

Details of visit**Service address:****Ascot Medical Centre****Forest Lodge, Gate 3 Heatherwood Hospital,
Kings Ride, Ascot, SL5 8AA****Service Provider:****Ascot Medical Centre****Date and Time:****Monday 2nd December 2019, 9.30am-11.30am****Authorised****Representatives:****Sharon Bowden, Steph Blades and Chris Downes****Contact details:****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, the national GP survey 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.

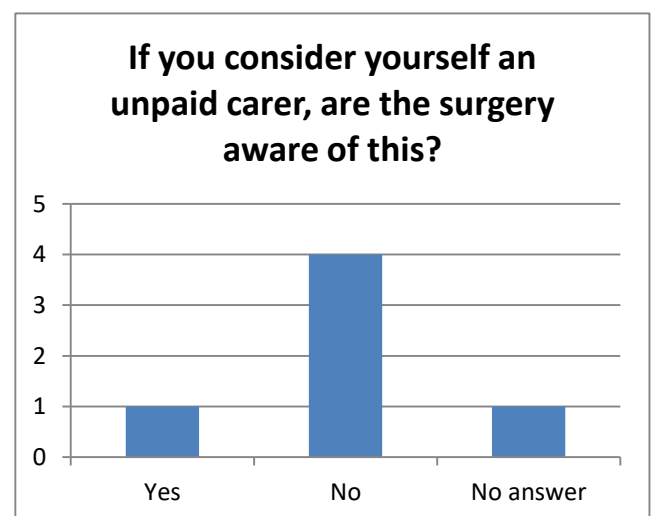
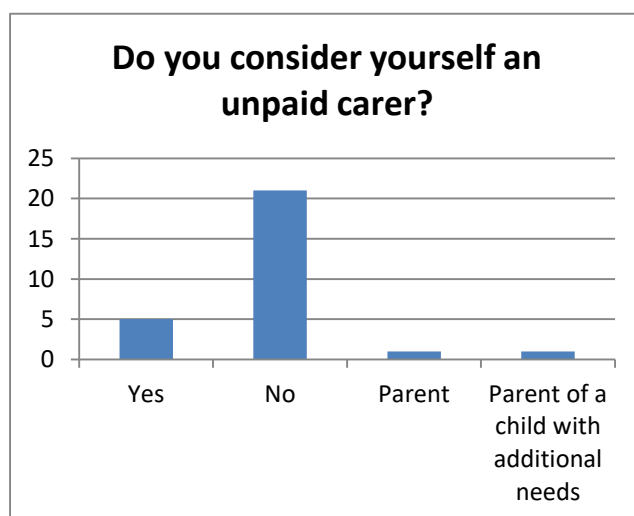
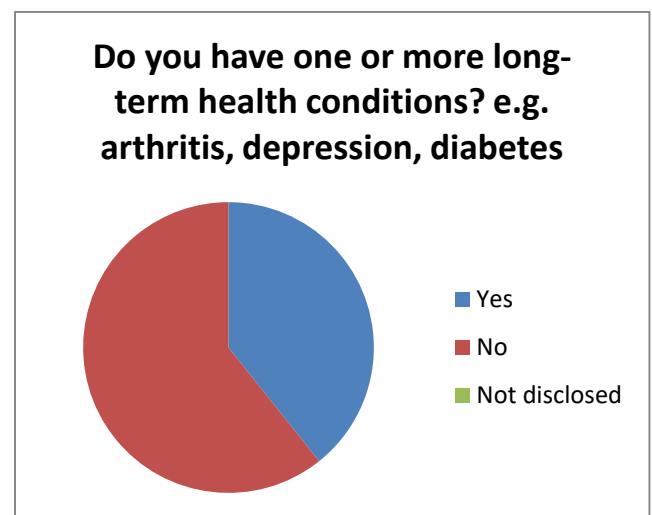
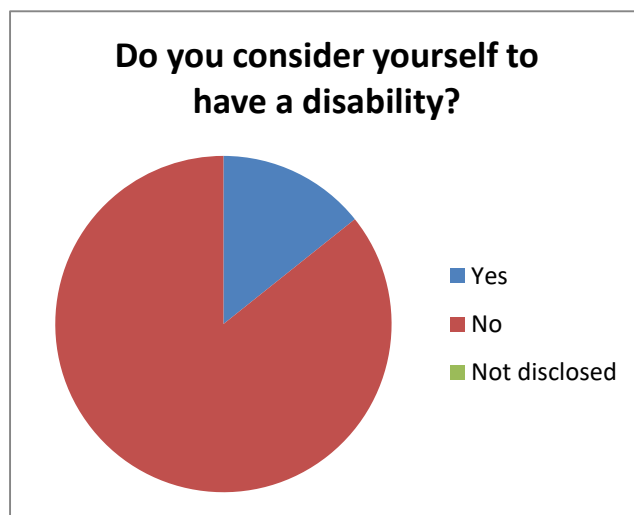
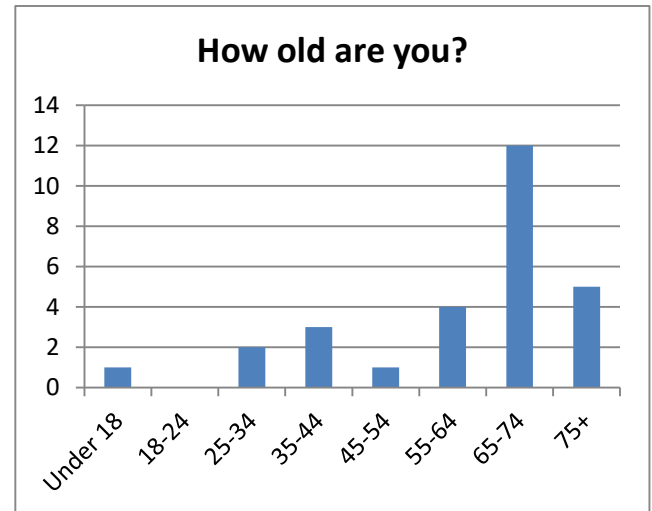
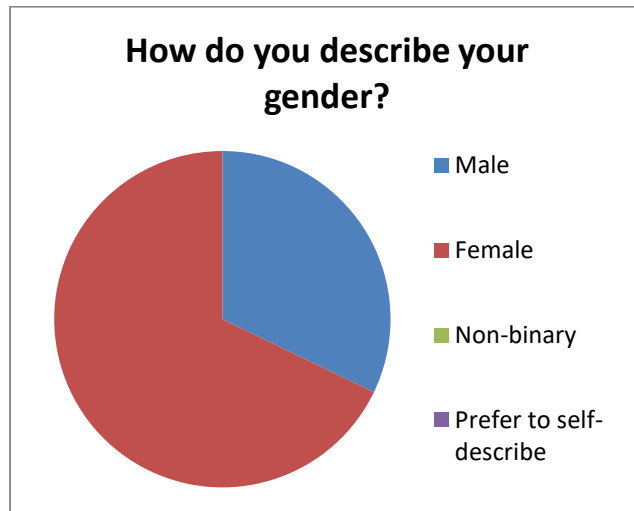
A proportion of the visit was also observational, allowing the authorised representatives to assess the environment and how patients engaged with staff members and the facilities.

