Write to the doctor I want to see”

Did you know that the Medical Centre runs an online appointment system?

Yes	No	Unaware
11	1	3

73% of patients who answered this question were aware that the medical centre runs an online appointment system. **20%** were unaware of the online system.

The practice manager told us that **2456** patients are registered for online patient access. The practice informs patients who are registered for online patient access, that appointments become available online for the following day from 18:30

How easy is it to get an appointment?

Easy	Fairly easy	Fairly Hard	Very Hard	Don't Know	Have not tried
4	4	4	4	0	0

50% of patients who answered this question told us getting an appointment was easy with **50%** of patients telling us that getting an appointment was hard.

Can you make an appointment for a day and time that suits you?

Yes	No	Unaware
9	5	2

56% of patients who answered this question could make an appointment for a day and time that suits them. **31%** told us that they couldn't.

Can you make appointments for evenings or Saturdays if you need them?

Yes	No	Unaware
5	5	6

31% of patients who answered the question told us that they could make evening/Saturday appointments. The same number of patients told us they couldn't. **38%** of patients who answered this question were unaware that they could make appointments.

The practice manager told us that the Medical Centre has extended opening hours on a Thursday evening and is open on a Saturday morning.

The practice manager told us that the Medical Centre does not have emergency appointments as there is a triage system in place. No patient is ever refused access.

Can you book an appointment in advance? (for example could you phone the medical centre on a Monday for an appointment you need on Friday that week or the following Monday)?

Yes	No	Unaware
3	6	4

When asked about booking an appointment in advance, **23%** of patients who answered the questions told us they were able to. **46%** of patients told us that they could not make appointments in advance, **31%** of patients not being aware of the option.

Tell us about your overall experience when making an appointment?

Theme	Comments
Telephone appointment booking system.	"Dread phoning in the morning. Couldn't get through from 7am until 8:50 - then set an appointment. Doctor called me back and I got an appointment"
	"Sometimes daughter phones up. Engaged and then no appointments"
	"Very helpful but difficult to get through on the phone. Today I have an emergency"
	"I have had a poor experience when trying to book for example, a blood test and other appointments"

	"It's usually impossible. Phone at 8 am - have to call 2 minutes before to get through"
	"Very hard to make appointments by phone, can never get through so always call in"
	"I have made contact by telephone twice in 2 years, otherwise impossible"
Online appointment booking system	"Online system just shows appointments available. Advised to go on at 8:30 am and 6:30 pm. Went on at lunch time and was able to get an appointment. This was outside the recommended time. Didn't know it had gone onto a daily appointment system. There are no advance appointments now. If there are no appointments available though the screen just cuts you off"
	"Online you can but cant always get an appointment"
Making an appointment with doctor of choice.	"Cant book in advance if I want to see a specific doctor"
	"sometimes cannot get to see my preferred doctor"
Quality of Treatment	"Very thorough, cover all aspects of care"
	"Ok"
	"No problems"
	"Mixed experiences"
	"No problems"

When asked if the telephone system works well in meeting the demand of incoming calls, the practice manager felt it did.

Consultation/ Getting Medical Care

Were you able to see the doctor you wanted?

Yes	No	Unaware
7	7	2

Responses to this question were mixed with an equal number of patients telling us that they could or couldn't see the doctor they wanted.

Was it a regular doctor or a locum?

Yes	No	Unaware
12	3	1

The majority of patients (**75%**) who spoke to us saw a regular doctor at the Medical Centre.

The practice manager told us that between June - December 2016 (inclusive), the centre had 138 extra/locum sessions but 54 of the sessions were worked by the partners.

Extra/locum sessions had been used to cover GP sessions and when GPs have retired and left the practice.

How many times over the past 12 months have you seen a different doctor?

Every time	3
Once	1
Twice	3
2 - 3 times	2
3 times	2
3 - 4 times	1
4 times	1
At my first visit	1
Don't Know	1

	Yes	No
Do you have a long term condition?	9	6
If Yes do you see the doctor for regular health checks?	5	3
If you see the doctor for regular health checks can you get an appointment that suits you?	5	

Not all patients who have a long term condition received a regular health check. Those patient's who do receive a regular health check, told us that there were able to get an appointment which suited them.

Is it possible for you to see a male or female doctor if you particularly wanted to?

Yes	No	Unaware
9	1	4

The majority of patients (64%) who spoke to us said it was possible to see a male or female doctor if they wanted to. 29% were unaware that you could choose.

