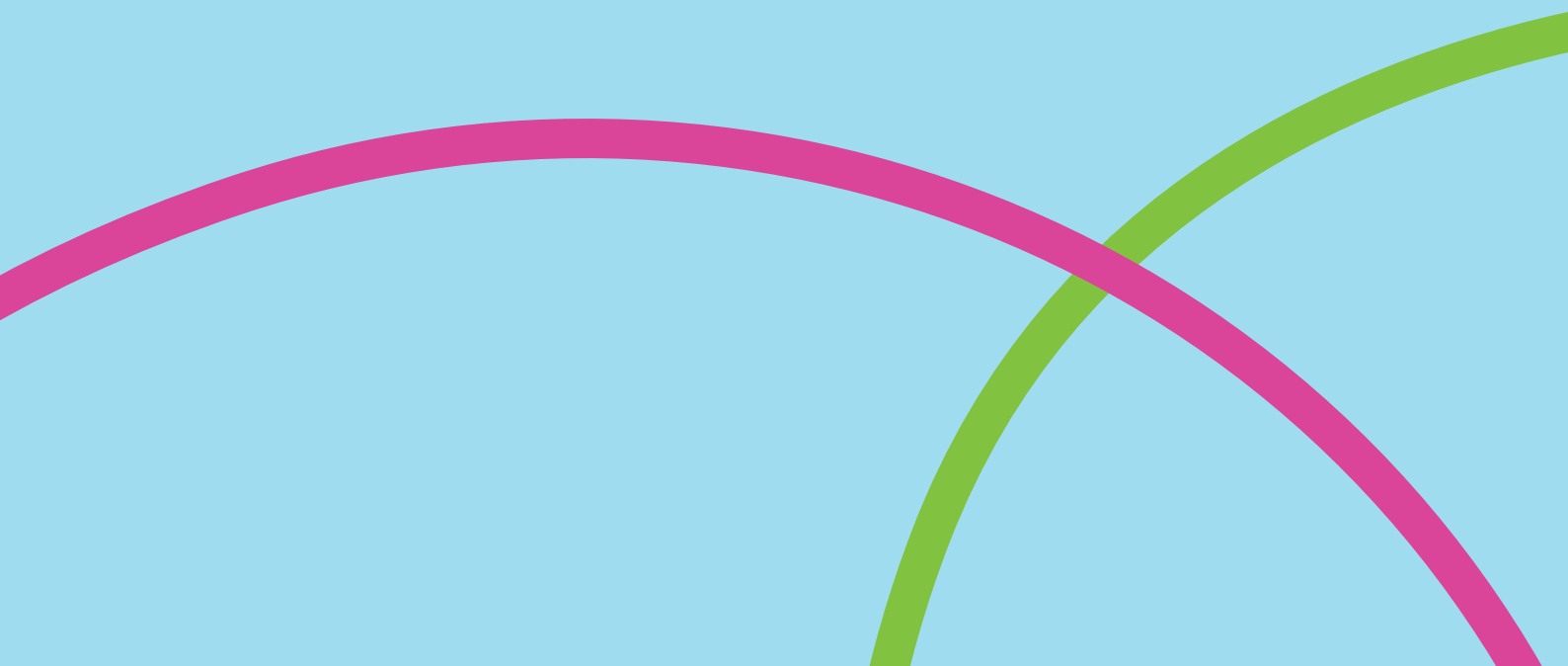


# **Enter and View report**

Sevenside Medical Practice,  
Gloucester

---

9/10 October 2023



# Contents

# Page

About Healthwatch Gloucestershire	3
What is Enter and View?	3
Details of the visit	4
Key findings	5
Recommendations	6
Observations and findings	7
What people told us	10
Acknowledgements	11
Provider response	11
Contact us	12

---

© Healthwatch Gloucestershire

The material must be acknowledged as Healthwatch Gloucestershire copyright and the document title specified. Where third party material has been identified, permission from the respective copyright holder must be sought.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at [info@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk)

You can download this publication from [healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk](http://healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk)

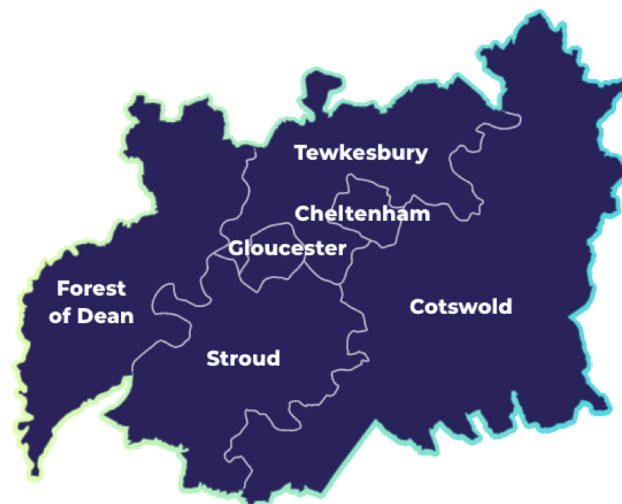
The Healthwatch Gloucestershire service is run by Evolving Communities CIC, a community interest company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales with company number 08464602. We confirm that we are using the Healthwatch Trademark (which covers the logo and Healthwatch Brand) when undertaking work on our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement

# About Healthwatch Gloucestershire

Healthwatch Gloucestershire is the county's health and social care champion. As an independent statutory body, we have the power to make sure that NHS leaders and other decision makers listen to your feedback and use it to improve standards of care.

