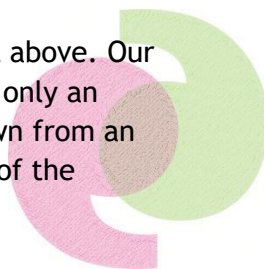


Details of visit**Service address:****Service Provider:****Date and Time:****Authorised****Representatives:****Contact details:****The Symons Medical Centre****25 All Saints Avenue, Maidenhead, SL6 6EL****The Symons Medical Centre****Tuesday 19th November 2019, 9.30am-11.30am****Chris Taylor, Jane Figg, Julian Scrace and Neil****McGiffen****info@healthwatchwam.co.uk****Acknowledgements**

Healthwatch Windsor, Ascot & Maidenhead would like to thank the service provider, patients and staff 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, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time - supported by data drawn from an online patient survey, surveys completed at the surgery, NHS website and a review of the surgery website.

**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 and dental surgeries. 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 or other serious concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch escalation 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.

Purpose of the visit

- Observe patients engaging with the staff and their surroundings.
- Capture the experience of patients and to record any ideas they may have for change to improve patient experience.

Strategic drivers

Healthwatch Windsor, Ascot & Maidenhead collects and collates feedback and intelligence on local services. Primary care, i.e. GP surgeries, is the service we receive the most information about. This is not surprising as it is the health service that the majority of the public access regularly.

A programme of Enter and View visits to all surgeries in the Windsor, Ascot & Maidenhead locality of the East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group (EBCCG) area was initiated in November 2019.

Methodology

At least two weeks prior to the visit a notification letter was sent to the Practice Manager. Information posters and flyers about the visit, which also included links to the online survey, intended for distribution to patients, were also delivered. The online survey was published on the Healthwatch Windsor, Ascot & Maidenhead website and notifications sent via e-bulletin and social media.

At the same time, a notification letter was sent to the Chair of the Patient Participation Group - again with flyers and posters. It also included a short survey asking questions about the membership of the group and how it feels it works with the practice to improve local services, promote health and wellbeing, improve communication with the wider patient group and ensuring the practice remains accountable and responsive to patient needs. A freepost envelope was enclosed for the return of the survey.

Two short surveys (which will be used in all GP Enter and View visits) had been prepared by authorised representatives and Healthwatch Windsor, Ascot & Maidenhead staff prior to the visit. The survey was split into two sections for the visit - pre and post consultation - but combined online. Questions include equalities data, questions regarding appointment booking, waiting times, appointment time suitability, use of the surgery website and patient satisfaction of any consultation time. There were also two questions which allowed for open ended text responses asking what people felt was good about the surgery and what, if anything, could be improved.