The practice manager informed us that patients are not always able to see the doctor they request due to a number of reasons including; some GPs only working part time, the GPs list may already be full or the GP may be on annual leave.

If your doctor has referred you to another service, for example hospital consultant, did they use or provide you with information on choose and book? (Choose and Book helps you choose where you want to be referred to)?

Yes	No	Unaware
6	5	3

43% of patients who answered this question had been referred to another service via the 'Choose and Book' system, 36% had not. 21% were unaware of the service.

The practice manager informed us that some of the GPs at the Medical Centre use the 'Choose and Book system'. The GPs who use the system discuss with their patients what hospitals are available for the patient to attend.

Have you ever used another service because you could not get an appointment?

Yes	No
6	9

If yes which service?

A & E	Walk In Centre	GP Out of Hours service	111	999 Ambulance
2	4	2	2	0

Do you order repeat prescriptions from the medical centre?		
Yes	No	Unaware
9	5	0

64% of patients who answered this question told us that they order their repeat prescriptions from St Marks Medical Centre.

The practice manager told us that they have not received any concerns from patients about repeat prescriptions.



Comments about the service:

“Always fine, I phone and it’s done.”

“Everything good. Book by phone and pick it up”

“Ordered online on Saturday - still not here. Normally very good”

“Sometimes a bit long to be available back and forth not always able to give full tablets”

“Mixed reviews”

“Very Good”

“Good”

“I can contact the dispensary by telephone and they deliver to home in 3/4 days”

“Fairly satisfied with everything”

We observed that there were boxes located in the waiting area for people to post in their requests for repeat prescriptions.

Do you consider yourself to be disabled in any way, including limited eyesight/hearing, learning disability, mobility difficulty, other?

Yes	No	Unaware
5	8	0

38% of patients we spoke to considered themselves to be disabled.



How could support be improved?

“Does the practice have a loop system for people who use hearing aids?”

“More doctors”

“Fine as it is”

When we spoke to the practice managers we asked about interpretation facilities. The Medical Centre uses Language Line and if a patient has English as their second language and is struggling to communicate, we were told that a patient will be offered a chaperone together with a 20 minute consultation with the GP instead of the usual 10 minutes. The Medical Centre also has a ‘hearing loop. Within the practice there is enough space to accommodate mobility scooters. There is a lift in the building and there are disabled toilet facilities.

The practice manager told us that staff at the Medical Centre have to undertake mandatory online equality and diversity training.

Overall experience of GP/ Practice care.

100% of patients we spoke to told us that they were treated with respect by practice staff.

Would you recommend this practice to friends and family?		
Yes	No	Unsure
11	4	1

Those patients who said they would not recommend the practice to friends and family all stated that this was due to the practice being too busy, there being too many patients.

The practice manager told us that patients at the Medical Centre are asked to take part in the 'Friends and Family' test but they get a poor response from patients.



Would you like to tell us anything else about St Marks Medical Centre?

- Been with this surgery over 20 years. The only reason I wouldn't recommend it is due to the fact that it is so busy and they have so many patients.
- Waiting time when in the surgery can be long, sometimes 1 hour.
Recommendation: - could they say how long we will have to have to wait on screen?
- Few doctors left. In the past excellent. Doctors are fabulous run off their feet.
- Long wait in reception.
- Good practice but busy - that's why I find it difficult to get in! Always very supportive for all the family.
- Pretty good at the moment.
- Well, they felt reluctant to help me fill in my immunisation box.
- Not being able to see the doctor I want, not always able to get an appointment on the phone. It is known that all practices are overloaded and doctors have left and received no replacements.
- Very content with the service.
- Needed an emergency appointment, stopped this last October. No other comment. Quite happy. I like to see same doctor. My previous doctor left - now see another, really good doctor. I don't want to see a locum. I am usually always lucky in that respect.
- Can't book my taxi till after 9am due to the school run. My appointment needs to be after 9am. It is busy but they always treat me well. I live in sheltered housing and the health care is good. If I need any medical help it is to hand.

- 🌱 They are short of medical staff and the telephone service is appalling; the worst I have encountered.
- 🌱 Like on site pharmacy. No complaints.

Additional findings

Signage

We observed good signage throughout the centre and there were arrows indicating which way patients should queue for the reception desk.

Feedback

We observed that there were boxes available for patients to add in their suggestions.

