

Richmond Hill Practice

GP Services Enter and View Report

Thursday 5th January 2023

2:00pm – 4:00pm



DISCLAIMER

This report relates only to the service viewed at the time of the visit and is only representative of the views of the staff, patients and relatives who met members of the Enter and View team on that date

Contact Details:

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Practice Liaison:

Janine Goff – Practice Manager

Date and time of our visit:

Thursday 5th January 2023
2:00pm – 4:00pm

Healthwatch Lancashire Authorised Representatives:

Steven Walmsley – Engagement Team Leader
Louise Dewhurst – Engagement Officer

Introduction

Our role at Healthwatch Lancashire is to gather people's views and experiences, especially those that are seldom heard, to give them the opportunity to express how they feel about a service. This was an announced Enter and View visit undertaken by authorised representatives from Healthwatch Lancashire (HWL) who have the authority to enter health and social care premises, announced or unannounced. The aim is to obtain the views and experiences of patients, relatives and staff and observe and assess the quality of services.

The team compile a report reflecting observations and feedback. Healthwatch Lancashire is an independent organisation, therefore we do not make judgements or express personal opinions. The report identifies aspects of good practice as well as possible areas of improvement. This is sent to the manager for their opportunity to respond. Where appropriate, Healthwatch Lancashire may arrange a revisit to check the progress of improvements. The report is then published on the Healthwatch Lancashire website at www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk and sent to the Care Quality Commission, Healthwatch England and any other relevant organisations

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Lancashire would like to thank the management team, staff and patients for making us feel welcome and taking part in the visit.

Methodology

Healthwatch Lancashire obtain the views and experiences of patients and staff. Conversations with each are adapted to capture individual experiences to help assess the quality of services. Patients were asked about their general feelings about the GP Surgery including their experience of making an appointment, communications and the surgery environment. Conversations with staff included their thoughts about provision, appointment management, communication, staffing levels and support, including training. The team also recorded their own observations on the environment and staff-service user interactions.

The surgery was given a poster with a link to our Feedback centre for people to share their experiences of the surgery prior to the visit. At the time of writing the report Healthwatch Lancashire have not received any response.

To retain confidentiality and anonymity of respondents, names, pronouns and any identifiable details have been removed from quotes; 'they/their' has been used throughout the report to refer to members of staff and patients.

Prior to the visit, a discussion was held with members of the Practice Management to discuss the context of the visit and gather information on the Surgery. This includes appointment making options, the patient demographic and staffing at the

Pre-visit

The Information below is gathered from discussion and contact with the management at the practice prior to and at the start of the visit.

Prior to the visit we contacted the surgery using the public phone number. We were held in a queue for 15 minutes with regular updates about our position in the queue and other options such as emergency numbers signposted to us.

Richmond Hill Practice is located at the Colne Health Centre which is host to a range of services including the Pendle Medical Partnership, community services, and the Pendle East Community Hub, Contraceptive and Sexual Health Services.

The demographic of the surgery was described to be variable. It was commented that "there is a high threshold of elderly patients with long-term respiratory conditions." The surgery serves 12,500 patients registered within 5 miles of the surgery.

Appointments can be made via phone or attending the surgery in person. Enquiries are handled by a team of Reception and Admin staff. During the busiest period of 8-9am, Management and other team members step in to answer calls, "It is all hands on deck." The phone line is in the process of being updated to accommodate the rising demand, and management are looking to expand the online provision for appointment making.

Core surgery staff comprises of 2 Managers, 8 Care Navigators, 3 Administrative Office Staff, 6 GPs, 4 Healthcare assistants, 3 Practice nurses 1 Triage Nurse, 2 Advanced Nurse Practitioners and 3 Trainee GPs.

There is also a Primary Care Network Hub attached to the Practice which offers additional services for patients such as Social Prescribers and Age UK.

The management explained there are plans in place to offer extended services between 8am and 8pm with provision available on Saturdays to increase capacity and flexibility for patients to make appointments that fit around their working hours.

Summary

Healthwatch Lancashire representatives made an announced visit on Thursday 5th January between 2:00pm and 4:00pm.

