

Enter & View Report

Latham House Medical Practice
Melton Mowbray

November 2021

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Report Details

Details of Visit	
Service Address	Latham House Medical Practice Sage Cross Street Melton Mowbray Leicestershire LE13 1NX
Service Provider	Latham House Medical Practice
Date and Time	23 November 2021, 10am
Authorised Representatives undertaking the visit	Chris Bosley and Kim Marshall Nichols.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire would like to thank the service provider, patients, and staff for their contribution to the Enter & 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 service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

This report is written by volunteer Enter and View Authorised Representatives who carried out the visit on behalf of Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire.

Purpose of the visit

- To gather patient views of the service provided at Latham House Medical Practice.
- To see if any of our recommendations from our previous visit has been acted upon.
- To observe the facilities and operation of the service.
- To observe patient access during the ongoing covid-19 restrictions.

Methodology

This was an announced Enter and View visit.

The visit was prompted by feedback we received during our Summer Tour about the GP Practice. We had previously visited Latham House in September 2018 and wanted to see what changes and/ or improvements had been made for patients.

We contacted the Practice Management Team in advance and had access to communal areas during our visit.

The visit was observational, involving the Authorised Representatives observing the surroundings to gain an understanding of how patients engaged with reception staff and the facilities.

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions in place, we did not speak to any of the patients during the visit. Patients were being advised to arrive 5 minutes before their appointment and were waiting in the waiting areas for a short amount of time.

To reach patients, we spoke to the management team prior to the visit about using the GP text messaging service and we received 1138 responses.

At the end of the visit, we gave our initial findings to the Management team.

Initially, we reviewed the previous recommendations listed in the September 2018 report:

1. Consider how waiting times for routine appointments can be shortened.
2. Review how the quality of all clinical interactions can be brought up to the best.

Due to Covid-19 infection control, the staff told us that the practice has measures in place to reduce the waiting times for patients (Patients advised to arrive 5 minutes before their appointments) and clinical interactions are currently a mixture between telephone triage and face to face appointments. The staff did tell us about the 'red zone' area that has been created for patients who have been diagnosed with Covid-19 but need to come to the practice to physically see a doctor. We observed a clear system in place and that patient and staff safety has been considered.

3. Make processes for moving doctor, making a complaint, or giving feedback more visible and easier to use.

We observed information around the surgery that advised patients how to make a complaint and provide feedback.

4. Consider the layout for noticeboards to improve accessibility for people in wheelchairs.

The noticeboards were very clear and clutter free. We noticed that the posters that had been created by the practice were very clear and could be read by all people within the waiting areas.

5. Consider advertising developments such as changes in opening times, self-referral services and so on in the local press.

We spoke to the communications manager who told us that the practice has increased its social media presence. Patients can connect with the practice and the practice are ensuring that they respond to all comments from patients.

At the front of the building, large vinyl stickers have been added to the glass doors with clear information for visitors and patients.



Summary of the findings

Summary

- The waiting areas were spacious and clean.
- Information and notices for patients were clearly displayed and the posters created by the practice were clear and easy to read.
- We saw Covid-19 preventative measures in place throughout the practice.
- Patients told us that the telephone system could be improved as it is difficult to contact the surgery over the telephone to make an appointment.
- People struggled to get face-to-face appointments.
- Patients are not routinely offered a choice of whether they see a doctor or nurse.
- Differing definitions of urgent /emergency leading to confusion for patients.
- The repeat prescription service was rated highly by patients.
- The survey findings suggest that patients view the quality of medical care and treatment as equally good and bad.

Results of Visit

The Practice

Latham House is a large medical practice in Melton Mowbray. It is located close to the town centre and shops. The current patient list is 35,660 (approximately).

There is a private car park with 30 spaces for patients with three disabled parking bays and one ambulance parking bay.

Reception and waiting areas

On arrival we queued from the main entrance to get to reception. There were two receptionists available for patients. We noted that there was a long queue of patients at reception that stretched out of the front doors.

We noted that the reception area had plastic screens. All staff and visitors were wearing face masks. There was little privacy when talking to the receptionists, however we did see signs that advised you could speak to a member of team in private.

There is a colour coded system in place for each clinical room. Each clinical room had their own reception desk and waiting area. Due to Covid-19, the reception areas were not being used and all visitors must sign in at the main reception.

The automated check-in facility and blood pressure machines are currently suspended due to Covid-19.