We're here to listen to your experiences of using local health and care services and to hear about the issues that really matter to you. We are entirely independent and impartial, and anything you share with us is confidential. We can also help you find reliable and trustworthy information and advice to help you to get the care and support you need.

Healthwatch Gloucestershire is part of a network of over 150 local Healthwatch across the country. We cover the geographical area of Gloucestershire County Council, which includes the districts and boroughs of Cheltenham, Cotswold, Forest of Dean, Gloucester, Stroud, and Tewkesbury.



## What is Enter and View?

One of the ways we can meet our statutory responsibilities is by using our legal powers to Enter and View health and social care services to see them in action.

During these visits we collect evidence of what works well and what could be improved to make people's experiences better. We do this by observing the quality of service, and by talking to people using the service, including patients, residents, carers and relatives.

Enter and View visits are carried out by our authorised representatives who have received training and been DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked. These visits are not part of a formal inspection process or audit.

This report is an example of how we share people's views, and how we evaluate the evidence we gather and make recommendations to inform positive change, for individual services as well as across the health and care system. We share our reports with those providing the service, regulators, the local authority, NHS commissioners, the public, Healthwatch England and any other relevant partners based on what we find during the visit.

# Details of the visit

**Service visited:** Severnside Medical Practice

**Visit date:** 9 and 10 October 2023

## About the service

Severnside Medical Practice is located in Gloucester city centre. The practice is in purpose built premises and is on a single site; they moved to these premises in July 2021. The building is shared with the Gloucester Health Access Centre (GHAC) with shared car parking and access to the building. Inside the building, Severnside is located on the first floor and has its own designated area, including reception, waiting room, clinic rooms, offices etc. It does share some space with GHAC, for example a clinical room where minor operations can be undertaken.

The practice has circa 8,800 registered patients and is part of the Inner City Primary Care Network.

## Purpose of the visit

This visit was part of our ongoing partnership working with NHS Gloucestershire and the CQC to support improving the patient experiences in GP practices across the county. It is also supporting a wider project being undertaken by Healthwatch Gloucestershire in relation to accessing GP services.

## How the visit was conducted

Severnside Medical Practice was told about the visit in advance. During the visit information was collected from observations of communal areas used by patients, including the accessibility of the premises, and by talking to patients. Ahead of the visit there was also a conversation with the Practice Manager to help inform the visit.

## Authorised Representatives

- Helen Esfandiarinia (Staff member and Lead Authorised Representative)
- Fred Ward (Volunteer)
- Amanda Naylor (Volunteer)

## Disclaimer

This report relates to this specific visit to the practice, at a particular point in time, and is not representative of all patients registered with the practice. We recognise the following limitations of our visit:

- We only spoke to patients who attended the practice during our visit, or those who had phoned Healthwatch Gloucestershire ahead of the visit.
- Observations are based only on those parts of the practice that are communal, for example, reception, waiting rooms, patient toilets, car park.
- We did not ask patients to share any information about the medical/health reason for their visit.

This report is written by the Lead Enter and View Authorised Representative who carried out the visit on behalf of Healthwatch Gloucestershire.

## Visit overview

Severnside Medical Practice was advised that the visit would take place and the dates for this; they were therefore expecting us.

Ahead of the visit the Lead Authorised Representative spoke, and met, with the Practice Manager. This helped to inform the visit and ensured that the team was able to speak to as many patients as possible.

The visit was carried out over two sessions on two different days. Three Authorised Representatives were involved. Across the two sessions we spoke to 35 patients; they ranged from being registered recently to being registered for a number of years.

Ahead of the visit the practice had shared details of the visit on their website and with patients via text. Posters detailing the visit were also evident across the practice and Healthwatch Gloucestershire information leaflets were also available on reception.

During the visit information was collected from observations of the communal areas of the practice, including the reception area, and via conversations with patients.

At the end of each session there was a team discussion to review and collate findings and recommendations were agreed. Initial feedback was provided to the Practice Manager at the end of the second session.