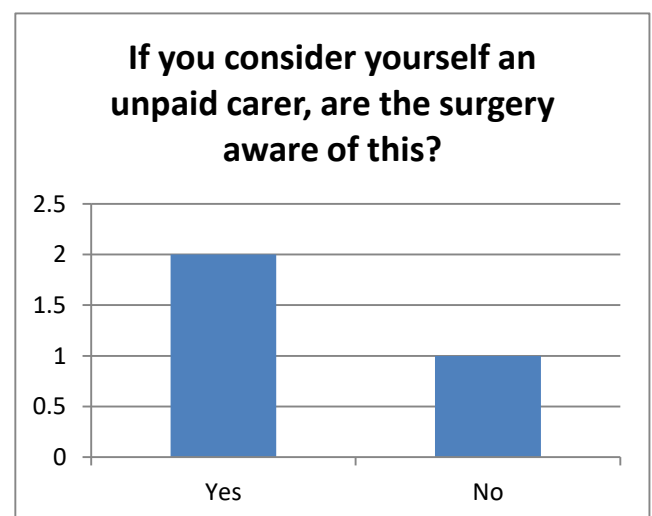
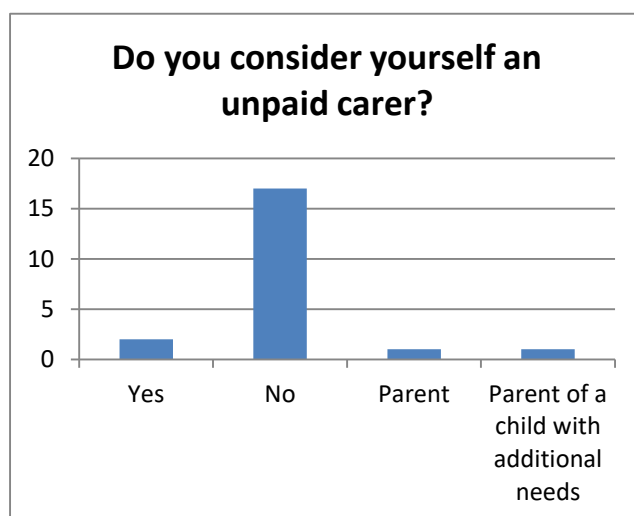
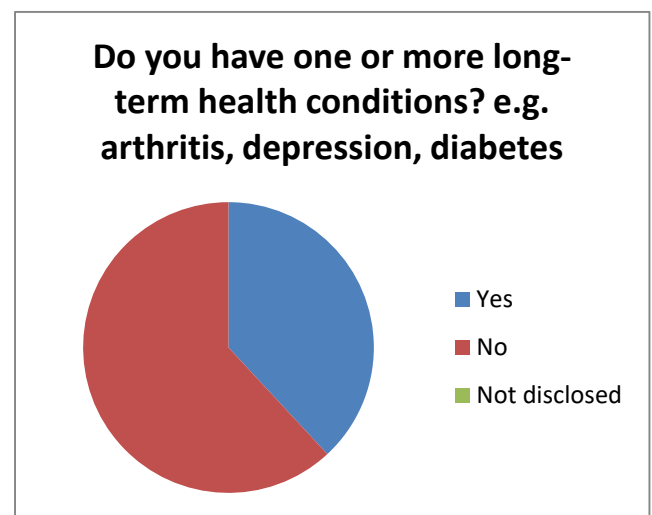
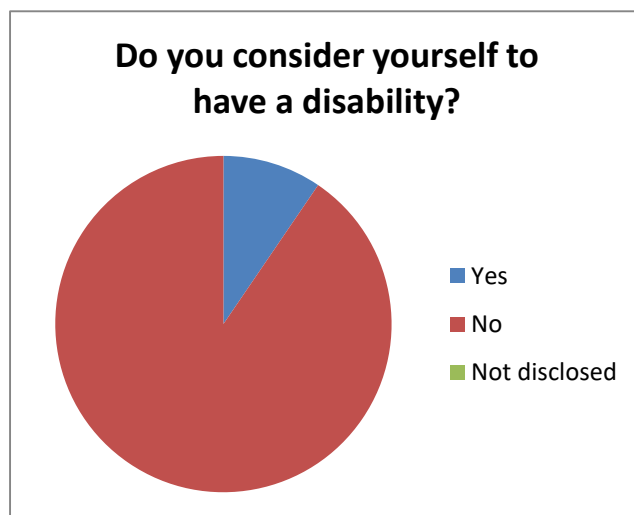
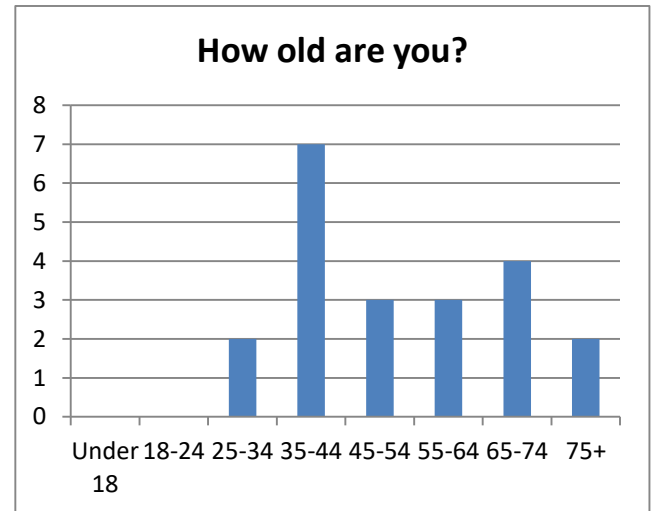
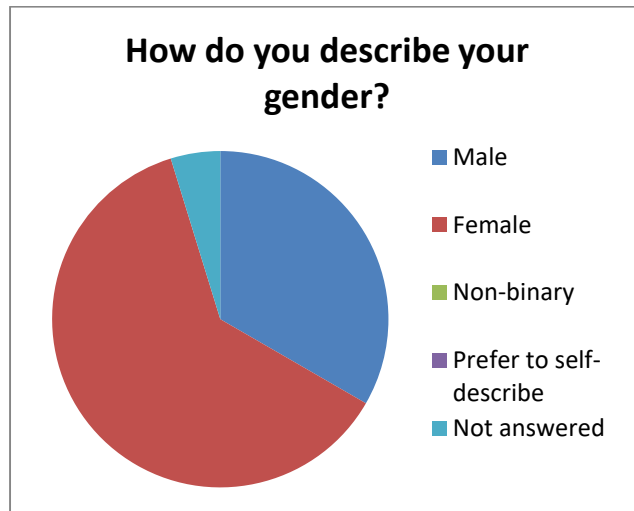
A proportion of the visit was also observational, allowing the authorised representatives to assess the environment and how patients engaged with staff members and the facilities.