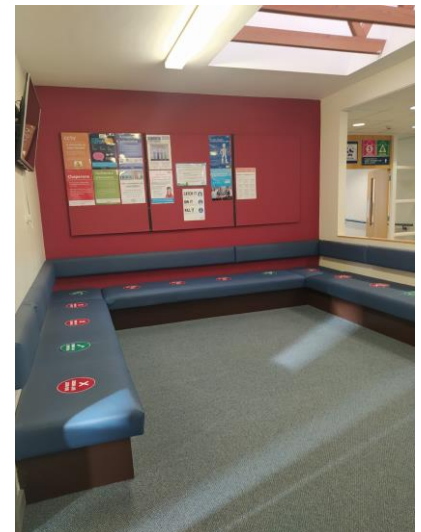
Hand sanitisers were available in all public parts of the building.

The building was well lit and clean throughout. There was ample seating for patients. There were benches for patients to sit on or chairs with armrests.

We saw information on how to make a complaint and the complaints procedure.

We noticed that there was information about prescriptions and choosing which pharmacy to use. The notice in the practice advised patients to leave prescriptions in the grey box. However, this is no longer there. We did see that there was a large green box at the front of the building.

No patient seemed to be waiting long before being called in to be seen by a clinician.



Accessibility

The building and waiting areas were large and there is access for wheelchairs and prams. There is a lift available to access the rooms upstairs. Hearing loops were in place.

There is a unisex toilet in the reception area with baby changing facilities.

There were 'accessible information' posters on the noticeboards that advised patients to talk to staff if they have any communications support needs.

Information available to patients

The noticeboards in all the waiting rooms contained information posters. We noted that the practice posters were very clear and in large print.

The noticeboards in the waiting areas were uncluttered with A3 information posters. There were noticeboards along the corridors with information about Services, Patient Reference Group, Patient Services, Mental Health and Positive Feedback.

The TV screens in the waiting areas were not currently in use.

We saw a poster for a 24 hour cancellation line so that patients can cancel their appointments at any time.



Staffing

The practice has 24 GPs, an international GP, 4 registrars, 30 nurses, 3 pharmacists, 2 physician associates, a social prescriber, and a paramedic.

We spoke with the PPG Chair and staff members who told us that the staff included a mental health nurse offering 30 minute appointments, who we were told was very busy and mainly dealing with crisis situations.

Health visitors have not been able to visit new mothers due to the Covid-19 restrictions. The manager said that workloads were being impacted by patients who were waiting longer for hospital treatments as monitoring their health conditions, including pain management, was being provided by the GPs.

Patient Feedback

A survey was sent to the GP patients via the text messaging service, and we received 1138 responses. We also gave patients the opportunity to contact us via telephone to share their feedback.

See Appendix I for the survey responses. Where we asked for comments, we have themed the responses and provided a selection of patient comments.

Recommendations

We recommend that Latham House Medical Practice:

1. Update the prescription box information for patients.
2. Promote the 24 hour cancellation line prominently to all patients to reduce the number of missed appointments to enable more on the day appointments.
3. Consider all the comments recorded from patients and what the implications are for the operation of the practice.
4. The findings did indicate that the telephone booking system is a huge frustration to patients. We recommend that the surgery reviews the telephone booking system and find a way to advertise more prominently, the different ways patients can make an appointment.
5. Routinely offer the patient the choice of seeing the nurse or doctor of their choice.
6. Explain to patients why the receptionists are asking for information to assist with making an appointment with the doctor or nurse.
7. Ensure continual feedback from clinicians to review and refine the receptionists' triage process.
8. Have information for patients explaining the triage system in place.
9. Return to face-to-face appointments for those patients that request them as soon as the Covid-19 situation allows.

Service provider response

The report was agreed with the Service Provider as factually accurate. They have provided the following responses to the report:

Understanding the views of our patients is incredibly important to us and we were happy to host the Healthwatch visit to our Practice and support the survey of our patients, achieving a good response rate. We felt that your visit to the Practice was very positive, and we were delighted with your verbal positive feedback based on visible improvements you noticed to our patient communications.

Having reviewed the results and comments we were heartened with the positive feedback and the acknowledgement from some patients of the difficult circumstances we have worked through.

However, it was clear to us that some of the responses were as a direct result of the pandemic, and some do not reflect the general themes we see in the national survey, particularly around the attitude of our reception team and the quality of our clinical care.

We also had significant temporary clinical staffing issues from July to September 2021. The CCG, CQC, local councillors and our MP were all made aware of the difficulties which we also communicated to every household registered with us by post and online.

These difficulties certainly meant we were unable to offer the level of service we want to provide for our patients for that short term.