We spoke to 10 patients and 8 staff members about their views on the service that the surgery provides.

Healthwatch representatives were greeted by the Practice Manager and met with other members of the Leadership team to discuss their position on patient care and to describe systems and processes that were in place to help manage the workload.

During the visit we were shown around the main entrance area, clinical rooms and the waiting area. We were shown the additional Primary Care Network facilities and services that are attached to the site, such as social-prescribers and care coordinators.

Patients were observed waiting in the reception area and called to their appointments via an information screen that informed them of room they needed to visit.

We were informed that all available appointments had been allocated on the day.

Enter and View observations

Location and external environment

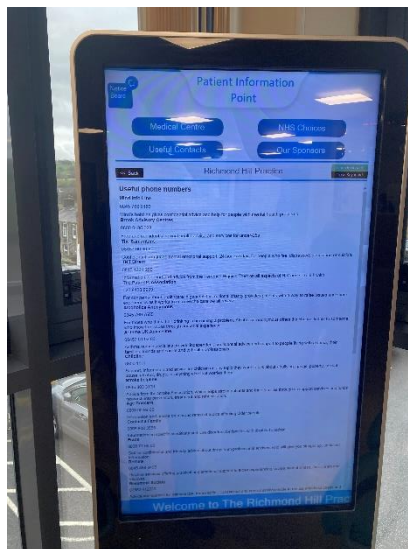
Richmond Hill Practice is located in the centre of Colne, on Craddock Road in the Colne Health Centre. There is a large car park with step-free kerbs for disabled access. The practice is on the first floor of the building as there are other services on the ground floor of the building. The surgery can be accessed via stairs or lifts to cater for disabled access. There is a bus station located adjacent to the health centre which provides links to the surrounding area.



Internal environment and reception

The waiting room was spacious with a range of seating provided for patients to use. The surgery shares a waiting room with the Pendle East Community Hub. Notice boards were present displaying information about Health and Safety and other services that were available in the local area such as support groups for people who self-harm. It was noted that there was a clock displaying the time behind the desk but it was not visible from the seating area.

A large totem information screen was present in the room. This was an interactive resource that patients could use to access the practice website and other information directories for health services.



The surgery was spacious and facilities were noted to be clean and tidy with no visible signs of damage in communal areas. Clear signage was present around all areas of the practice to indicate where patients needed to go. It was observed that signage for clinical rooms was at eye-level and of a consistent style throughout the whole practice.

Patient privacy was catered for with a private room located next to the practice Reception desk which was available throughout the whole visit for anyone to use if required.

Patient interactions

Patients were observed entering the practice and checking in at the Reception desk with a member of staff. There was an option to self-check in on a tablet which did not appear to be used by any patients during the visit. There were queues of patients during the visit at Reception to check in and make enquiries. Staff were polite with patients and explained the next steps to patients, informing them to take a seat and wait to be called to their appointment.

Patients were called to their appointment on a visual display that identified the patient and the room that they needed to visit. Patients were met by a member of staff at the relevant room who assisted them if they were unsure where they needed to go. A member of the care-navigation team was observed providing assistance to reception staff with a patient enquiry.

Patient privacy was catered for with a room being available for private conversations attached to the waiting room.

Patient Involvement

The surgery advertises that it runs a Patient Participation Group (PPG) which is currently active and holding face to face meetings on a regular basis. Additional information about the PPG was available on the Totem and on the surgery website. We did not observe any advertisements for the group in the waiting room or around the surgery. A feedback box was on the desk to allow patients to post comments and feedback on the services.



Feedback from patients

Healthwatch spoke to 10 patients who attended the surgery.

How did you make your appointment?

Seven of the patients Healthwatch spoke with had made their appointment using the phone. Patients commented that they experienced a wait on the phone line "When I rang they tell you that you are in a queue, it's busy."

Three commented that they made numerous attempts to call when they got an engaged tone. "I tried for about 35 minutes and kept getting cut off."

Two patients commented that they attended the surgery to arrange their appointments as they felt that it was a simpler process with one commenting that "I walk in because I struggle on the phone."

What would you change about the process?