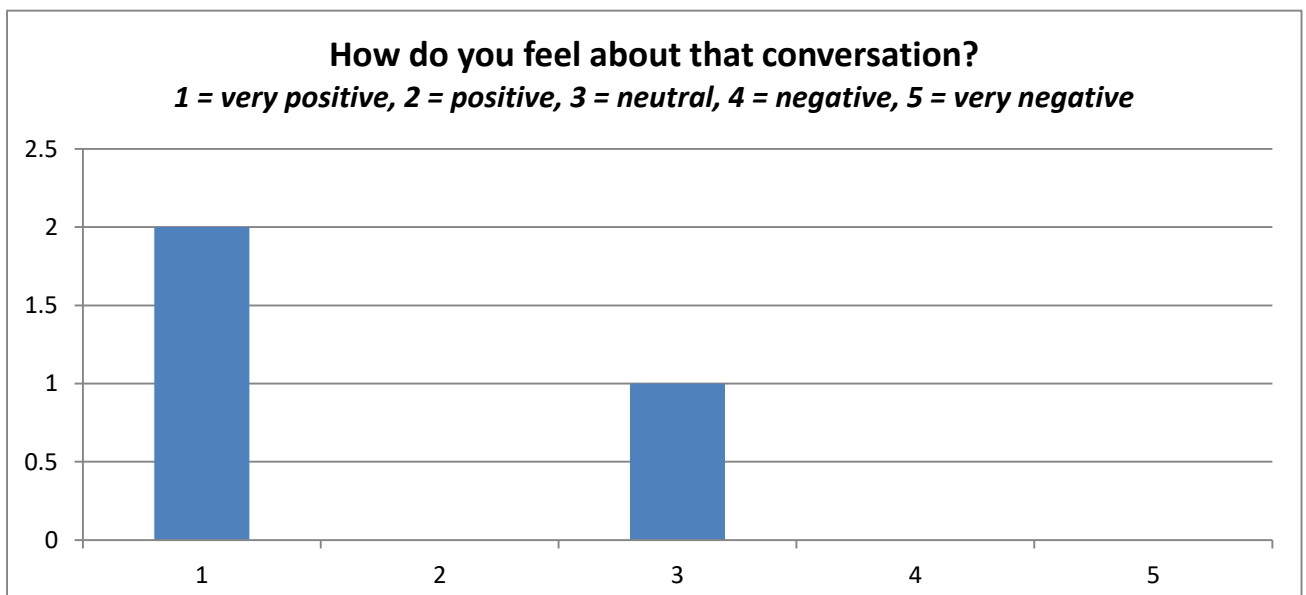
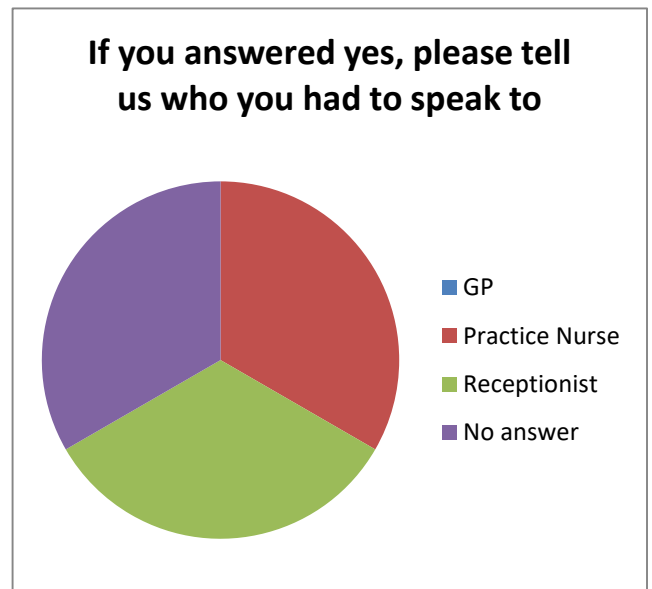
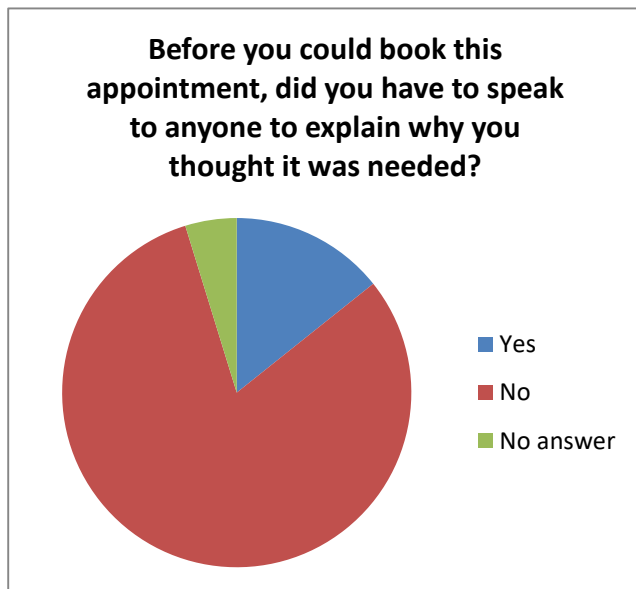
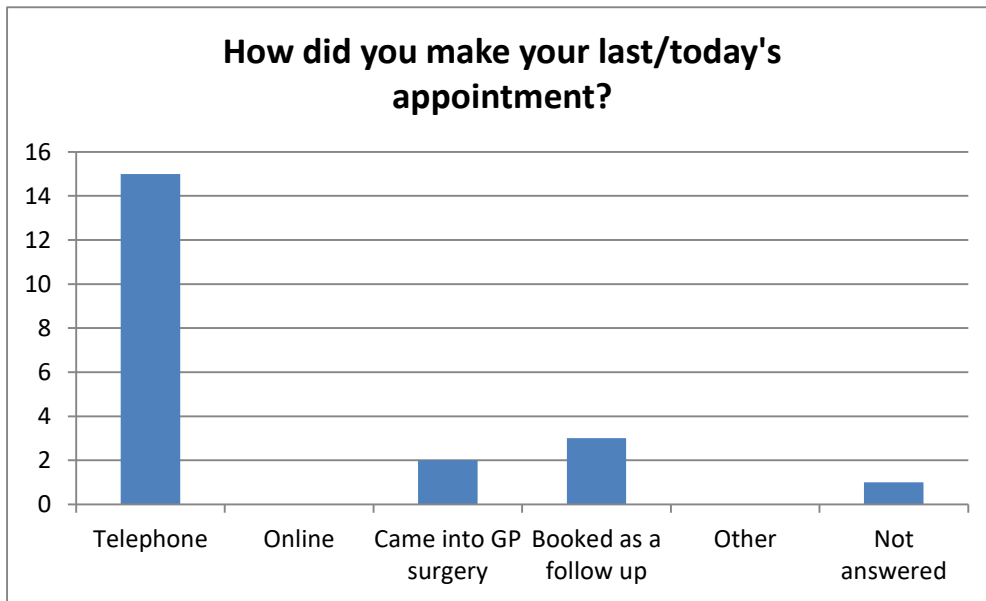
Alongside the visit Healthwatch Windsor, Ascot & Maidenhead staff reviewed NHS website reviews for the surgery over the last 6 months and the practice website.