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

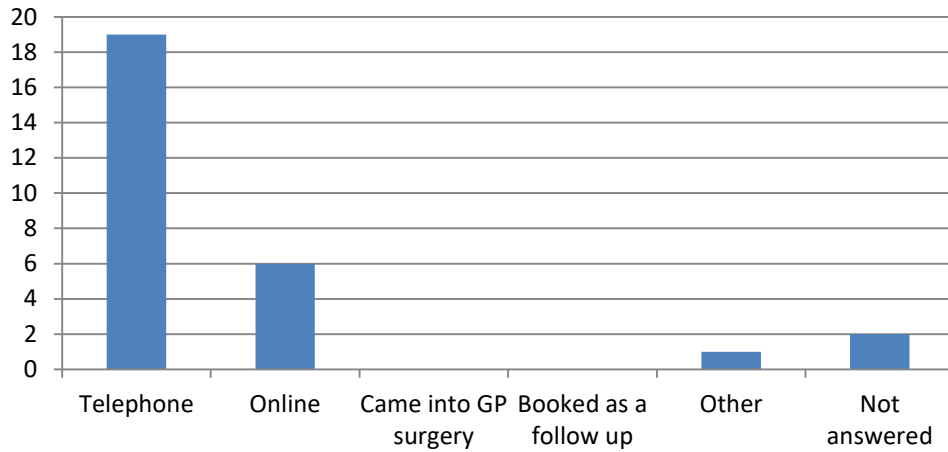
Results of Visit

Survey results

14 surveys completed on the visit + 14 online

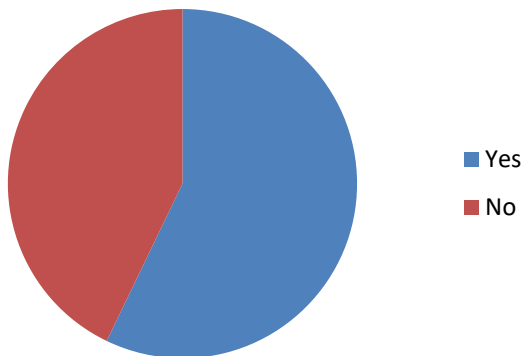


How did you make your last/today's appointment?

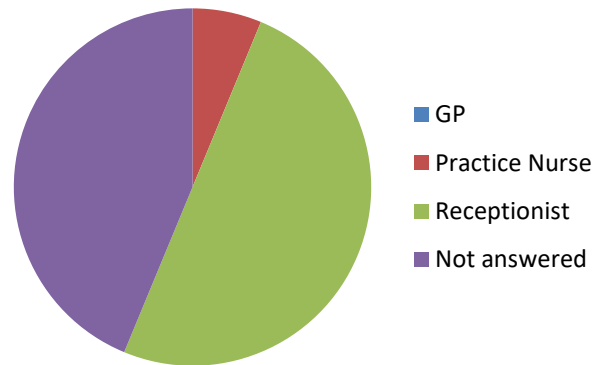


The nurse contacting the patient requesting they make an appointment accounted for the 'other' response.

Before you could book this appointment, did you have to speak to anyone to explain why you thought it was needed?