Staff Attitude

We observed one patient who had come into the practice who had been told to come into the practice as a member of staff would support them. The member of staff who supported this patient was warm and welcoming.

During the visit, a couple called into the practice and asked if they could go upstairs to have a look at the stained glass windows. They had travelled from Leeds to spend the day in Southport and had a particular interest in architecture and church buildings. We observed a member of staff taking the time to show them around.

Although waiting some time to be seen, a patient with a young child in a pram was greeted by a doctor who came out to speak to them both. This patient had been given an emergency appointment.

Access

We observed a patient who was using crutches being able to open a door independently using the electronic pad.



Recommendations based on information gathered and observations made

Healthwatch Sefton has identified areas where improvements can be made to improve patient experience. The following recommendations are made from the information gathered and observations made on the day the Enter and View visit took place;



1. Review of appointment system.

The practice manager told us that they felt that the telephone system works well in meeting the demand of incoming calls.

There were mixed views from patients as to whether it was easy or hard to get an appointment. The information we gathered from patients when asking about their overall experience of making an appointment highlighted the problems faced by patients when contacting the Medical Centre by telephone to book an appointment, patient's finding it difficult to get through to speak to a member of staff to be triaged. Other comments from patients at the centre related to how busy the practice is and the number of patients registered which they see as one of the reasons why they can't get appointments.

Response: We continually review our appointment system and make amendments wherever necessary, some of it based on patient feedback. We have a dedicated "working party" looking at our appointment system to make improvements to help the patients and the staff and GPs.

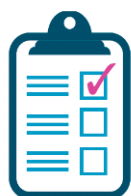


2. Review of the online booking system and further promotion.

Before the visit we were aware that appointments were released online (18:30) for patients to book. This was confirmed during the visit. One patient told us that they had found that appointments were released online at lunch time. It would be useful to hear from the centre about how this service is used to help patient's access appointments and how the centre plans to promote this online service more to its patients on a regular basis.

Response: We promote patient access to all patients when they contact us by telephone as we feel this is the best way forward to reduce the pressure on the telephones, but we also appreciate that this system will not be suitable for some of our patients. Our aim would be to have at least half our patients signed up to Patient access and although we have promoted this in and around reception areas in the past we will of course carry out more promotional exercises in the very near future, whereby staff circulate around reception areas advising patients of how they can access appointments on line.

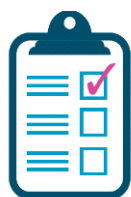
Some of our morning appointments are released at 6.30 the evening before , the rest are released at 7.50am on the day. Afternoon appointments are released at 11am for the same day.



3. Promotion of additional pre bookable appointments (Saturday mornings and Thursday evening).

Promotion of the centres extended opening hours to patients may be helpful in ensuring that all patients at the Medical Centre are aware of their options when making appointments.

Response: We have posters on all our reception boards indicating Thursday evening and Saturday morning pre-bookable appointments are available. Our website also gives this information. Our reception staff advise patients on the phone about any pre-bookable appointments that are available.



4. Promotion of the Home Visits service.

56% of patients we spoke to were not sure if their GP would do a home visit. We are aware that home visits are reserved for patients who are housebound/ those patients who cannot be brought into the Medical Centre but it would be good to see that this service is promoted so patients are aware of their options.

Response: All GP practices offer home visits by a GP or if appropriate Nurse Practitioner. Our website gives further information and we display posters around reception.



5. Consistent use of Choose and Book system across the Medical Centre.

From the visit and in talking to the Practice Manager we have found that some of the GPs at the centre use the Choose and Book system but not all. To ensure that all patients have access to the same level of service and have the same information from which they can make informed choices about their care, its important that this is used in a consistent way.

Response: Choose and Book is available for patients but not all specialities has availability. Our secretaries are very conversant with the Choose and Book system and it is offered to patients by GPs at the point of referral. Unfortunately, our trainee GPs (GP registrars and Foundation Year 2 Doctors) are not able to offer this service.



6. Patient recommendation: Informing patients of waiting times.

One of the patients we spoke to highlighted the issue of the waiting times in the Centre, which can sometimes be long. The recommendation was for the Medical Centre to have a board in the patient waiting area which is updated to show the average waiting time for appointments.