Results of Visit

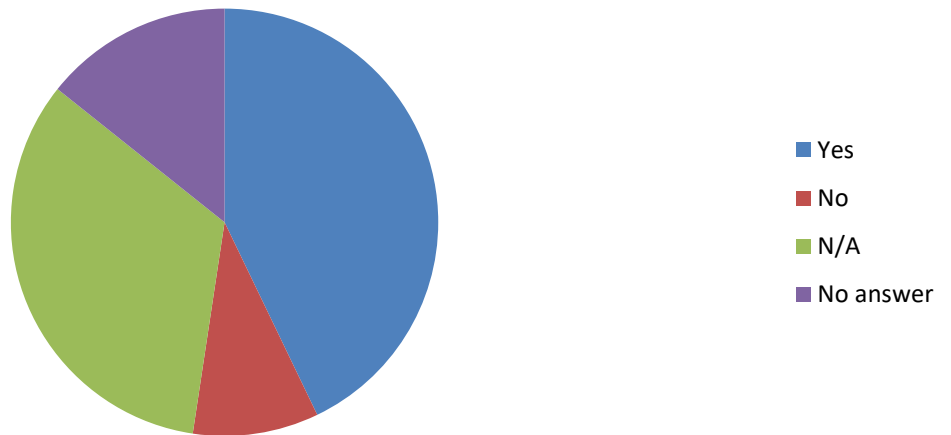
Survey results

17 surveys completed on the visit + 4 online



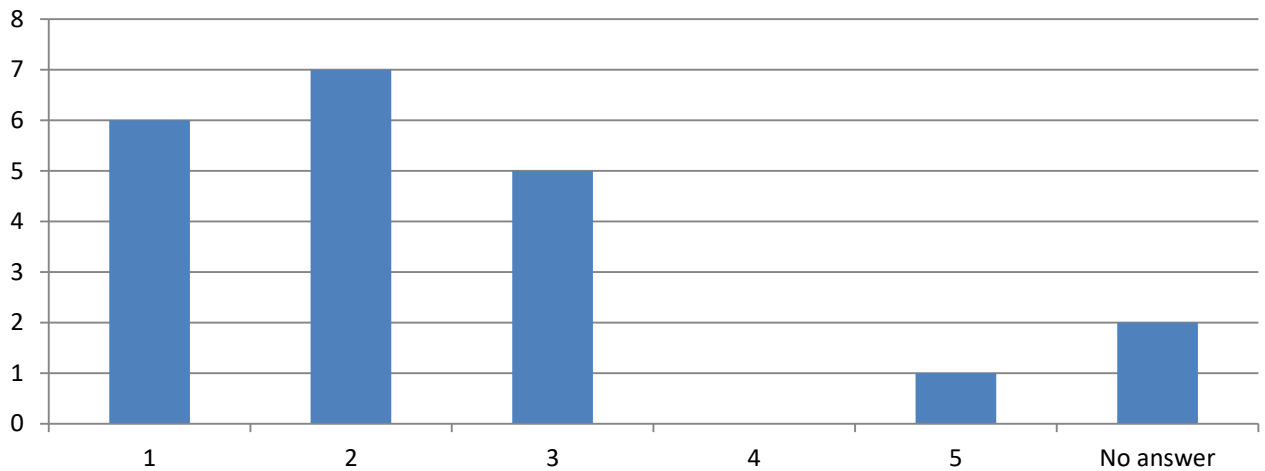


If your appointment was/is with a GP, were you able to make this with the GP of your choice/named GP?