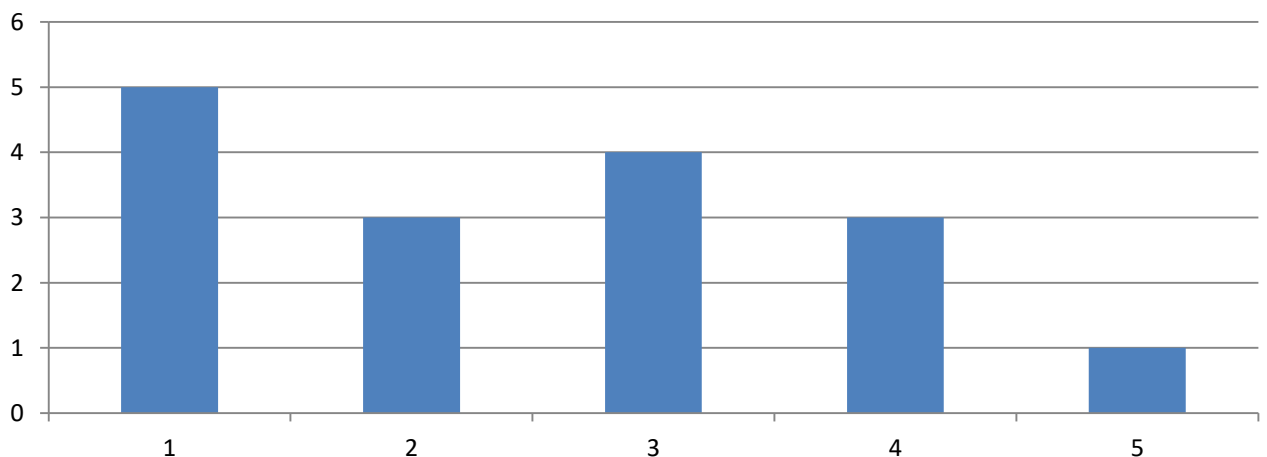


If you answered yes, please tell us who you had to speak to

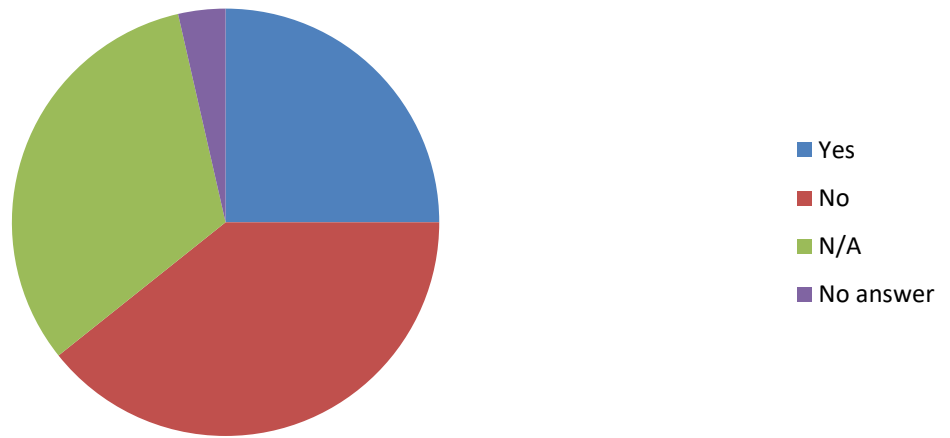


How do you feel about that conversation?

1 = very positive, 2 = positive, 3 = neutral, 4 = negative, 5 = very negative

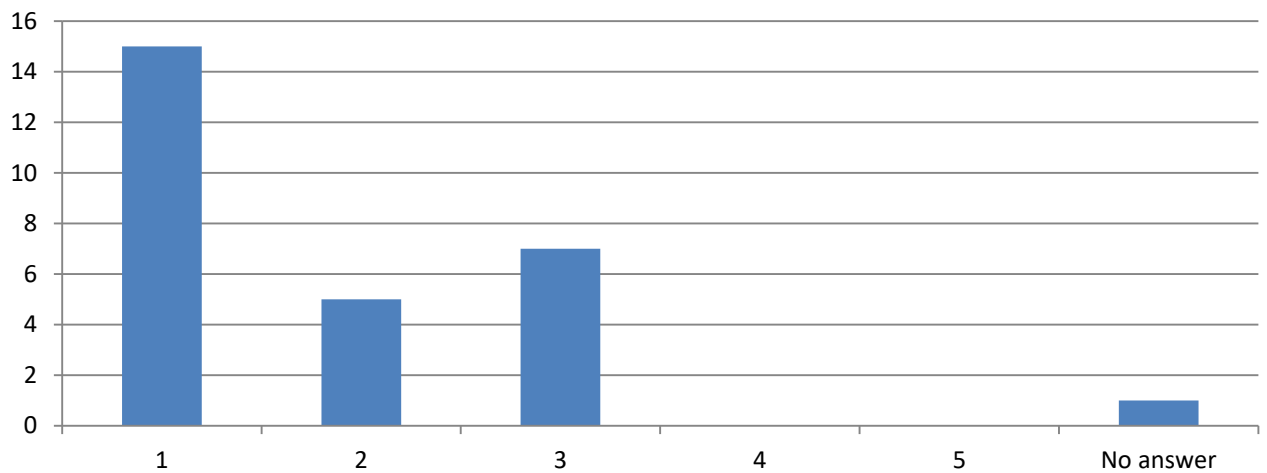


If your appointment was/is with a GP, were you able to make this with the GP of your choice/named GP?