Key Themes

Telephones & Access to the Practice

During the pandemic we experienced an average of a 47% increase in phone calls to the Practice, and of these an average of 65% were answered; the average wait time for the call to be answered was just over 12 minutes.

We have invested in additional call centre staff who are now fully trained.

We changed and shortened our recorded telephone voice message in conjunction with the support of our PRG.

We have also given patients the option to go through directly to the prescriptions team via phone.

We launched Engage Consult in response to the pandemic and we have excellent response rates to online contacts – offering same day response to contacts received before 2pm.

We promote direct email options for greater patient convenience, enabling alternative ways to get in touch in addition to calling or walking into the Practice.

In addition, since January 2022 we have, seen a drop in call numbers back to pre-pandemic levels. Since early January 85% of our calls have been answered with an average wait time of just under 5 ½ minutes.

We are developing our team to enable us to flex resources across tasks to maximise the number of staff on the phones at peak times. In addition to this we are also investing in a new telephone system which we will implement in April 2022. This system has multiple benefits including a call back option to save holding in a telephone queue. We have researched this system thoroughly and believe it will provide us with a system fit for the future. This new system will also enable staff to log in to the system from anywhere and provide enhanced data to assist with managing performance.

The Healthwatch Team also experienced a long queue at our main reception when they visited the Practice. Due to covid restrictions we had switched off our automatic checking in system and also stopped patients going directly to the sub reception area of their clinician. This is to enable us to manage infection risk both from the touchscreens and asking patients the essential symptom questions before allowing access into the building. We have recently turned our self check in machines on and are pending NHS England guidance on infection control and the need to triage patients at the door.

Choice of Clinician

There is a national expectation of GP practices to ensure doctors are available to manage more complex, high need patients. As such, we do not offer patients a choice of type of clinician; NHS England and our CCG both support this approach and provide training and funding to enable us to train our staff to navigate patients to the most appropriate clinician for their clinical concern. Our GPs also feedback regularly to our receptionists regarding who patients see, we will more formally record this in future. We

will also continue to promote to patients the reasons why our reception team ask for information and the reasons for triage.

Mode of Appointment

For all routine appointments we have offered patients a choice of face to face or telephone since 27th October 2021 when the national guidance changed. We do not anticipate routinely offering face to face appointments for people with urgent needs; these can very often be managed satisfactorily on the phone, and we do not feel it is advisable to go back to having numerous patients, some of whom will have infectious diseases or be vulnerable in one busy waiting room. We are however working on pulling together a list of patients and conditions who are likely to need to be seen face to face and not putting them down for telephone triage first.

Availability of Appointments

We recruited an additional 18 sessions of GP time during 2021, these GPs started in Autumn 2021 and have increased accessibility.

We run a list system and patients are encouraged to see their usual GP to maintain continuity of care. The average wait time for a routine appointment is currently 13 days which is around the national average, although this will vary from GP to GP depending on absences.

All patients who need an urgent appointment at the Practice are offered a telephone consultation that day. However, we are actively encouraged to divert patients to other services, such as community pharmacists and same day mental health services by NHS England and the CCG. It is therefore likely that more patients will report not having been offered an urgent appointment with us. The only time our team would divert a patient to A&E or EMAS is if they described symptoms that are assessed as immediately life threatening such as a stroke, heart attack or sepsis. We will audit a sample of our calls from now on to ensure staff are not inappropriately sending patients to A&E.

We would like to thank you for your recommendations which will all form actions that will directly link into our Management team personal development plans as key priorities.

In addition to your suggested focus areas, we also identified an opportunity to:

- Explain the diverse clinical roles in Primary care and how that clinician can support the patient. We hope that by giving greater clarity on the varied roles it will help the patient understand who is supporting their concern and why.
- There was a helpful comment regarding telephone consultations and how it can be difficult for a patient to hear if the clinician is on loud speaker. This information will be shared back to our team with an amended recommendation to our best practice telephone consultations learnings.
- A further opportunity to share NHSE communications regarding what is considered 'Urgent' and who to contact in those instances.
- An opportunity for us to share communications regarding clinical appointment time slots to better manage the expectations of the patient when attending / participating in a consultation.

We look forward to sharing positive news on our progress with you in the future.

Thank you for your support.

Distribution

The report is for distribution to the following:

- Latham House Medical Practice
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Leicestershire County Council (LCC)
- East Leicestershire & Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group (ELRCCG)
- NHS England (Leicestershire and Lincolnshire) Local Area Team
- Healthwatch England and the local Healthwatch Network
- Published on www.healthwatchll.com

Appendix 1: Survey Findings

1138 Patients

Q1. How would you rate this GP Practice?