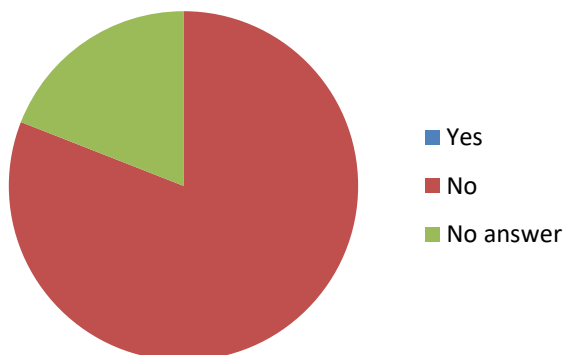


How convenient was/is your appointment time with regards to any responsibilities you have? e.g. work, parenting, caring or other commitments

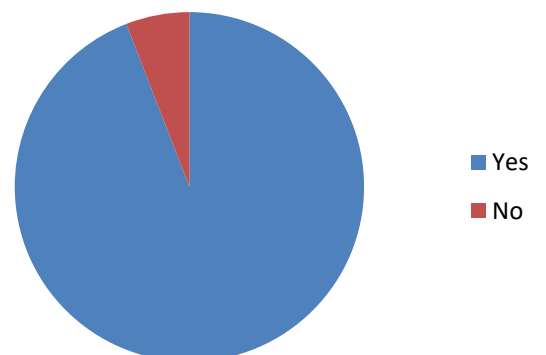
1 = very convenient, 2 = convenient, 3 = neutral, 4 = inconvenient, 5 = very inconvenient



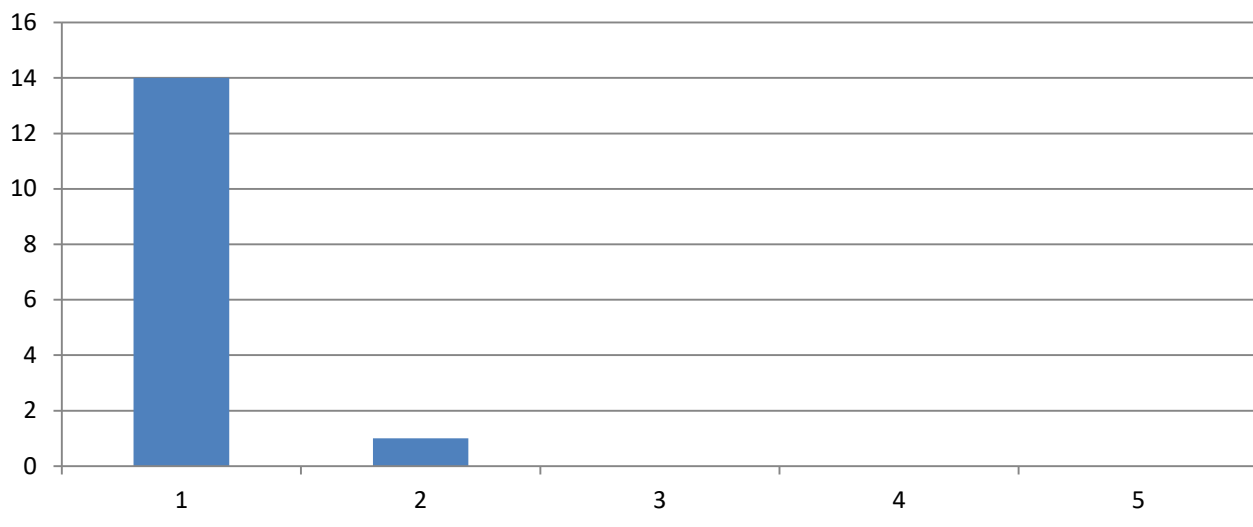
Did you receive a text reminder for your last/today's appointment?



If you answered no, do you have a mobile phone that you use daily?



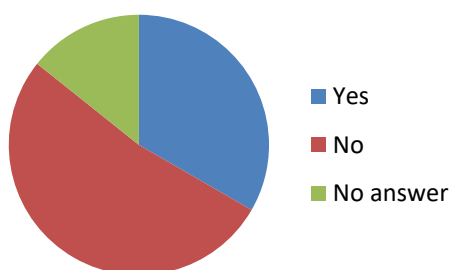
How would you rate the communication, care and treatment received during your last/today's appointment?
 1 = very positive, 2 = positive, 3 = neutral, 4 = negative, 5 = very negative



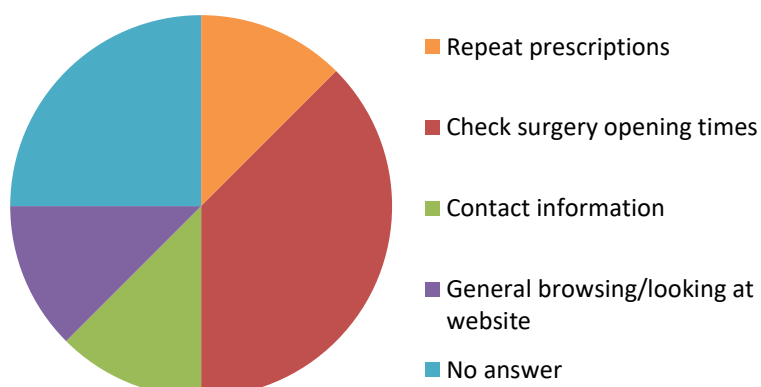
For the visit, the survey questionnaire was split in two (pre and post appointment) therefore, for these **two questions only**, the responses are based on 11 surveys from the visit and 4 online surveys)

<i>Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your last/today's appointment?</i>		
Comment category		No. of comments
	Positive Neutral Negative	
Positive comment about nurse appointment		2
Emergency appointment - turned out to be with own GP		2
Positive comment about GP appointment		1
Only an INR blood test		1
Thank you NHS		1

Do you use the surgery website?