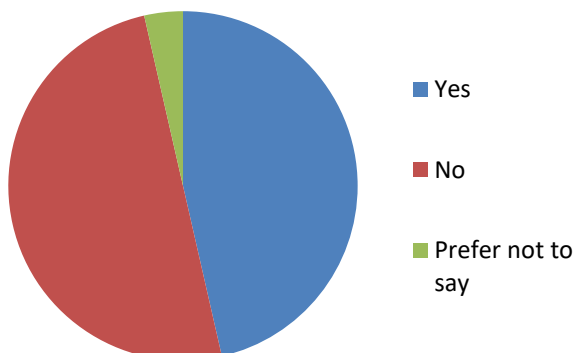


How convenient was/is your appointment time with regards to any responsibilities you have? e.g. work, parenting, caring or other commitments

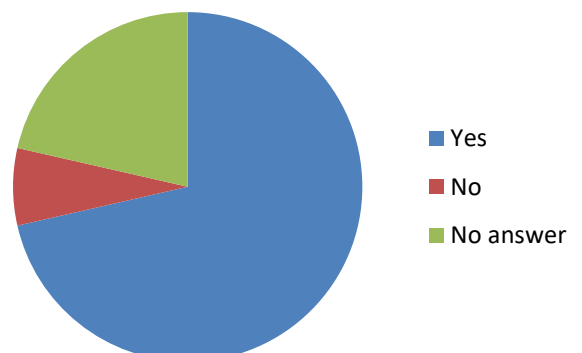
1 = very convenient, 2 = convenient, 3 = neutral, 4 = inconvenient, 5 = very inconvenient



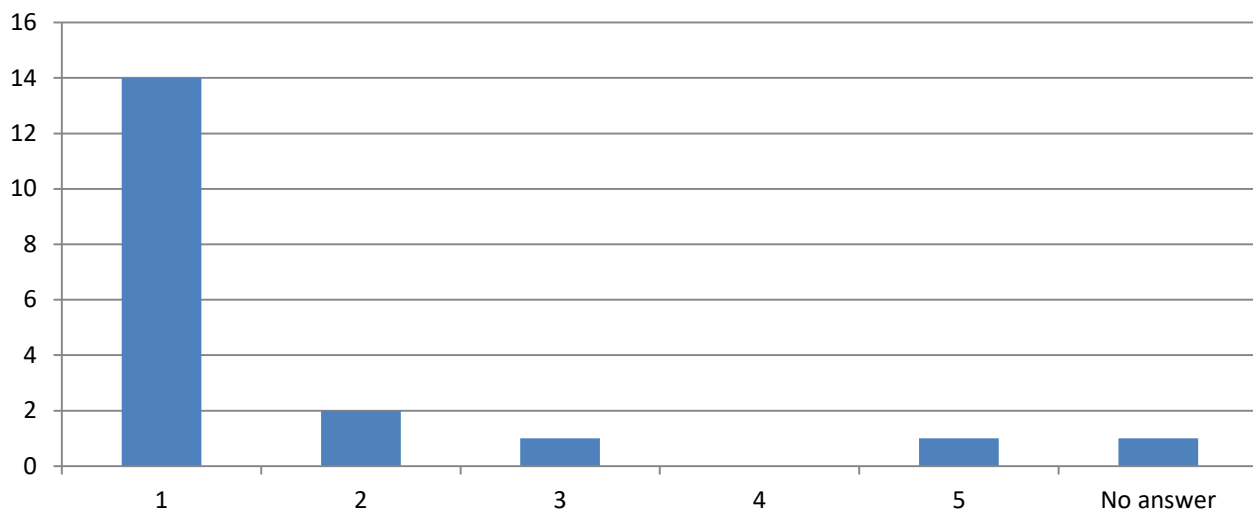
Did you receive a text reminder for your last/today's appointment?



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

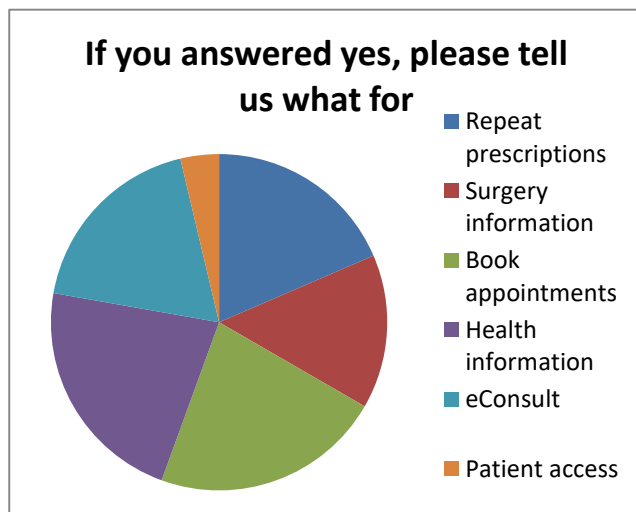
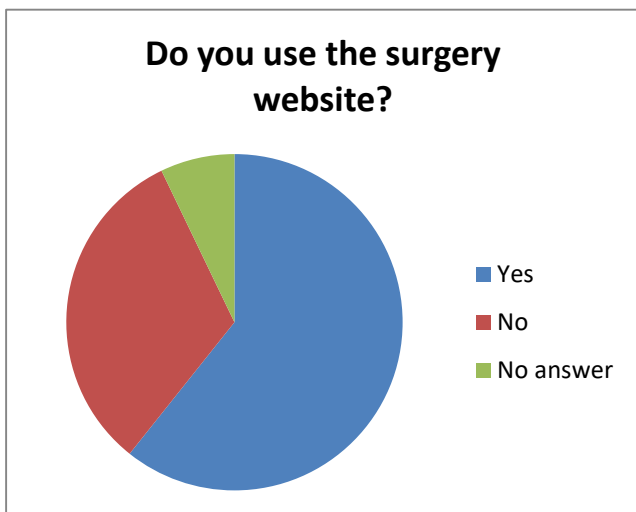