50% Positive

26% Negative

24% Mixed

Q2. What do you like most?

People spoke positively about their doctor and said:

'My doctor is fantastic.'

'GP very friendly and approachable.'

'Time taken by the GP to explore my concerns.'

'When I talk to my doctor, he takes the time to listen.'

'My doctor is always there when needed.'

People mentioned the available facilities and location of the practice and said:

'Big practice with lots of in-house facilities.'

'Everything under one roof.'

'They offer a good range of services.'

'It's in a good position in town and has a branch in our village too (when it is open).'

'That it's in the centre of town.'

Access to appointments

'Same day, face to face appointments, seven days a week.'

'Easy in getting appointments.'

'Engage consult online works well when it's appropriate to use.'

'Being able to make contact and services online.'

Staff/ customer service

'The staff are very friendly and will do all they can to help.'

'The nurses do an amazing job.'

'The reception staff are always very helpful.'

'The staff when I see them are very helpful and friendly.'

'One of the doctor's receptionists is exceptionally helpful.'

Q3. What do you dislike the most?

People expressed their issues with getting appointments:

'Hard to contact and to get appointments.'

'Extremely difficult to make a GP appointment.'

'Length of time for an appointment.'

'Lack of availability of appointments within a suitable time frame.'

'Weeks of waiting for an appointment and they constantly cancel for no reason.'

'Long wait for appointments, even telephone consultations.'

'Three weeks to get a GP appointment.'

'Cannot get an appointment for love nor money.'

'You can never get an appointment or speak to anyone.'

'The long waits to see your GP, the ridiculously long wait times when you call in.'

Lack of face-to-face appointments

'The fact that we still can't see a doctor and it completely puts you off...'

'Unable to see doctor face to face when required.'

'GPs still routinely not offering face to face when hospital doctors have carried on doing this.'

'Impersonal and virtually impossible to get direct contact with your GP.'

'No face-to-face appointments still. Not being able to go in to make an appointment unless you actually have one!'

'You cannot see a doctor face to face, receptionist making medical decisions.'

'So hard to get face to face appointments. Receptionists expected to triage over the phone.'

'Haven't been able to physically see my GP and find telephone calls on loudspeaker difficult to comprehend.'

Staff

'Some staff not very caring, do not apologise for mistakes.'

'We have a wonderful surgery in the village, but no staff to run it.'

'Some staff dismiss health concerns as nothing and provide wrong advice, causing issues for patients.'

'None of the staff seem to have any empathy with patients.'

'Staff on reception and nurses can be quite rude.'

Telephone waiting times

'Long wait to get through on the phone.'

'Can't get an appointment. 20 minutes waiting time on the phone.'

'Long wait for the telephone to be answered.'

'When you phone to get an appointment most times you are waiting over half an hour for someone to answer.'

Appointment waiting times

'Appointments need three weeks plus advance notice.'

'Can't speak to a doctor for 4 weeks.'

'Appointments are weeks away.'

'Always two weeks wait for an appointment.'

Practice size

'Too many patients and not enough doctors. Surgery is too small for the ever-expanding town.'

'Surgery is too large.'

'Too small for the ever-increasing size of town and local area.'

'Can't cope with the number of patients.'

'Need an additional GP practice in Melton.'

Q4. Is it easy to get through to your practice on the telephone to make an appointment?

14% Yes

86% No

People commented on the long waiting time to get through to the surgery by telephone:

"Can be waiting an hour to get through."

"Always waiting. Mostly engaged."

"Can't get an appointment. 20 minutes waiting time on the phone."

"Long wait for the telephone to be answered."

"When you phone to get an appointment most times you are waiting over half an hour for someone to answer."

Q5. What method do you use to book an appointment? (tick all that apply)

87% Telephone

35% Online booking Service

27% In Person

3% Other

Q6. When making your appointment, are you given the option of seeing the doctor or the nurse?

67% No

33% Yes

Patients given a nurse regardless of their preference

'Always a nurse by phone first, they decide if you need to see a doctor'

'Have to see the nurse first. Then if we're lucky, we may get to see the doctor at a later date!'

