

Abingdon Surgery

Enter and View Report



November 2023



Contents

1.	Visit details	3
2.	What is Enter and View?	3
3.	Summary of findings	4
4.	Recommendations	5
5.	Service response to recommendations.....	6
6.	Report: Visit to Abingdon Surgery on 26 th September 2023.....	7

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Oxfordshire would like to thank all the people we spoke to and heard from, including patients, the Patient Participation Group, and staff at the Abingdon Surgery, for their support and contribution to the Enter and View visit.

1. Visit details

1.1 Details of Visit

Service Address	65 Stert Street, Abingdon OX14 3LB
Service Provider	Abingdon Surgery
Date and Time	September 26 th 2023, 10am to 1pm
Authorised Representatives	Amier Alagab, Vicky Tilley, Tania Wickham
Visit Status	Announced
Contact details	01865 520520 Healthwatch Oxfordshire

1.2 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.

2. What is Enter and View?

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 legislation allows Enter and View activity to be undertaken on premises where health and social care is publicly funded, such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists, and pharmacies. We visit:

- To gather the views of health and social care service users, families, and carers.
- To report what we see and hear to improve the quality of health and care services.

2.1 Purpose of the visit

- To observe how the facility operates and provides its services.
- To collect views from patients, volunteers, and staff on services.
- To identify 'Best Practice' and highlight any areas of concern.

2.2 Strategic drivers

Healthwatch Oxfordshire's visit to the Abingdon Surgery was part of our ongoing Enter and View programme to listen to the health and social care experiences of people living in the county. We chose to visit a surgery in Abingdon because we were aware that some GP surgeries had suspended their lists, and we were hearing from members of the public about access issues to GPs in the area. We wanted to hear what is working well as well as where things could be improved.

3. Summary of findings

Please note these findings represent a portrayal of what we observed and heard about the experiences of the service users and staff on the day that we visited:

- The surgery was very welcoming; however, there is no welcome sign at the main entrance.
- The surgery is clean, painted in different colours and has a very calm and pleasant atmosphere.
- The reception and waiting rooms are well organised and seats are available in different sizes and heights.
- Three different coloured waiting areas 'Blue, Green, and Red' help patients to easily navigate their way to the GP's room. Comments from patients about the environment and efficiency of the services, and the attitudes of staff, were generally very positive.
- Patients told us they generally feel able to raise concerns with the staff team about their treatment and care directly or by phone.
- Staff were accessible and friendly to patients and easy to talk to.
- Signage from the car park could be clearer in guiding visitors to find the way to the main reception area of the Abingdon Surgery.
- Face masks and hand gel are available at the main entrance before passing to the reception area.
- There is a water fountain available inside the reception office behind the receptionists, but there are no signs advising patients and visitors that there is a water fountain.
- There are no translated information leaflets on displays at the waiting areas.

- There was no clear information on how to give comments and feedback despite the availability of the friends and family compliments box at the reception.
- The Care Quality Commission (CQC) report is not displayed.

4. Recommendations

Following our visit, we would like to make these recommendations:

- Clearer signage from the car park to the reception would support patient navigation into the surgery.
- It would be useful to have the surgery opening times displayed clearly in the reception area and in visible locations.
- The patient names and car registrations book should be kept behind reception, so confidentiality is maintained, and these details are not publicly available or visible.
- Display information on how to access an interpreter /or availability of a hearing loop (if there is one) as well as information for patients in Easy Read format and other languages.
- Display information on how patients can give feedback and include responses to suggestions, for example showing 'You said, we did' responses.
- A sign about the availability of the water dispenser could be provided.
- The Care Quality Commission report should be displayed as per the attachment:

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2015024%20Guidance%20for%20providers%20on%20meeting%20the%20regulations.pdf>

5. Service response to recommendations

Abingdon Surgery responded to say:

“Thanks to you and your team. We agree with the recommendations. We will work to rectify any shortcomings over the coming months”.

As follows:

- ✓ Clearer signage from the car park to the reception would support patient navigation into the surgery.
- ✓ It would be useful to have the surgery opening times displayed clearly in the reception area and in visible locations.
- ✓ The patient names and car registrations book should be kept behind reception, so confidentiality is maintained, and these details are not publicly available or visible.
- ✓ Display information on how to access an interpreter /or availability of a hearing loop (if there is one) as well as information for patients in Easy Read format and other languages.
- ✓ Display information on how patients can give feedback and include responses to suggestions, for example showing ‘You said, we did’ responses.
- ✓ A sign about the availability of the water dispenser could be provided.
- ✓ The Care Quality Commission report should be displayed as per the attachment:
<https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2015024%20Guidance%20for%20providers%20on%20meeting%20the%20regulations.pdf>

By email on 22nd November 2023 from:

Nick Regaard
Practice Manager

6. Report: Visit to Abingdon Surgery on 26th September 2023

Methodology

We follow Healthwatch England guidelines for Enter and View visits. The steps below summarise the process:

- **Plan:**
 - Appoint an Enter and View lead for the visit.
- **Communicate:**
 - Inform the provider of the visit, and relevant details including the purpose, date, time, estimation of how long it will take, how many people will be carrying out the visit, and the name of the lead person.
 - Prepare visit posters including the purpose of the visit, time and date, and dispatch these to the provider for display, so that people using the service are clear why the visit is taking place.
 - Include information about how members of the public can contact Healthwatch Oxfordshire if they are not able to when the visit is taking place.
- **Prepare:**
 - Prepare resources such as surveys and questionnaires.
 - Identify any requirements for special support necessary to facilitate the visit such as access or security. This must be done before the visit, as you may be refused entry.
 - Meet with the service provider before the visit.
- **Report:**
 - On completion of the visit a draft report is shared with the service provider requesting comments on factual accuracy and responses to any recommendations within 20 working days.
- **Follow up:**

The final report is published on Healthwatch Oxfordshire website and shared with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and service provider.

The visit to The Abingdon Surgery took place from 10am to 1pm on September 26th 2023 with three trained Enter and View representatives, including the lead member.

During the visit the team were able to spend time observing the daily work of the surgery, noting the general environment such as cleanliness, comfort, and information displays, and to speak to both patients and staff. They were able to meet with staff and a member of the Patient Participation Group.

Additional question sheets, with FREEPOST envelopes for return, were left with staff and patients for comment and feedback.

Service background

The Abingdon Surgery is an established doctors' surgery based in Abingdon. It employs more than 50 practice staff. Patients are allocated a named GP; the practice values the opportunity this offers to provide patients with continuity of care.

The surgery staff team includes twelve GPs (partners and salaried), two of whom are qualified to support training placements for students and trainee GPs. There are also medical, administrative staff, and allied health professionals, nursing staff, clinical pharmacist, health care assistants, physiotherapists, paramedic, health visitors, mental health practitioners and practice support team. Opportunities are provided for career development, as well as links to research and teaching.

The surgery has been facing rapid increase in patient demand for both health services and registration over the past few years. This has brought significant pressures, including with capacity, increased administrative and management demands. As a result, the Abingdon Surgery sought permission to temporarily suspend their patient list from May 2023. The increased demand has been driven in part due to the expansion of new housing built in the area, impact of neighbouring GP surgeries suspending their patient list, and recent reorganisation of Botley and Kennington surgeries.

Patients access the surgery through E-Consult, phone apps and via phone. The surgery has positive inclusion statements including being 'Armed Forces friendly' and 'Teenage Friendly'. On the day and emergency appointments are offered, and a duty doctor focuses on patient lists in the afternoons. Dedicated staff focus on managing 'workflow' to support flow of patients through the surgery and ensure waiting times are managed. As a result, patients are usually seen within 24 to 48 hours, and a maximum wait of eight to nine days for non-urgent cases. The surgery building is a town house, across two floors and set within a terrace, and these places limiting factors on space, accessibility, capacity and ability to expand. The management have been exploring options for increasing capacity, including possible use of further local premises within the Primary Care Network, and options for remote working for some staff. The surgery has also created guidebooks to show clear workflows for all staff, showing who is dealing with what to help ensure a clear pathway for reception staff to follow.

The surgery offers flu vaccines to general patients, and Covid vaccinations to house-bound patients and care homes (due to capacity). They have scheduled

six Saturday flu clinics in autumn 2023, with high demand: one session saw 600 people receiving a vaccination.

The surgery supports an active Patient Participation Group (PPG) with eight members and which holds regular meetings every two months with practice staff and supports the practice through surveys reaching out to patients.

More details can be found at <https://www.abingdonsurgery.com/>

Access and signage

External signage from the car park guiding patients to the main entrance was not clear and it wasn't easy to find the surgery entrance for a newcomer.

The environment

The atmosphere of the surgery was calm and quiet. Staff were welcoming and staff - patient interactions were friendly. Photos of the staff were displayed.

The surgery was bright, clean and airy despite the age of the building and there were a range of facilities, including clinical rooms and a meeting room.

Patients arrive, report to the main reception, and are asked to wait in one of three designated coloured waiting areas. Each area represents a group of doctors and makes it easy for patients to locate the room of the doctor they are seeing.

The waiting room at the surgery is functional with sofa chairs and hence some patients may face difficulty getting up as all the sofa benches have no arms for support.