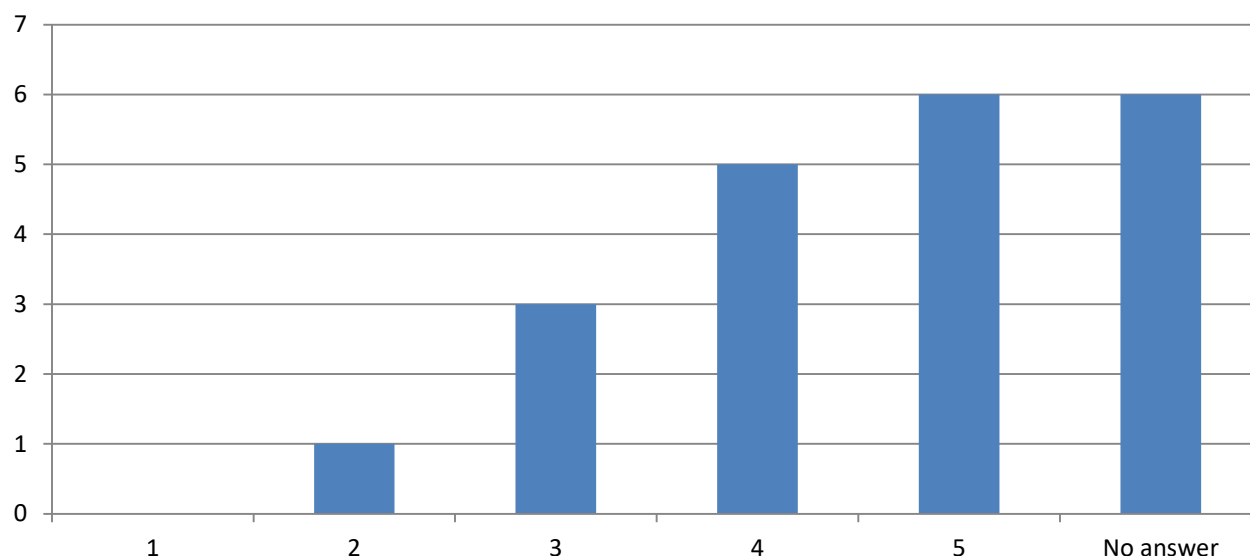


If you answered yes, please tell us what for



How aware are you of the surgery's patient group and its work?

1 = very aware, 2 = aware, 3 = neutral, 4 = unaware, 5 = very unaware



Text comments

Patients were asked two questions - what they find really good about the surgery and what, if anything, could be improved - allowing them to give feedback on the surgery beyond the scope of the questions already asked in the survey.

The text comments were coded into categories. The number of comments did not equal the number of participants as some individuals did not provide responses (to one or both questions) and some participants gave more than one comment per question. The total number of comments from the responses that were coded was:

What is good? 27

What could be improved? 11

<i>What do you find really good about this surgery?</i>	
Comment category	No. of comments
Friendly and helpful staff (medical and reception)	12
Appointment access	4
General positive comments (supportive etc.)	3
Convenient/good location	2
Continuity of care (seeing the same doctor)	2
Good communication	1
The new telephone system	1
Good review service	1
Home visits	1

<i>What, if anything, could be improved at this surgery?</i>	
Comment category	No. of comments
Communication	2
Continuity of care (seeing the same GP)	2
Appointment access	2
Online appointment booking	1
Email/text communication (about events etc.)	1
Location	1
Parking	1
Home visit booking process	1

Authorised representative observations

The Practice Manager told us they did not receive our letter advising them of our visit. Despite this they were welcoming and also showed us where we could make tea/coffee.

The authorised representatives made the following observations:

Cleanliness

- Clean throughout; only dust observed was minimal and high level
- The locality outside the building was also clean
- Most of the chairs in the waiting room were wipe clean however a few were not - including the high back chair

Condition/appearance

- Pleasant environment; nice looking building set amongst trees and bushes
- The men's toilet is very small, cramped and looked 'tired'
- In the waiting room the old call system was in place
- There was artwork displayed

Facilities

- Good sized waiting room
- Magazines, books and children's books were available
- The surgery shares the building, and an entrance, with a pharmacy
- Accessible toilet with baby change available. It was observed to be clean and it was big enough for a wheelchair or pushchair. The baby change table had a roll of hygiene paper which could be pulled across for use and then disposed of. There was one issue reported, the hand dryer was switched off but when it was switched on it was still not working so it obviously was out of order. It was felt that there should be a sign to say it was out of order to stop a patient trying to switch it on with, potentially, wet hands.
- In the men's toilet the hand dryer was also not working (see above comments for accessible toilet) and the toilet seat was also broken and had been removed from the toilet and placed by the side of it. Due to the cramped nature of the toilet the soap dispenser sat on the toilet cistern.
- 16 regular parking spaces

Accessibility

- One of our authorised representatives has visual impairment and, although only half the waiting room lights were switched on, they felt the room was well lit
- 1 disabled parking bay
- Flat access from car park to entrance. Inside all patient areas: - reception, waiting room and consulting rooms, are on the ground floor
- The surgery is well signposted from outside
- Although the surgery does not have automatic opening doors there is a call button for access
- There is no accessible counter at reception
- There is a big TV screen in the waiting room providing information. It is also used to call patients and the text was large and easy to read on a contrasting background. The name of the patient was also said audibly
- There is a high backed chair in the waiting room for older or mobility impaired patients
- There is a large glass door between the reception area and the waiting room. Although great for confidentiality we were unsure how easy this would be for someone to open if frail and if potentially it could trap small fingers
- No signs indicating location of the toilets was seen