'Always want you to see nurse'

'Defaults to a nurse'

'Only ever allowed to see a nurse'

'The nurse most times but sometimes I prefer to see a nurse'

'Nurse appointments are pushed despite it being a GP needed. This wastes time'

'I wanted to see my doctor, the receptionist ignored my request and booked me to see a nurse'

'Nurse is put forward, but this fails to resolve my problem'

'I am only ever given the choice to see a nurse first who will then decide if I get to see a doctor'

'When I make an appointment, I want to see a doctor. The nurse just passed you on to a doctor anyway'

'You can ask to see doctor, but 99% of the time you are declined'
'Usually told you will see the nurse'
'I don't want to see a nurse when I ask to see a doctor'
'Nurse even if you ask for a doctor'
'Usually have to go through the nurse before accessing a doctor'
'Usually advised to see nurse, not always practical'
'A nurse 1st, then a month for my doctor. If you're lucky.'
'You are always offered a nurse first unless you really insist'
'You have to accept whoever's offered as nurses are more available'
'Access to doctor via nurse'
'Always try to get you to see a nurse'

Patients choose to see whichever practitioner gets them in quickest

[choose a nurse] 'Mainly because seeing the nurse is quicker'
[will make a choice] 'If I want to wait a couple of weeks sure.'
'To see a doctor is +3 weeks, so a nurse is an only option if it's urgent.'
'Your own doctor appointment can be delayed though'
'Needed to see someone that day as my son quite ill so only nurse available.'
'Bribed to see a nurse in a week or doctor in a month'
'Seen the nurse sooner than having to wait to see doctor'
'Appointments seem to be taking longer to get especially if you want to see your own doctor'
'If I want to see a specific doctor, I would have to wait at least 2 months'

Practitioner decided by receptionist

[receptionists] 'They make appointment where they think you need'
'Just told who I'll be seeing'
'Have to send in details and you are then allocated an option' [by reception]
'Given the appropriate choice as a GP may not always be best option'
'The receptionist will say which is best to speak to'
'Never been asked' [who they would prefer to see]
'I am told who I will see'
'I allow the system to decide who I need to see'
'Options are not offered'
'Receptionists usually good in offering appropriate choice, within the guidelines they have been set'
'Often just given an appointment and can't get appointment with own GP'
'They tell you who you can see'

'The receptionist decides' [which practitioner you should see]
'No options given' [of choosing a practitioner]
'Receptionists want details to make decision and can get it wrong which wastes appointments'
'the above [choosing a practitioner] is very rarely an option'
'They decide who they think you should see'
'A receptionist decides whether I need to speak to a doctor or nurse'
'Often told what I'm getting rather than seeing who I want'
'Usually told who we will see'
'Always get told who I'm seeing regardless of who my doctor is'
'The staff decide who they think you should see normally a nurse rather than a doctor'
'Not heard that one before.' [being able to choose which practitioner you see]
'It's whatever they can give you rather than choice.'
'Never given this option in 53 years'
'Not given a choice they decide'
'The receptionist seems to decide'
'Decisions are being made by practice what kind of appointment will I get'
'Neither of these options were given to me, I was told to discuss my problem with a pharmacist'
'We are TOLD who we will see'
'I have never been given this option' [of choosing a practitioner]
'They decide'
'You are told who you will see.'
'A triage system is in place that works well and I'm directed to the correct person for my needs'
'I have not heard of this before' [being able to choose practitioner]
'Not been given option'
'Didn't even know there was an option'
'Not normally given choice'
'Normally yes but pandemic issues cause problems'
'Haven't been given the option of seeing a doctor in person for 2 nearly years'
'No option given' [to choose a practitioner]
'No - an option would be a blessing'
'Not the last time I needed to see a doctor 6 weeks ago'

Patients must ask to see a practitioner of choice

'You can ask to see who ever you like'
'I usually request which I need to see'

'If I ask'

'I have always had to ask'

'When I insisted on any doctor, I finally got an appointment face to face.'

'You can see a doctor if you forceful to see one.'

'Asked to see a nurse which worked well'

Q7. Do you always see the doctor or nurse of your choice?

53% No

15% Yes

32% Sometimes

Q8. Have you had a telephone or online consultation with your doctor?

74% Yes

26% No

We asked patients to tell us 'how did you feel about it':

Average

'Fine, I was protected, as were they.'

'Mostly good but one time no one called, and it said on my records that they had tried to reach me.'

'Ok in some circumstances, not ideal for the majority.'

'It was fine, but my condition was not urgent or particularly serious.'

Can't see/ speak with doctor

'Never my doctor that I speak to.'

'Not good with it. How doctor can say what is wrong with me when he not checking or he does not see me.'

'First time thought was talking to doctor but wasn't and had to wait a week to speak to a doctor.'