Response: We display a notice in reception to ask patients to report back to the desk if they have been waiting more than 30 minutes. Some GPs run quite late due to a number of reasons but wherever possible we try to let patients know if the particular GP that they are seeing is running late. Our checking in system does not have the facility to give that information and the majority of our patient's book in using the screen. It would be difficult to advise about an average waiting time for patients but it is something that we can look into.

***The full response to the report can be found in appendix 1.**

Appendix 1: Response from St Marks Medical Centre.

Page 5

I can confirm that there is a practice leaflet available for patients to view. This is available on our website and in paper form. We will be happy to supply larger print for any patients who have any sight problems. Unfortunately we are unable to supply a braille copy. We have notices in and around the reception areas informing patients about our website.

I can also confirm that we have information on our notice boards regarding any complaints and who to complain to. All reception staff are familiar with the complaint policy/procedure.

Page 6

Patients are only asked to pay for specific private medicals or for the completion of forms (say for travel insurance/mortgage protection etc.) Any letters that are requesting which a patient requests to pass to i.e. housing etc we levy a charge to cover administration costs.

We make a charge for any sick note (medical certificate) that has been lost , to cover admin charges. We do not charge for any original certs. We do not make a charge for any referrals.

We will of course look at our information boards and ensure that all the text is clear and large enough to read. Obviously we are trying to display a lot of information which may result in the posters being smaller than we would like.

Page 7

Although Parking is limited at St Marks there is generally adequate spaces , including disabled spaces, for our patients. We do advise patients when they ask , that Asda, a short walk away is available to use for parking, although time is limited and this will incur a charge. I'm afraid that as we are town centre all the surrounding streets are pay and display or resident parking only.

Home visits are available to housebound poorly patients. We display a notice to this effect on all the reception notice boards. Reception staff who answer the phone advise patients of this information. I'm afraid we cannot visit patients who cannot get to surgery because of transport problems or cost problems.

Page 8

We continually advise patients both on the telephone and in person about our online booking system. It is clearly advertised on our notice boards and on our website. We have dedicated members of staff who will help any patients to sign up to "Patient Access" and answer any queries should they arise.

We advise patients that this is the most effective way of accessing appointments when they become available. We are aware, however, that this system will not suit everyone therefore all the appointments can be booked via the telephone also.

Page 9

As a busy practice with over 15,000 patients we are under huge pressure to provide appointments for patients. Our telephone lines are constantly busy but we never say No when a patient contacts us and if the appointments have gone for that day they will be offered a telephone call back from a GP who will give advice or may offer a Nurse Practitioner appointment or an appointment with a GP if this is necessary.

The majority of our patients can make an appointment with a GP of their choice, however, this is not always possible as none of our GPs work every day.

Saturday morning appointments are available to book in advance via the telephone or Patient Access. Thursday evening appointments either with a GP, Practice Nurse or BP clinic are also available to book in advance both via telephone and on line.

Page 10

We do have advance appointments that can be booked. These are generally early morning , which go very quickly or Thursday evening, Saturday morning. If a GP sees a patient and wants them to be seen again in say 2/3 weeks they will book the appointment for them there and then.

Our telephones are particularly busy in the morning as most patients ring early. We advise patients to keep trying at a time which is the most suitable to them. When patients are working it's not easy to ring the surgery at specific times. Obviously if the appointments have all been taken there will be an opportunity to speak with a GP who will call them back.

If a patient says the appointment is urgent and will not wait they will be given a call back from a GP. If the emergency is of a life threatening nature(ie accident/chest pains etc) we would advise to go to A & E.

We have several Health Care Assistants working each day who have blood test appointments. These can be booked up to a month in advance.

Page 11

Obviously we do have a very busy phone system and we have a dedicated team of receptionists who answer the phone constantly. It is difficult to get through and we appreciate patient's frustration. We are hopeful that the more patients sign up to Patient Access the easier it will become to get through on the telephone.

We would encourage patients to ring at a time to suit themselves to try and avoid the very busy times.

We do not close at lunchtime and our phones are answered throughout the day from 8am to 6.30pm. Lunchtime can be a quieter time to get through on the phone.

It is difficult for patients to see a GP of their choice but all our GPs are extremely dedicated to looking after the needs of our patients and can access medical records on the computer.

Page 12

I'm afraid we will never be able to meet patient expectation of their request to see the GP of their choice at a time of their choice. Unfortunately, GP recruitment is at an all-time low and despite advertising, we have still not been able to replace the GPs who have retired.