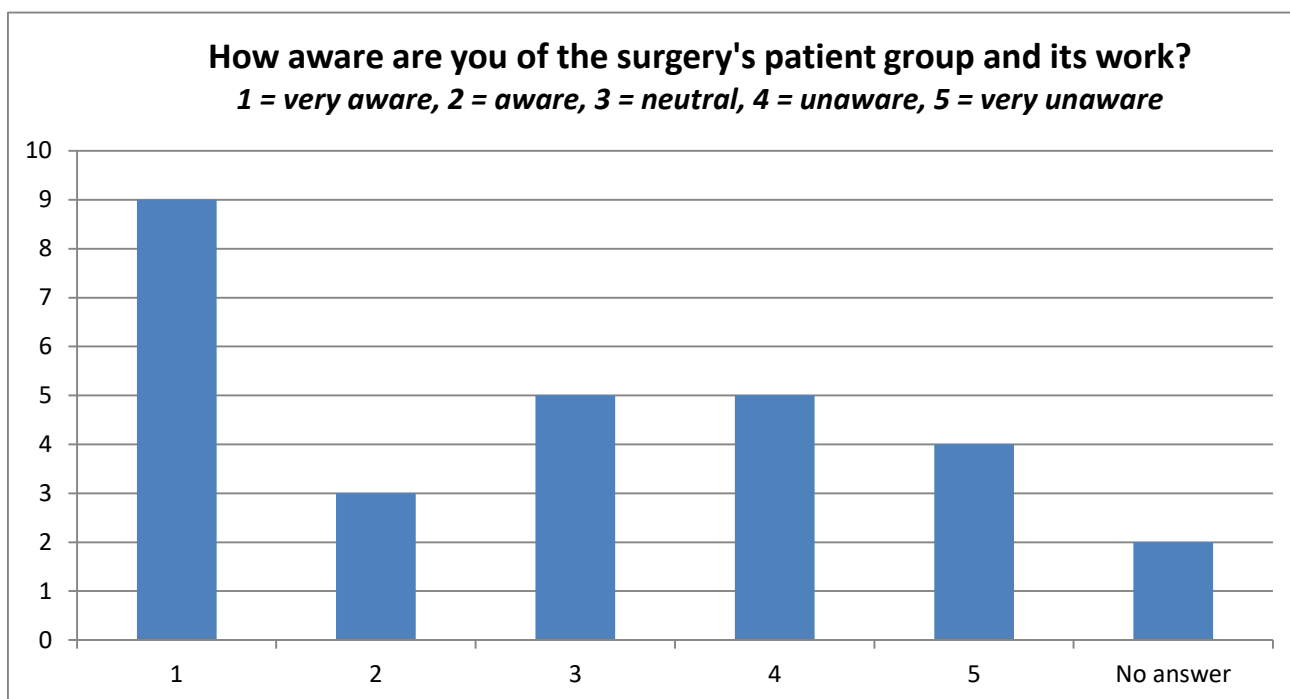
How would you rate the communication, care and treatment received during your last/today's appointment?
 1 = very positive, 2 = positive, 3 = neutral, 4 = negative, 5 = very negative



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 5 surveys from the visit and 14 online surveys)

<i>Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your last/today's appointment?</i>	
	No. of comments
Positive comments about care and treatment received	4
Negative comments about treatment received	1





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? 51

What could be improved? 19

<i>What do you find really good about this surgery?</i>	
Comment category	No. of comments
Doctors	9
Reception staff	8
Appointment availability	8
General positive comments	8
Nurses	5
Location	4
Progressive, continually improving	3
Care & treatment received	2
Free parking	1
Waiting times	1
Team work	1
eConsult	1

<i>What, if anything, could be improved at this surgery?</i>	
Comment category	No. of comments
Appointment availability	4
Online booking (appointment availability)	2
Opening hours	2
Reception staff	2
Healthcare assistants	1
Triage system	1
Length of appointments	1
Additional services (to reduce referrals to hospital)	1
Continuity of care - GP	1
Future changes (parking) with development of site	1
Follow us (test results)	1
Phone system (long introduction)	1
eConsult	1

Authorised representative observations

The authorised representatives made the following observations:

Cleanliness

- The surgery was clean and tidy throughout although there were marks on the walls, skirting boards and floor through wear and tear
- Lots of dead flies in light covers

Condition/appearance

- The décor appeared tired, mainly due to the number of age and wear and tear related marks and staining

Facilities

- One of the toilets was reported as blocked during our visit. An 'out of order' sign was promptly placed on the door but we were told it happens a lot
- Automatic check-in works intermittently - been problems since installation which the surgery is trying to resolve and is in email communication with the CCG
- Although there was an automatic hand sanitiser dispenser by the automatic check-in, it was not working. This was reported to reception
- 23 car parking spaces; permits to put in cars on notice board by reception - there have been recent building works on the wider hospital site which has changed parking and access and there is no clear signage for parking available to the surgery's patients (initial parking is for staff and permit holders)
- There is no directional signage (to toilets, consulting rooms)
- There are no baby change facilities
- There is no clock in the waiting room
- There are no children's books