Difficult

'It's odd and you forget what you want to say.'

'It is sometimes difficult to explain your symptoms.'

'OK as it was my own doctor, but I do find it difficult to talk to people on the phone.'

'Not a clear line, they put you on loudspeaker so very hard to hear clearly.'

Efficient

'It was helpful to have a quick response.'

'It was fine. It got the problem dealt with quickly and efficiently.'

'It was good. Saves time for the doctor if no need to see them in person.'

Depends on condition

'Depends on the nature of the issue. Sometimes dealt with easily on the phone but not always.'

'OK for some situations but not others.'

Long waiting time

Appalled as the doctor rang nearly two hours after the appointment time and I wasn't available by then.'

'Positive but saddened had to wait weeks to speak.'

Three weeks for a telephone appointment.'

'Called me two weeks later and problem had gone by then.'

Poor

'Do not like it. I am deaf.'

'Poor, might as well use Google.'

Prefer face to face

'I think it is not always possible to verbalise your symptoms.'

'It is concerning with young children when they refuse to see them.'

'Feel we are now just a number on their books.'

'Felt somewhat rushed and not easy to have an in-depth conversation.'

'For physical issue you can't show the doctor over the phone.'

'They can't see your ailment so guessing what is wrong on what you say, some people can't explain.'

Rushed

'It was ok but very rushed. I had no opportunity for questions.'

'Did not like it. Only allowed five minutes.'

'It was good, but you feel you don't cover everything.'

'Like the doctor didn't have time to talk to me. Not against it in principle'

Happy with remote

'It was fine. I don't have a problem with future appointments being done that way.'

'Takes getting used to but it was entirely appropriate for advice required.'

Very poor

'Waste of time. When the doctor finally came in person to see my dad he was in shock at his appearance.'

'Total waste of time. Felt let down and unsupported.'

Q9. For urgent appointments, can you normally see the doctor or nurse on the same day?

67% No

33% Yes

Difficulty in obtaining urgent appointments

[can get an urgent appointment] 'with great difficulty'

'These appointments are always taken'

'Same day appointments are not offered'

'Had to go through private' [instead as couldn't get an appointment]

'Too many gatekeepers trying to stop this' [getting appointments]

'Up to 2+ months to get an appointment'

'It's not always possible' [to get an appointment]

'Surgery is too busy' [to get an appointment]

'Hard to get through' [on the phone]

'You cannot get urgent appointments because you cannot get through on the telephone'

'In most case unable to' [book an appointment]

'Never a doctor /nurse available on the same day'

'Virtually impossible' [to get an urgent appointment]

[receptionists] 'don't answer the phone'

'If you don't ring early enough, they can't help that same day'

[can] 'never' [get an appointment]

'Not always' [able to get an appointment]

'Our practice rarely lets you see a doctor the same day'

'Despite calling as soon as they open appointments normally gone'

'Can't get through' [on the phone]

[can get an appointment] 'only if you call before midday'

'Absolutely not, and it's been like that for years'

'It's impossible to get a same day appointment'

'Doctors always seem to be unavailable'

'Usually good at seeing my children on the same day but not adults.'

'I gave up!' [with trying to get an appointment]

'I've never seen my doctor on the same day.'

Able to obtain appointments if you insist

[you can get a same day urgent appointment] 'only if you insist'

'Can get a phone call sometimes if you really insist...'

'Only if you push and make a fuss which should not happen'

'As long as I sit and wait' [to get through on the telephone]

'An urgent appointment isn't offered unless you insist. receptionists want to know about problem first'

'Been lucky on the few occasions I've been desperate and hung on the phone'

'Have to ring really early' [to be able to get an appointment]

'Depends on how hard you push.'

'You have a battle to get a phone consultation on the same day it's normally at least 24 hours later'

'Yes, if you phone up early enough'

'If you able to push and it nearly a life-or-death situation'

'You do have to insist on seeing someone'

Patients would go elsewhere if they thought the problem was urgent

'It can't be helped, there is always 111 or 999 to fall back on if required'

'Cannot get through the phone line to make an urgent appointment. I would have to go to A&E'

'If urgent we call 111'

'I've dialled 111 before now if necessary'

'If urgent we ring 111 it's a waste of time trying to ring Latham House'

[if urgent] 'I use Melton hospital'

'I think it would be quicker to go to an overcrowded walk in centre'

'Would sooner go to A&E' [if had an urgent problem]

'Go to minor injury unit' [instead of using urgent same day appointment]