We often fill the gaps with locums who we regularly use and are familiar with the practice. We do not use locum agencies.

We, of course, plan ahead so that we have enough cover from locums and partners to cover planned holidays.

We have a dedicated Nurse team who run clinics with regard to chronic diseases i.e. Diabetes, CHD, Asthma etc. Patients will be invited to attend regular appointments for reviews. All patients who have other long term conditions will be closely monitored by GPs and regular medication reviews will take place.

We are fortunate to have a good mix of male and female GPs to enable patients to have a choice.

All our GPs are familiar and use Choose and Book for referrals. Some specialities, however do not have this facility available. GPs have recently been able to hand out leaflets to patients giving more information of what to expect following their referrals.

We never refuse patients an appointment or a telephone call back. We never advise patients to attend A & E, (unless suspected heart attack etc- i.e. emergency) Walk in centres or other organisations during our opening times.

Our prescription service provided to patients is second to none and we have a dedicated medicines management team, 2 pharmacists employed by the practice and an independent pharmacy on site. Our aim is to produce prescriptions in 48 hours but obviously this is not always possible for medications that are not on repeat. Bank Holiday and PLT closures will sometimes create a delay.

We have excellent facilities for our disabled patients by way of access, parking etc, disabled toilets etc. There is a loop system in the building and we also have a member of staff who has undertaken a sign language course.

We are delighted to have received a score of 100% in relation to the question of treated with respect. We regularly have training sessions and discuss our aim to provide an excellent service to all our patients. It is pleasing to know that we have fulfilled this aim.

Family and Friends test is not something that the patients seem to engage with and despite the fact that we are displaying promotional posters , we receive very few responses. The ones we have received though have generally been positive.

Page 18

We are a busy town centre practice and I'm afraid that is something that we can't change. We have over 15,000 patients with a huge boundary area. Any patients that move into our boundary area are entitled to register with St Marks but we do advise if there are nearer surgeries.

We cannot limit the number of patients who register here as we would not be allowed by NHS England to close our books unless there were exceptional circumstances.

We are happy to help any patient requesting information from their records. We will provide print offs for patients on receipt of written requests.

We do have a busy reception area and unfortunately some patients will wait longer than others to see particular GPs. WE do display posters advising about waiting times. Reception staff will advise patients if the GP they are waiting to see is running particularly late. Often GPs take longer than 10 minutes for patients who have complex problems.

As previously mentioned we have been trying to recruit new full time GPs but unfortunately we have received no applications to date.

We continue to actively seek new GPs.

Our reception staff answer the telephone from 8am to 6.30pm. There is always enough staff to cover the phone lines and we do our best to accommodate patients requests over the telephone.

Unfortunately, we cannot offer appointments that always fit around work or school but we will do our best to help wherever we can.

Page 19

We strive to provide an excellent caring service to our patients. Our staff are trained to treat all patients with respect and the way they would wish to be treated. We have staff principles that we all abide with to ensure a comfortable, secure and happy place to work.

Page 20

1)We continually review our appointment system and make amendments wherever necessary, some of it based on patient feedback. We have a dedicated “working party” looking at our appointment system to make improvements to help the patients and the staff and GPs.

2)We promote patient access to all patients when they contact us by telephone as we feel this is the best way forward to reduce the pressure on the telephones, but we also appreciate that this system will not be suitable for some of our patients. Our aim would be to have at least half our patients signed up to Patient access and although we have promoted this in and around reception areas in the past we will of course carry out more promotional exercises in the very near future, whereby staff circulate around reception areas advising patients of how they can access appointments on line.

Some of our morning appointments are released at 6.30 the evening before , the rest are released at 7.50am on the day. Afternoon appointments are released at 11am for the same day.

Page 21

3)We have posters on all our reception boards indicating Thursday evening and Saturday morning pre-bookable appointments are available. Our website also gives this information. Our reception staff advise patients on the phone about any pre-bookable appointments that are available.

4) All GP practices offer home visits by a GP or if appropriate Nurse Practitioner. Our website gives further information and we display posters around reception.