Information available

- There was an information file for patients available. This contained lots of useful information including how to make complaints and feedback about the surgery
- There was a sign on the wall about the friends and family test however no cards or box to place completed cards was seen.
- There was also information for patients through posters and leaflets. We saw information on carers support, mental health, out of hours, patient access, transport, chaperones along with condition specific information. No information for patients living with dementia was seen. Apart from a notice board dedicated to flu there did not appear to be any other type of grouping of posters and leaflets.
- There was also a sign about patients not attending appointments. It was also dated a week before and said “today x number of patients did not attend”
- The flu vaccination clinic information was out of date - but only be one day
- We did not see anything about identifying yourself to a member of staff if you were a carer
- We did not see any information about the patient group

Interactions

- We observed reception staff and nurses interacting with patients; these interactions were all friendly and professional
- A receptionist was observed promptly stopping a patient from answering their mobile phone; this was done in an assertive but very friendly and professional way

Confidentiality

- Patients wait in a separate area from reception
- From the public reception area or the waiting room we did not overhear conversations with patients
- There was a computer to the left-hand side of the reception desk whose screen could be seen when interacting with receptionists

Response from the Patient Participation Group survey

We have not received a completed survey or communication from the chair or other representative of the Patient Participation Group. We did follow this up with an email to the Practice Manager but have not received a response.

We were unable to find any minutes or documents relating to the group after 2014/2015 where it was noted that the group was struggling to meet and had lost some members.

The surgery website currently displays the following message:

Thank you for your interest in the patient participation group.

We are not currently recruiting for our patient group. News will appear here if this changes, although you can register your interest in writing with the Practice Manager and we will keep this on record.

Website review

The Symons Medical Centre website was reviewed on the 27th November 2019 and looked at the following areas:

- **Information about how to join the surgery**

Easy to find and the practice boundaries are clearly shown. There is limited information about what a new patient has to do to register. There is no new patient form available to print and fill in prior to visiting the surgery. The links for non-English speaking patients do not work.

- **Information about how to make an appointment**

Easy to find, clear information about what to do and also a link available to online booking. There is a dedicated phone number for appointments. This phone number could be shown in the header next to the general surgery phone number to make it clearer to patients that there is another dedicated phone number in use. There is no detailed information about the extended hours service.

- **Information about staff**

Easy to find; the different staff who work at the surgery have been separated into their disciplines. It would be useful for patients to see photos and know a bit about the members of staff at the practice.

- **CQC rating displayed**

The CQC rating is linked to at the bottom of the home page.

- **How does the practice share information with patients; e.g. newsletters, news section?**

The practice has a news section on its website. There is only one article relevant to the surgery and the page draws mainly from health information from the BBC and the NHS.

- **Contact information**

Address details and main telephone number are included in the header on the website. There is a contact page with address, map and contact information. There is no mention of 111 for out of hours.

- **Out of hours' information**

There is information available about what to do when the surgery is closed. This should be reviewed to ensure it is correct, as it refers to the disbanded Berkshire East PCT.

- **Information about PPG**

There is no information about the Patient Group other than a page which thanks someone for their interest and says they are not currently recruiting to the group. It would be useful for patients to know more about what the patient group does, who they are, what they have done, etc.

- **Ease of use**

The information is clear and easy to find, but would benefit from being updated and broken links fixed. The site scales well on a desktop, tablet and mobile phone, with the exception of some images affecting the placement of the text. Using a mobile phone, please look at the repeat prescriptions page for an example of this.

- **Accessibility tools / features**

The website includes an accessibility statement. Colours contrast which makes it easy to see the information. The site has a language changer but no other accessibility tools.

Nhs.uk reviews

Healthwatch Windsor, Ascot & Maidenhead staff looked at the surgery's reviews on nhs.uk for the last 6 months.

There were a total of 3 reviews. None had received a reply or comment from the service provider.

Two reviews gave the surgery 5 stars. The quality of the medical care and treatment received and the medical staff were mentioned in a very positive manner and the home visit service was valued by one reviewer - although it was acknowledged that, in the past, there had been some issues with reception staff.

One review gave the surgery 1 star. Rude reception staff, difficulties getting an appointment and the ignoring of feedback and complaints were the main reasons for this low review. Medical care and treatment were considered to usually be of an acceptable standard although issues with continuity of care, delay in referrals and problems with repeat prescriptions were mentioned.

National GP survey

The full results for the surgery can be found at:

<https://www.gp-patient.co.uk/PatientExperiences?practicecode=K81066>

Where the results for Symons Medical Centre significantly vary (more than 10%) from the national average results are:

Only 51% of patients find it easy to get through to the GP practice by phone (national average 68%).

Since the national survey the practice has invested in a new telephone system.

62% of patients usually get to see or speak to their preferred GP when they would like to (national average 48%).

80% of patients waited 15 minutes or less after their appointment time to be seen at their last general practice appointment (national average 69%).

Only 66% of patients say they have had enough support from local services or organisations in the last 12 months to help manage their long-term condition(s) (national average 78%).