'I guess you could [try for a same day appointment] but with the poor service the better option would be 111 or direct to a walk in centre'
[use] 'urgent care clinic'
'I ring 111 for advice'
'Normally see someone in urgent care unit.'
'If urgent I wouldn't bother with Latham House, I would ring 111 or 999'

Patients happy with this service

'Always available appointments'
'Usually' [same day urgent appointments available]
[same day appointments have] 'been fantastic'
'Had immediate access'
'Excellent service'
[appointments available] 'If it's determined you have an urgent need'
'Was seen very quickly'
'I was given an appointment for the next day which was fine.'
'Told to go straight to surgery and seen quickly'
'Saw a nurse the same day'
'This is not always possible, but they do try to arrange it'
'Very rarely had to do this, but staff do their best'
'They are very good in this respect'
'Fantastic service'
'X-rays arranged on the same day'
'Rarely need to use a same day service but I have before and feel it's a good service'

Appointments not offered with practitioner of choice

[can get an appointment] 'as long as I don't mind who I see'
[can get a same day appointment but] 'not with your own doctor'
'Usually a nurse'
'Had to have at telephone consult with a nurse'
'Usually, I get to speak on the phone with a nurse not a doctor'
'Probably not my own GP but somebody'
'Just nurse I don't know if doctors are still available there'
'Not my doctor but a doctor at least if needed'
'You get whoever is on'
'Very rarely ever get to see my doctor'
[can get an appointment] 'but not a doctor always a nurse practitioner'

'I was contacted by a paramedic over the phone for an urgent appointment'
'Dr no, nurse yes, if you sit and wait in a queue'
'They got a pharmacist to ring me on one occasion'
'Not my specific doctor'
'If you are prepared to see anyone'
Not your own doctor'

Telephone same day appointments often offered instead of face-to-face

'Only phone consultations'
'I would rather be seen in person and examined properly'
'Has been a phone call later that day or the next day'
'Have immediate access via telephone'
'I was given a phone appointment next day then a follow up in person appointment same day'
'Routinely offer telephone appointments still'
'Consultation by phone'
'You get a phone appointment'
'Telephone appointment but not being seen' [in person]
'Normally it's via telephone but not face to face'
'Usually a telephone discussion.'
'I'd like to see a doctor face to face'
'Only by phone'

Differing definitions of urgent/ emergency leading to confusion for patients – some told their concern is not urgent enough for a same day appointment and some told their concern is too urgent and they need to go elsewhere e.g., A&E.

'Seems if the receptionist doesn't find it necessary, they won't help'
'Urgent appointments are directed to A&E'
'Urgent appointments seem to only cover really serious issues'
'How urgent it is depends on classification by people in reception, no availability'
'What I consider urgent isn't taken up'
'Told to ring 999'
'Told to go A&E numerous times'
'They point you to III'
'Deciding what is actually urgent can be an issue'
'If I insist they have advised go to A&E'

'If you tell them it's an emergency, they don't want to see you'
'Told to go drop in or A&E'
'What do you class as urgent?'
'Seems the receptionists decide what is urgent or not'
'What they class as urgent is diff to what I see'
'No chance [of getting an appointment]. All urgent cases referred to A&E.'
'Who decides what is urgent. Receptionist?'
'I was told go hospital'
'Depends on what they consider urgent.'

Q10. How satisfied are you with the practice opening hours?

21% Not at all satisfied
16% Slightly satisfied
37% Moderately satisfied
19% Very satisfied
7% Completely satisfied

Q11. How would you rate the reception service?

18% Very poor
22% Poor
17% OK
26% Good
17% Very good

Decline in quality

'A practice that used to be very polite. I think the staff are under a lot of pressure.'
'Reception not doing the right job anymore.'

Difficult telephone system

'As helpful as can be when you get through to them.'
'When you finally get through, they are very helpful.'
'Apart from cutting off calls they do what they can.'
'Once you get through being 25th in the queue they are pleasant and helpful.'

Friendly staff

'Receptionists are friendly enough but working with very few options.'
'Always friendly but always seem understaffed to answer the phones.'

'Very helpful and friendly staff.'

Invasive

'They ask too many questions when trying to book an appointment.'

'Receptionists seem to be triaging you, not medical staff.'

'Receptionists ask symptoms which is inappropriate.'

'Should not be assessed by a non-professional before getting an appointment to see a doctor.'

Overworked

'Hard job for the frontline staff, witnessed extremely rude behaviour towards them.'

'Very hard job, they should be given more credit.'

'They try hard but are overwhelmed.'