All ten patients commented that they had experienced issues with making contact with the surgery using the phone system. One patient suggested that the surgery needed more members of staff to handle calls which would make the experience better.

Would you be open to other methods of appointment making?

Nine of the ten patients expressed interest in alternative methods of making appointments with the surgery. Four patients commented that they would prefer an online option “patient access doesn’t let me make an appointment. It would be easier if I could use that.”

Three patients mentioned that they would like to receive reminders via text message to help them manage their appointments.

One patient said that they would like to continue using the phone system as they felt it was more personal to speak to members of staff.

Do you feel that you receive care and treatment that meets your needs?

Eight patients were positive about the care that they received from staff. It was commented that “staff were friendly and helpful.” One patient said that they felt like they were listened to and said that, “my Doctor wanted to make sure that I was looked after when I went for an appointment at hospital and told me to ring if I was worried about my results not being sent.”

One patient commented that they preferred to have face to face appointments instead of telephone consultations as it is “more personal.”

Two patients commented that sometimes there was a lack of consistency in communication with the surgery about prescriptions and repeat appointments. “I was supposed to have a regular 12-month check-up that I was not called for. I rang the surgery and after some discussion I was eventually listened to.” One patient also mentioned that the advice they were given by the surgery was not always helpful which they had raised as an issue with the surgery.

Do you think the premises are well maintained, accessible and clean?

All patients were complimentary about the facilities at the practice. One patient said that "I like how everything is in one building."



Do you know who to speak to if you are not happy with the service or wish to make a complaint?

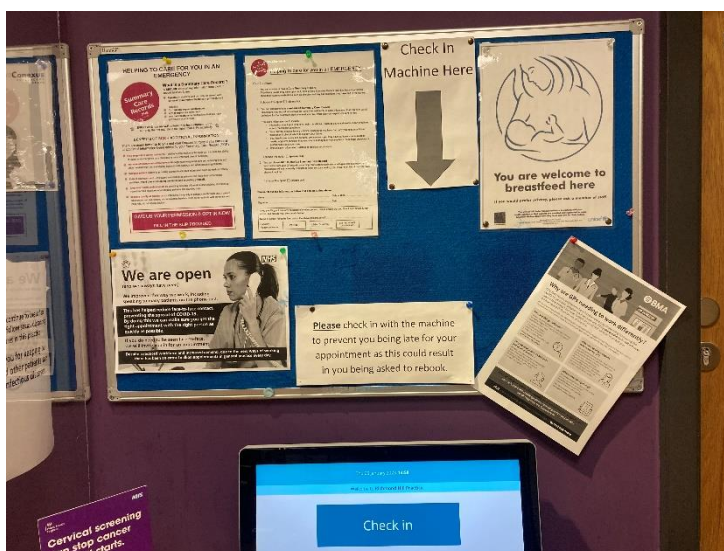
We received a mixed response from patients with regards to the complaints procedure. Three patients said that they would ring up to make a complaint if they experienced issues with the surgery. One patient explicitly stated "I don't know who to speak to." Two patients said that they would look on the website to find out how to complain.

Any other comments and feedback

Two patients commented that they wanted to know more about the alternative services that were available to them so that they didn't need to rely on visiting the health centre.

One patient expressed a desire for the surgery to be open for longer to suit their working patterns "I wouldn't have to come out of work for my appointment."

There was a comment, on healthcare in general, saying that "Since Covid I feel like nobody is really interested. I get directed to Urgent Care who then send me back to my GP."



Staff views

We spoke to 8 members of staff including administrative staff, Practice management and Receptionists.

Do you have enough staff when on duty?

The eight members of staff that Healthwatch spoke with commented on the rising demand in terms of patients booking appointments at the surgery. "Most shifts we are at capacity." However, all staff said that they felt they had enough staff to meet the needs of patients "we meet the demand." One member of staff explained how they manage the "early morning rush" as the surgery adapts their work to support each other at times of high demand. One member of staff commented that "we all jump in to help with an example being when members of the senior leadership team help us to answer calls." Two members of staff said that having the Advanced nurse practitioners available allowed the surgery to "offer patients options." It was commented that any staff who fielded calls had the "care navigation" folder to help them direct patients to appropriate appointments.