Summary of key findings

At the time of our visit, the evidence is that:

- After the publication of the national GP Patient Survey earlier in the year, when only 51% of patients surveyed said they found it easy to get through to the practice by telephone, a new telephone system was introduced. This includes a dedicated telephone number for appointments. This seems to have made a positive impact with the majority of patients we spoke to telling us they made their appointment by telephone and the fact one patient mentioned it as a 'good' thing about the surgery. Only 2 patients identified appointment access as something that could be 'improved' at the surgery.
- The majority of patients did not feel they had been triaged before getting an appointment and this corresponds with information relayed by the Practice Manager who does not allow receptionists to triage patients.
- 43% of patients we spoke to told us they were able to make an appointment with the GP of their choice (if applicable). This is lower than the practice's national survey results but 47% of the patients we spoke to either answered not applicable or gave no answer. Continuity of care was mentioned equally in the text questions 'what is good?' and 'what could be improved?'
- 61% of patients we spoke to said their appointment time was 'very convenient' or 'convenient' with regards to any responsibilities they have (e.g. work, parenting, caring).
- No patients reported receiving a text reminder for their appointment yet 94% of them had a mobile phone they use daily. Missed appointment data is displayed in the surgery.
- All of the patients we spoke to rated their care and treatment received as 'very positive' (93.5%) or 'positive' (6.5%).
- Only 7 (33%) patients we spoke to said they used the surgery website - but only one of these said they used one of the patient functions (repeat prescriptions). The online appointment booking system is easy to miss on the surgery website (when using a computer) and both online appointment and text/email communication were mentioned as areas where the surgery could 'improve'.
- The patients we spoke to reported little awareness of the Patient Participation Group. This result alongside the holding message online, no visible information at the surgery and no evidence from an online search of the group operating since 2015 has led us to believe there is not an active group currently.
- Friendly staff, both in reception and medical professionals, was identified by 57% of patients as something they found 'good' about the surgery. Evidence of positive interactions between staff and patients was observed.
- The surgery building looked very clean and, with the exception of the men's toilets, did not look like it currently needed decorating. Artwork is also displayed.

- There is equipment that is not in use and/or needs repair; old appointment call system, hand dryers in toilets and toilet seat (men's).
- The surgery and the facilities are, on the whole, accessible; all patient areas are on one level, there is an accessible toilet, a high backed chair, a call button on the main doors, a disabled parking bay, well lit and a patient call system that is both visual and audible. There is a heavy door between the reception and waiting areas.
- The door between the reception and waiting areas is very good for patient confidentiality but one of the computers in reception can be seen by patients.
- There is lots of information and signposting to other sources of help for patients both in the surgery and on the website. However, the information on the website is mainly national and information in the surgery could be presented differently and there are gaps in significant areas such as dementia. This is important, as demonstrated by the national GP survey results, to make the patients feel supported by local services and organisations.
- The website is easy to use but some information is out of date and some links are broken. There are areas where additional information could be included/expanded and, in some cases, given more significance. There are elements of the site that do not work well on different devices.
- Although there was a Friends and Family Test poster displayed in the surgery, we did not see the cards or collection box. Under this heading on the website there is no option to complete online - patients are told to go into the surgery and fill in the form that is available in reception/waiting room. As the surgery does not use a text service they are not collecting patient feedback in this format either. The GP Survey data on the website is from 2017. Although there is a link to the latest Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection, which is a requirement, the rating is not prominently displayed; you have to click the link. The recent reviews on nhs.uk had also not been responded to.

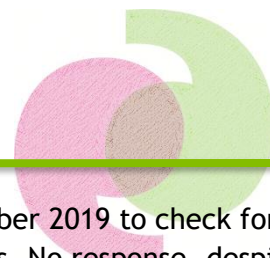
Recommendations

- The website is viewed, on different types of devices, and information is reviewed, updated and expanded and broken links fixed. Online patient functions should be given prominence and promoted in the surgery.
- Information in the surgery could be presented in a more accessible way e.g. grouping information on notice boards (like the flu notice board). On the wall leaflet holders could be installed. Focus could be directed on certain areas e.g. carer identification, Friends and Family Test, Patient Participation Group, certain conditions during awareness months.
- Hand dryers should have an out of order sign immediately but should also be repaired as soon as possible, as should the toilet seat in the men's toilet.
- The computer screen in the reception area, if it cannot be moved, should have a privacy screen; which means the information could only be viewed from directly in front of the screen.
- The surgery responds in a timely manner to reviews on nhs.uk and updates the website with the more recent GP survey data.
- Healthwatch Windsor, Ascot & Maidenhead would like to offer the Practice Manager a meeting to explore how we could help and support the surgery in the development of an active Patient Participation Group.

Longer term considerations

- To consider using a text system to remind patients of upcoming appointment, send out important information and to collect patient feedback after appointments.
- Next time there is decorating works planned to refresh the men's toilet and to remove the old call system from the waiting room.
- To replace the main doors and the door between the reception and the waiting room and add an accessible counter to the reception area to become fully accessible.

Service Provider response



The report was sent to Margaret Adaway, Practice Manager, on the 11th December 2019 to check for any factual errors and a response to the report's findings and recommendations. No response, despite further reminders to both the Practice Manager and the Office Manager, has been received.

Report published 8th January 2020