Accessibility

- 2 disabled parking spaces for blue badge holders
- The surgery is all on one level

- There are no automatic doors; the outer door is propped open with a plant pot; the inner door needs to be pulled open
- There is an accessible toilet; it is also used by staff
- There are high-backed chairs with arms available

Information available

- Information about our visit was displayed
- Recent Friends and Family Test results were displayed
- Screen with PowerPoint presentation in the waiting room
- There were many posters in the waiting room but these were not displayed in an accessible way - there were too many, some out of date and one was even upside down
- There were information leaflets available and these all appeared to be up to date and relevant
- Some of the newsletters available (surgery and other organisations) were out of date
- There is a notice board in the entrance with pictures of staff
- There is a Patient Participation Group (PPG) board which contained up to date information and minutes

Interactions

- All staff were very welcoming to authorised representatives; reception and clinical
- Clinicians came to the waiting room to collect patients for their appointment
- All interactions between staff and patients observed were polite and cheerful and reception staff seemed to know many of the patients
- Some patients had a wait time of about 20 minutes

Confidentiality

- The reception desk is situated away from the waiting room helping with privacy and patient confidentiality

Response from the Patient Participation Group survey

The survey was completed by the Chair and they were able to consult with other members to complete the survey.

How many active members are in your group?

8, including Chair and Secretary, and over 50 virtual members

How often and when does your group meet?

Every 6-8 weeks

Does your group have a Governing Document/Terms of Reference?

Yes

Do members complete a volunteer agreement or similar document?

No

**Do you think your group is representative of the diversity of your practices' patients?
e.g. age, disability, gender, parents, unpaid carers, ethnicity**

Generally, yes across both the group and virtual group. Areas that are not so well covered would be ethnicity and young people, as recruiting has been more difficult from these two groups.

Do you have a wider Patient Reference Group who can be consulted?

Yes - Virtual PPG, NAPP, WAM PPG Network, Ascot Network PPGs

How much do you agree with the following statements, please provide us with an example/short statement to support your rating.

1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree

Our group works with GPs and practice staff to improve local services and the quality of care

1

The group meets every 6-8 weeks. The meeting is attended by the Senior Partner and Practice Manager with other staff called as required. A standing agenda item is patient feedback received via iPlato on a monthly basis and the annual survey. Items that cannot be resolved then are added to the action plan.

Our group works with GPs and practice staff to improve the communication between the surgery and the patients

1

The PPG publishes a newsletter for patients normally 4 times a year and provides information via the website and PPG notice board. Again, we raise patient concerns regarding communication at our meeting and get a resolution which is fed back to patients via the newsletter or directly dependant on the issue.

Our group works with GPs and practice staff to promote health and wellbeing to patients

1

We have run health awareness sessions for patients and now support the health awareness sessions put on at Lynwood House by the other Ascot practices.

Our group ensures that the practice remains accountable and responsive to patient needs

1

We raise issues and concerns that have come to us by a number of means at the PPG meeting. Items not resolved at the meeting are added to the action plan which is signed off by the practice and PPG. The action plan is reviewed 4 times a year. I, as the Chair of the PPG, have direct access to the Senior GP Partner and Practice Manager and speak regularly with them regarding patient needs.

Website review

The Ascot Medical Centre website was reviewed on the 10th December 2019 and looked at the following areas:

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

Easy to find. Clear information about the boundaries and new patient forms available to print and fill in prior to visiting the surgery.

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

Easy to find. Detailed clear information about the different types of appointments available and how to utilise these. The practice is also using eConsult, which enables patients to be able to contact the surgery online.

- **Information about staff**

This section has been well thought through. There is good information about the different people that work at this Practice. The surgery may wish to consider adding a photo against each person to help patients to know who's who.

- **CQC rating displayed**

The CQC rating is displayed on many of the sites' pages.

- **How does the practice share information with patients, such as newsletters, news section?**

The practice has a newsletter, produced by the patient group. It says that this is produced quarterly; the last one available is spring/summer 2019.

- **Contact information**

We were unable to find the surgery phone number on the site. On the home page there is information about Gate 3 being closed during construction. It would be useful to see this information on the contact page too.

- **Out of hours' information**

Out of hours' information is available within the opening hours' section of the site.

- **Information about PPG**

The surgery has a page about the patient group - this also invites patients to join a virtual group. Minutes of previous meetings are available along with an action plan. This section maybe a bit out of date as the last minutes are from July 2019.

- **Ease of use**

Information is clear and easy to find and the site scales well on a desktop, tablet and mobile phone. The practice phone number may have been removed from the site due to the new eConsult - to encourage patients to use this, however people will still need to call in. Please consider adding this back to the site.

- **Accessibility tools / features**

The site has a good colour scheme which makes it easy to see the information. The website has an accessibility statement which tells people how to change the size of the text, colours and how to navigate without a mouse. The site does not have a language changer or any 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 1 reviews. This was a 5-star review posted on the 12th September and concerned a nurse appointment. It was not acknowledged by the surgery until the 28th November, shortly before our visit.

National GP survey

The full results for the surgery can be found at:

<https://www.gp-patient.co.uk/PatientExperiences?practicecode=K81655>

The results of the national survey combine Radnor House Surgery and Ascot Medical Centre which are now delivered on the one site.