One member of staff explained how they had access to an on-call Doctor and the Advanced Nurse Practitioners to assist with care navigation when a patient presented with complex needs. They qualified this by saying, "this helps us out when someone needs more support."



Do you feel supported to deliver a person-centred experience?

All of the members of staff that Healthwatch spoke with felt that the surgery offered the best possible experience they could to patients. One member of staff explained how they catered for patient preferences saying, “if it can be done face to face it is better for patients.” They commented that some patients were taking up the option to have appointments with nurse practitioners in lieu of a Doctor which meant that they could be seen quicker. Five members of staff said that felt they offered a “personal” service.

One member of staff said that they felt the flexibility of the staff team helped them to meet the needs of patients by giving them support in a timely manner. Three members of staff commented that they felt there was a need to educate patients about the options that are available to them in terms of choosing the most appropriate pathway.

The way that the surgery handles complaints was explained by one member of the staff team. They said how they tried to handle complaints personally by phoning them on “the same day” to resolve issues and then keeping them apprised of developments in writing. They felt that this “works well as people know their issue is being dealt with.”

Do you feel that you have enough training to carry out your duties well?

All staff commented on how they received regular training on how to meet the needs of patients. “We are always trying out new systems.” One member of staff explained how the surgery is investigating how to improve “care navigation” with plans in place to roll out further training.

What is your experience of working here?

The main feedback on this question was that all members of staff felt that they were part of a supportive team with “very supportive management” who made sure that staff received the support that they needed. One member of staff said that they worked with “a really good team.”

Are there any changes that can be made to improve the patient experience?

Four members of staff commented that the main issue surrounding the patient experience was linked to the phone line with one explaining that “the phone line is the issue”. It was mentioned that the surgery is undertaking a piece of work to try and ease the issue of waiting times on the phone which is ongoing.

Five members of staff commented on the need to educate and inform patients about how to make the most of the service and to use alternative provision to free up capacity at the surgery. It was mentioned that, “We have so many patients coming to us, we need to make them aware that they don’t always need to see a doctor. There are other options that they can choose which they don’t really know about.” One member of staff said that there was a “life-long issue with education with patients who will always need to be kept updated on how working practices have changed in recent years.”

Any other comments?

Four members of staff commented on how it was useful to have the alternate provision of the Pendle Community Hub available in the same building, as the practice, so that patients could be referred to them if a patient did not require clinical support. They said that “having the community hub and other services in the same building makes things easier for patients to access alternative services.”



Recommendations for Improvement

The following areas for improvement have been highlighted from patient, relative and staff feedback. These are not Healthwatch Lancashire recommendations but rather, areas for improvement suggested by service users and staff.

1. Promote patient education of pathways and options for appointment making and appointment options through a communications strategy.
2. Promote the use of the self-check in system to help ease queues at the Reception desk.
3. Provide more visible information about how to raise issues and concerns to enhance patient communication experience.
4. Raise the profile of the information Totem through advertising, word of mouth or positioning within the surgery.
5. Reposition the clock to make the waiting room dementia friendly so that patients are aware of the date and time.

Provider Response

Areas identified for improvement	Action from provider	When by	Comments
1. Promote patient education of pathways and options for appointment making and appointment options through a communications strategy.		ongoing	
2. Promote the use of the self-check in system to help ease queues at the Reception desk.	Install a new system	Completed January 2023	We have a new system and it is now in place.
3. Provide more visible information about how to raise issues and concerns to enhance patient communication experience.		Ongoing	
4. Raise the profile of the information Totem through advertising, word of mouth or positioning within the surgery.	Look at moving the information totem	Ongoing	The totem is managed by an outside agency and we will need to make contact with them to make any changes.
5. Reposition the clock to make the waiting room dementia friendly so that patients are aware of the date and time.	Investigate moving the position of the clock	Ongoing	
Completed by	(Name)	Date	

Questions

Is the report factually accurate? If not please state what.

The content of the report is valid.

Any other comments?

Enhanced access for patients is now up and running with additional appointments being available for patients to choose from.

The phone system is still in the process of being updated and we are awaiting contractual signoff.

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