The three waiting rooms in different colours at the surgery as below:





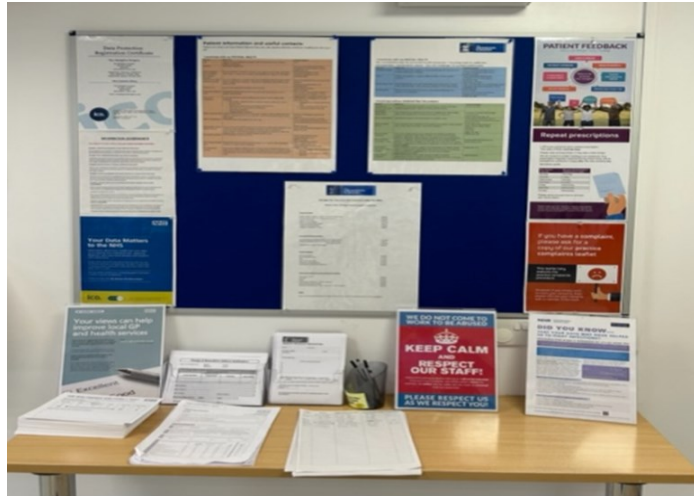
Green, red and blue waiting areas

A water fountain is available for patients and visitors in the reception office, but not in the waiting room.

Information on display

There is comprehensive information displayed in the main reception area and patient waiting rooms, staff pictures also displayed.

There are no translated materials or leaflets on display.



Information displayed in the reception area

We did not see information displayed about the Care Quality Commission (CQC) report and on the complaints process. A friends and family compliments box were provided, but there was no paper or pens available to provide written feedback or complaints.



Compliments Box

Patient feedback

In all we heard from six patients directly on the day of the visit. All of them were women, representing a range of ages between 18 to over 80 years old, and all White British. Patients travelled in for treatment both from Abingdon and Oxford, for instance due to the Botley surgery closure.

Overall, patients were hugely appreciative of the support and care they received at the surgery.

We heard from a patient who has used Abingdon surgery for more than 50 years. They praised and thanked the staff team for their support and quality of services.

Patients who spoke to us felt that the information and support they received about their treatment and care was good.

Patients commented on the general environment of the surgery - that the building is nice, they told us they do ask for things where necessary, that the atmosphere is warm and comfortable, but they would like more facilities:

"I like the screen saying which doctors were in that day. Nice to have something to look at really."

Patients told us that although there were different sizes of seats available at the waiting area they could be more comfortable if they were a bit higher and had arms to give more support when getting out of them.

Patients told us their experience at the surgery was positive, and they have had difficulty sometimes getting an appointment.

"I haven't seen a doctor for two years, I have spoken to one over the phone but not always easy. Sometimes had to wait two weeks to get a phone call."

All patients we spoke to were very happy about the care services received and told us the staff are well qualified and offer a high quality of care, always supporting them and providing information related to their needs.

When we asked patients about how they can give feedback on the service, and how to make suggestions, two out of six said they 'didn't know how to comment'. One patient said:

"Sometimes get a text message to ask how I got on, which I do reply to sometimes but there's never any problem to report - I always get an appointment."

Another patient fed back, saying:

"It's excellent. I have no complaints at all. We're very lucky to have it. The only thing is parking can sometimes be a bit tight when it's busy but depends on what day you come."

Patients praised and thanked the staff team for their support and care, they said:

"Nurses are very good. They act as a go between patient and doctors and for me, it does save a lot of time."

Staff feedback

We received feedback and comments from ten members of staff on the day, representing a cross section of roles within the surgery.

We spoke to the Deputy Practice Manager, GPs (partner), pharmacist, nurse, and admin staff.

Seven out of ten worked as part time staff while three work full time.

Staff we spoke to were positive about their work in the Abingdon Surgery, and especially valued the patient, family and carer interactions and care.

Staff told us that the present management are open to suggestions and feedback. Staff commented that they felt listened to and able to make suggestions about the surgery. They felt that their concerns would be taken seriously.

We heard from all the staff that they had the required training, plenty of support, and that the GPs are very open to training requests, and time is the main barrier.

What are the challenges staff raised?

We asked staff to tell us about any frustrations or challenges with their work. Comments included the challenge of the building capacity and staff shortage.

We heard from staff members that the growing list size, limited room capacity for clinicians and lack of funding from the government to give staff pay rises to surpass inflation are among the challenges.

What suggestions did staff make?

Staff suggestions included:

- More staff needed to support and facilitate in the surgery service to cope with the increased workload.
- Challenge is around rooms and lack of space, the building capacity and workload.



Healthwatch Oxfordshire - our friendly staff are here for you to help answer questions or give you information on health and care services in Oxfordshire. If you need more information or advice, call us on **01865 520520** from 9am-4pm Monday to Friday

To find out more about Healthwatch Oxfordshire please see www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk

If you would like a paper copy of this report or would like it in a different format or language, please get in touch with us:



01865 520520



hello@healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk