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

Only 35% of patients usually get to see or speak to their preferred GP when they would like to (national average 48%).

81% of patients waited 15 minutes or less after their appointment time to be seen at their last general practice appointment (national average 69%).

Summary of key findings

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

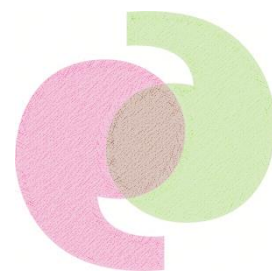
- Of the six people we spoke to who told us they were an unpaid carer, only one said the surgery was aware of this.
- Many of the people we spoke to made their appointment by telephone but 20% made their appointment online.
- Just over half the people we spoke to said they underwent a process of triage, usually by a receptionist, before being given an appointment. People's feelings about this process - positive/negative - were varied.
- Only 25% of patients were able to see the GP of their choice. This is in-line with the findings of the National GP Survey.
- 71% of patients found their appointment time *very convenient* or *convenient* with regards to their other responsibilities such as working or caring.
- Half the people we spoke to did not receive a text reminder for their appointment, despite the majority having a mobile phone they use daily. However, 2 patients told us that they had made been given an urgent appointment not long after request so wouldn't have expected one.
- The majority of patients, who told us about the care and treatment received today/at their last appointment, said they felt *very positive* about it
- 61% of people we spoke to use the surgery's website; this is higher than many other practices we have visited so far. They use the website for a variety of reasons: surgery opening hours, repeat prescriptions, self-care advice and eConsult.
- People told us about the helpful, friendly reception staff and professional doctors and this was observed by authorised representatives.
- Although appointment availability was mentioned by 8 people as an area that is good about the surgery, some patients still found getting an appointment, particularly availability online, a problem.
- The surgery's progressive attitude and continuous improvement based on patient feedback was mentioned by patients and the PPG.
- The location and car parking are seen as a positive but at least one patient voiced concern about potential impact of the redevelopment of the wider hospital site.
- The surgery is clean and tidy.

- There are a lot of age related marks and wear and tear damage to the décor and flooring.
- One of the toilets seems to get blocked frequently.
- The automatic check-in does not always work.
- The automatic hand sanitiser was not working during our visit.
- Inside the surgery there is not much directional signage for new visitors/those with cognitive or other disabilities.
- There are no baby change facilities.
- The waiting room has no clock or children's books/activities and we observed some patients waiting for 20 minutes or more.
- The surgery has some accessible features: it is all on one level, chairs suitable for people with mobility issues, 2 disabled parking bays and an accessible toilet.
- There is a lot of information for patients but some of it is out of date or presented in a confusing way.
- The surgery uses iPlato to collect patient feedback and this is discussed at PPG meetings.
- The reception desk is situated away from the waiting room which helps with privacy and patient confidentiality.
- There is varied awareness of the Patient Participation Group (PPG) although it is active, has a section on the website, produces newsletters and has a dedicated noticeboard in the surgery.
- The PPG is active, has a membership of 8 and is open to new members. Although not fully reflective of the diversity of the surgery's it also has access to a virtual group with over 50 members and other patient networks.
- The PPG has a good relationship with the surgery and feels it works well with GPs to improve communication with patients and promote health and wellbeing. They listened to when advocating for the wider patient group and issues are resolved immediately or added to the surgery action plan that requires sign off from both the practice and the PPG.

- The website is easy to use but does not include some information that could be helpful for patients (contact number for example). The website scales well on all devices. The site does not have a language changer or any other accessibility tools.
- A recent review (within 6 months) was not replied to promptly (2+ months).

Recommendations

- To run a campaign for unpaid family carers to identify themselves to the surgery; including more prominent information in the surgery.
- To communicate with patients about how the triage system works and provide reassurance particularly around confidence and confidentiality
- To run a campaign to get patients to provide a mobile number to the surgery and sign up to the text messaging service.
- Continue to promote the website and online functions available to patients. Different approaches, such as promotion on social media, may reach those that rarely need to attend the surgery or book an appointment.
- Refresh the décor and consider replacing the floor.
- Identify and remedy the underlying issue of the blocked toilet.
- Repair the automatic hand sanitiser dispenser.
- Add signage inside the surgery (to toilets, consulting rooms).
- Install a baby change station in the accessible toilet.
- Add a clock and children's books to the waiting room.
- Add an assistance bell to the main doors.
- Continue to promote the Patient Participation Group (PPG) to patients. Social media could be utilised.
- Information in the surgery could be presented in a more accessible way e.g. grouping information on notice boards. Focus could be directed on certain areas e.g. carer identification, Friends and Family Test, certain conditions during awareness months. Avoid overcrowding notice boards.
- Review the website and consider adding some information useful to patients. Add accessibility features.
- Respond to all reviews on nhs.uk in a timely manner.



Longer term considerations

- To continue to work with the Patient Participation Group to improve appointment access and continuity of care.
- To replace the main doors (make them automatic) and add an accessible counter to the reception area.

Service Provider response



This report was agreed with Jo Taylor, Practice Manager as factually accurate and the following response to the report and recommendations was received on the 11th February 2020.

Following the recent Healthwatch Enter and View visit to our Surgery, we wanted to thank the team for providing a balanced, positive report of their observations.