'They do their best in trying circumstances with a difficult system to work to.'

'Reception is always under pressure. They are hardworking and efficient.'

'Cannot fault them as they are always polite and I know they have to put up with a lot of aggression.'

Variable depending on receptionist

'I know the receptionists work hard but some of them can be a little sharp and talk down to you.'

'I have found some of the receptionists unhelpful and rude.'

'Receptionists sometimes give appalling and inappropriate advice.'

'Generally helpful and friendly. The odd one quite abrupt and unfriendly.'

'Some don't come across as very friendly.'

'A few are really nice and helpful, but in general they are quite sharp in their attitude.'

Understaffed

'Only two receptionists on the desk mean you could be queuing out onto the public pavement.'

'Where have all the receptionists gone?'

'Busy practice means that reception aren't able to cope with the volume of patients.'

Q12. How do you rate the repeat prescription service?

4% Very Poor
6% Poor
11% OK
37% Good
42% Very Good

Decline in service

'Should be how it was before not on phone for hours.'

'Not able to request repeat prescriptions early enough as you now have to allow 7 days to collect.'

'Pharmacist have changed policy and it can now take more than a week to get a prescription.'

Difficult phone system

'Again, waiting to get through, can't call prescriptions directly.'

'Very difficult to speak to prescription department.'

Easy online system

'I use online ordering and it works very well.'

'I now do this online. Very quick and easy.'

'I can book a repeat prescription through my NHS app.'

Efficient

'Always helpful and good response to ordering.'

'Quick and efficient. Issues arise depending upon your chosen chemist.'

Long waiting time

'Takes ages to go through this paperless system to get prescription from chemist.'

'Chemist didn't get my prescription until six days later.'

Q13. How do you rate the quality of medical care and treatment at this surgery?

16% Very poor
20% Poor
14% OK
30% Good
20% Very Good

Quality of care is average

'So far it's been good. Not very good, just good.'

Dismissive doctors

'The doctor I have now is dismissive.'

'My particular doctor is disinterested and not very helpful.'

'Some doctors are a bit dismissive.'

Can't see GP

'You need to see someone to get treatment.'

'Since Covid there's no point in ringing, you can't see anyone unless you're at death's door.'

'Hard to give a good mark when it's impossible to see a doctor.'

'Just a shame is nigh on impossible to see my doctor.'

'Zero because you can't get to see anyone.'

Decline in quality

'There's a lot of upset people who feel this practice is no longer meeting the needs of its patients.'

'Used to be good but not as good now.'

'Never been great but since Covid, that's an excuse to provide substandard services.'

'I do feel let down recently, plus constant change of doctors.'

Long time for an appointment

'When you do manage to see someone, they are very good.'

'Can't get any so obviously surgery is too small for the number of people in the area.'

'Wait time for appointments is anything up to 4 weeks.'

'Getting an appointment is the hardest part.'

'Can never see a doctor unless you wait for a month.'

'When after waiting 7 weeks to speak to GP he was extremely helpful.'

'When you get to see someone, it is good. The problem is access.'

Misdiagnosis

'Myself and others have had health problems missed.'

'I feel sometimes that diagnosis is hit and miss, rather than calling for tests and analysing them.'

No face-to-face appointments

'The doctors need to see people face to face again and get back to normal like the dentist are!'

'Need to get back to face to face. We can see an optician, the chemist, why not our GP?'

Nurses are better

'Nursing great, doctors go for quick fix and no follow through.'

Positive

'So far I have been very impressed with the doctor and the nurse who took my blood sample. Both very helpful'

'Excellent. Listen to you.'

'Excellent, they are professional, knowledgeable, approachable, helpful. They listen and act.'

'Doctor listened. Not rushed. Clear opinion and advice given.'

'I can't fault this area or my GP for getting additional help.'

'During the very challenging time during this pandemic the care had been as good as possible.'

Rushed

'Staff so pushed for time they aren't able to truly discuss and assess.'

'Don't feel supported, too much rush to get you out of the door, have to go many times for the same thing.'

Continuity

'When I saw my doctor it was good, but he left and I have seen a different doctor for everything since.'

Uncaring

'Never feel listened to or concerns taken seriously.'

'Get the feeling I am inconveniencing them.'

'So far not impressed, appear very uninterested.'

Understaffed

'Overall poor. Not a care provider at all. Simply not enough resources.'

'Worried at present as they have needed to contact all patients about their understaffing problems.'

'The main problem seems to be a lack of GPs.'

Very poor

'Desperately in need of improvement.'



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