5) Choose and Book is available for patients but not all specialities has availability. Our secretaries are very conversant with the Choose and Book system and it is

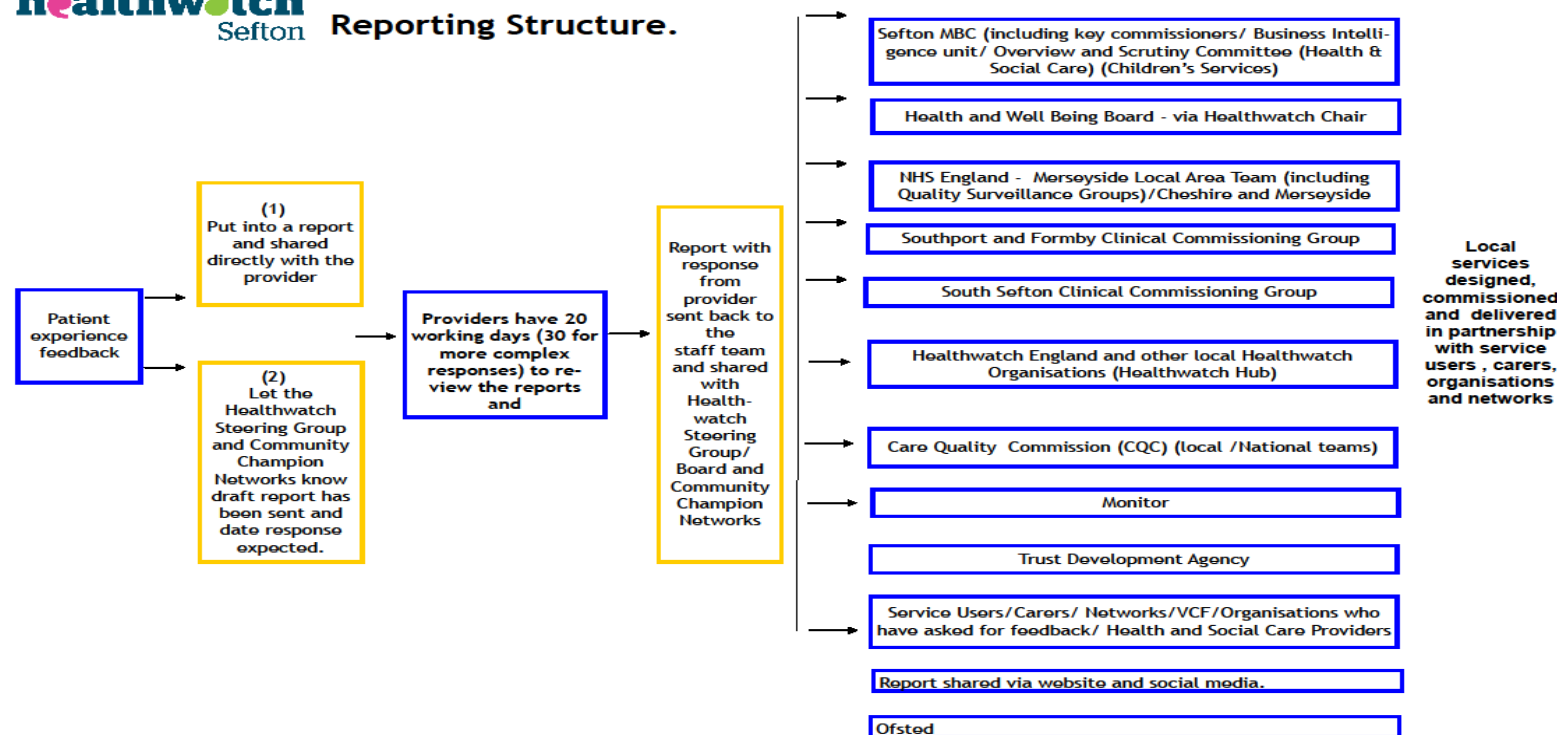
offered to patients by GPs at the point of referral. Unfortunately, our trainee GPs (GP registrars and Foundation Year 2 Doctors) are not able to offer this service.

6) We display a notice in reception to ask patients to report back to the desk if they have been waiting more than 30 minutes. Some GPs run quite late due to a number of reasons but wherever possible we try to let patients know if the particular GP that they are seeing is running late. Our checking in system does not have the facility to give that information and the majority of our patient's book in using the screen. It would be difficult to advise about an average waiting time for patients but it is something that we can look into.

Joyce Lloyd
Practice Manager
17th February 2017

Appendix 2: Healthwatch Sefton Reporting Structure.

Reporting Structure.



Version 3
September 2014
Review Date - September 2015

* See Healthwatch Sefton Communications Strategy for a breakdown of key contacts

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