It was pleasing to hear most people spoken to were happy with the care they receive, that the Surgery was clean and tidy and that people asked spoke about the friendly helpful staff, and that this was supported by the Healthwatch team observations.

It was pleasing to hear confirmation that the surgery responds to feedback from patients and develops its services to the use of modern technologies.

In helping in our aim to continually improve our service we have produced an action plan in response to the Healthwatch Recommendations (Suggestions).

This Action Plan will be regularly reviewed by the Senior GP Partner, Practice Manager and the Patient Participation group (PPG) to ensure completion of all items. The plan is in two parts; the first covers the recommendations that apply to the building the surgery is in; the second covers administration, people and other items.

It is important to point out we are tenants of Forest Lodge @ Gate 3 of Heatherwood Hospital (part of the Frimley Health Trust), and that we are scheduled to move in 2021 to a new purpose designed Surgery building on the current new hospital site, as part of the ongoing Heatherwood redevelopment project and The Ascot Plan.

ASCOT MEDICAL CENTRE - ACTION PLAN

(in response to the Healthwatch Enter & View visit on 2nd December 2019)

Key - PM = Practice Manager, PPG = Patient Participation Group

The recommendation	Action	Who	When
The surgery could be decorated and then flooring replaced.	Request has been sent to Frimley Estates Department.	PM	4 weeks
Fix the toilet that keeps getting blocked.	Several repair requests were submitted to Frimley. Toilets are part of the daily check list which are reported on and followed up - AM & PM	PM	Fixed the following day

Repair the automatic hand sanitiser dispenser	Sanitiser will be replaced. Back up sanitiser was available on the reception desk, signage to be reviewed.	PM PM	Replacement ordered 4 weeks
Put baby change unit in the accessible toilet.	Request will be made to Frimley. This facility will be provided in the new surgery.	PM	2 weeks
Put clock and some childrens' books in the waiting room.	Repaired clock is now in the waiting room. We are unable to put childrens' books in the waiting room because of infection control guidelines. We are looking at possibility of wooden child's play station which potentially could be utilised in waiting room with a log to ensure this is cleaned daily.		Done N/A 4 weeks
Get an assistance bell for the main doors.	Video assistance bell in place connected to Reception desk. Signage ordered to inform patients/ visitors who need assistance, to press the red accessible button on the external wall.	PM	Done 4 weeks
The main doors could be changed to be automatic and accessible reception counter added.	Subject to be raised with Frimley, however, it is unlikely they will agree to the expenditure with the move to the new building so close. Both items are to be provided in the new surgery building.	PM	4 weeks

Part two covers People, Administration and other items:

The recommendation	Action	Who	When
<p>To try to get people to tell the surgery if they are caring for someone so they can be offered more support.</p>	<p>This is an area where the Surgery continues to invest time to identify and best support carers. Item to be added to PPG agenda for suggestions. Item to be added to next clinical meeting with recommendations to be brought to the attention of the Social Prescribers in-house and coded accordingly Do Healthwatch have any recommendations on recognition of carers to the Practice.</p>	<p>PM</p>	<p>4 weeks</p>
<p>To explain to patients why they need to talk to someone before they can make an appointment.</p>	<p>We will continue to review the initial messages that patients received upon contacting the Practice for an appointment in line with the NHSE multi-disciplinary approach to providing targeted care.</p>	<p>PM</p>	<p>Review every Quarter</p>
<p>Try to get people to give the surgery their mobile number so they can receive text messages from the surgery.</p>	<p>At the point of patients' making an appointment over the telephone, the Reception staff will always check with the patient that their mobile numbers we have are current and correct. Cross reference with all of our e-consultations received with what we have on our system, for mobile numbers as well as current home address and email addresses. New patient questionnaire requests this information.</p>	<p>PM</p>	<p>Reviewed every Quarter</p>

To continue to let people know about the web site and what they can do online.	We have adopted a multi-channel promotion approach which includes the Practice Newsletter, telephone answer machine, in-house notices.	PM	Review every Quarter
Continue to let people know about the PPG and the work they do.	The subject of increasing awareness of PPG activities to be added to the next PPG meeting agenda and a plan to be formed.	PPG Chair	4 weeks
Make sure that information provided in the Surgery is up to date and in an accessible way. Information of conditions, topics etc., could be displayed together.	One member of staff will be allocated to regularly check patient information is up to date, accessible and displayed for ease of use.	PM	Check every 2 weeks PPG noticeboard to be kept updated
Website - consider adding a telephone number for the surgery. Add accessibility tools and features.	There is a telephone number located on the website however we will make the telephone number easier to find (under Contact Us). Accessibility tools and features have been added to include Google translate.	PM	Completed Completed
Reply to all reviews on nhs.uk as soon as possible.	The PM had a technical problem with NHS Choices being unable to respond to comments which lasted for 2 months. This review would usually inform the PM there is a comment waiting - it did not. However, this has now been fully rectified.	PM	Completed
To continue to work with the PPG to improve the amount of	Subject to be added to the next PPG meeting agenda and a plan/response produced.	PPG Chair	Meeting in 4 weeks.

appointments available at convenient times for people with the GP of their choice.			
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Footnote:

Ascot Medical Centre currently has 2 listings on www.nhs.uk, Healthwatch was not made aware of this until after the report was completed. The Practice Manager is unable to access one of the accounts so cannot respond. They have tried to resolve this with NHS England and we will also follow this up with NHS England - it is confusing for everyone, including patients.

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