## Key findings

The following are the key findings from the visits and should be considered alongside the further information provided later in the report:

- The visiting team was warmly welcomed into the practice and the majority of the feedback provided by patients was positive.
- The reception area and waiting room are located in the same large room which is modern and spacious. A calm environment was observed during the visit.
- Accessibility of the building and practice:
  - There is a car park available for patients to use which includes some disabled parking bays. This is shared with GHAC. We did hear that more recently there have been some challenges with getting a space in the car park; we heard that the practice is aware of this and is speaking to their landlord. We also heard that the location of the disabled bays results in patients having to navigate across the rest of the car park to access the building.
  - There are two lifts and stairs to access the practice on the first floor. The lifts are large enough to accommodate wheelchair users and a larger lift is available in a different part of the building.
  - The rooms and corridors within the practice are all large enough to enable patients to access all of the areas they need to.
  - The toilet facilities for patients are located in the waiting room and are accessible for all.
  - We did hear from a couple of patients that the map/directions on the website is not clear and had resulted in some confusion when trying to access the practice for the first time.
- On the whole patients were complimentary about the staff across the practice; all interactions observed during the visit were managed in a calm way.
- There were two key areas of concern raised by patients:
  - Delays in being able to arrange appointments for routine issues. The majority of patients spoken to said that they were able to get appointments if they were urgent.
  - The length of time that it can take for the phone to be answered and a number of patients had experienced being cut-off while waiting in the queue.
- Patients using mobile phones described being kept up-to-date about what is happening in the practice, appointment reminders, news etc. Some patients who did not have mobile phones felt that they were not kept up-to-date in the same way.

- There were a couple of concerns raised by patients in relation to the large screen in the waiting room:
  - It was not up-to-date with whether appointments were running.
  - The font and background colour for the screen advising patients to go through for their appointment was difficult to read for some patients.
- There was no clock or time displayed in the waiting room.

## Recommendations

We would like the practice to consider the following recommendations to help improve the patient experience of accessing the practice and services provided. These are based on our findings from the visit:

1. Consider how you can keep patients updated and reassured about the upcoming changes being made to the phone system, to alleviate some of the frustrations currently being experienced. In addition, once the new system is up and running, undertake regular reviews, including seeking patient feedback, to ensure that this is providing a better experience for patients.
2. Consider providing information to patients about how and when to contact the practice for an appointment. For example, a lot of patients talked about the morning pressures on the phones and may not understand what the alternative options could be.
3. Continue to review the appointments that are available to patients, particularly in relation to more routine appointments.
4. Continue to work with your landlord to improve access to the car park to ensure that it is only able to be used by staff, patients and visitors of the practice (and GHAC).
5. Recognising the restrictions in relocating the disabled parking bays due to the space available, consider introducing more signage so the spaces can be easily located by patients (the spaces are located in different parts of the car park).
6. Review the following elements of the screen in the waiting room:
  - The font and background colour for the screen advising patients that they can go through for their appointment.
  - The size of the font for the staff working on that day.
  - Whether or not information relating to whether appointments are running on time should be included if this is not kept up-to-date.
7. Review your website in relation to the directions/access to the practice.
8. Consider introducing a clock into the waiting room as not all patients will have the time on their person.

# Observations and findings

These are based on what was observed on the day of the visit, the conversations that took place with the practice ahead of the visit and conversations with patients during the visit.

## Premises and accessibility

The car park and initial access to the practice is shared with GHAC. There is good signposting available to support patients to access the car park and practice.

The practice is located on the first floor of the building with the car park on the ground floor.

We did hear from a couple of patients that the directions to the practice from the website or map App is confusing and that the car park can be difficult to find.

## Parking

There is parking available for patients. We heard from the practice that there are 80 spaces available in the car park which is shared with GHAC. This is an improved provision from the previous premises which offered no patient parking.

The car park provides a few disabled bays. However, these are not located together or near the entrance to the practice, rather in the areas of the car park that provide the required space.

Patients mostly described being able to park; there have been occasions when they have had to drive around for a while. We heard from the practice that parking had become more of a challenge recently and that they were monitoring the situation and speaking to their landlord to work on a solution.

## Accessibility

From the ground floor there are two lifts available and a flight of stairs up to the first floor where the practice is located.

Once in the practice the space is roomy, light and well decorated and maintained. All corridors and doorways are wide to accommodate wheelchair users, prams and walking aids.

No concerns were expressed by patients in relation to being able to access the building or any challenges with trying to move around the practice.

## Premises

The practice relocated here from a location near Gloucester Park approximately three years ago. This is a purpose built premises. Patients described being very happy with the new premises, "very welcoming" and that it is much better than the previous one.

## Reception area and waiting room

This is a large area that offers a lot of seating for patients. There was a choice of seating available for patients. During our visit the 'knit and natter' group were set up in one part of the waiting room and we heard that they meet weekly. There is also a weekly coffee morning in the waiting room that all patients of the practice are invited to join.

The practice advised us that the calls to the practice are managed by reception staff who are located in an admin office (away from the main reception area). We heard that this was to enable reception staff on the desk to support patients who are attending the practice in person and to ensure that noise levels are managed.

Patients have the option of checking in via the self-check in service, which has a number of different language options, or via the reception desk. Patients were observed using both during the visit. We heard from patients that they are not made to feel that they must use the self-check in service.

There is a lot of information available to patients in the waiting room both on noticeboards, via a screen or in the form of leaflets. All information was in English however we were advised that information can be provided in other languages upon request. Some patients found elements of the screen difficult:

- The font and background colour of the screen advising patients to go through for their appointment was difficult for some to read.
- The font size of the screen showing who was working that day was too small for some patients to read.

There were no toys/books available to children; the practice told us that this for infection control reasons. A couple of patients felt that this would be a good addition, especially if they are using the bus to get to the practice and are arriving early as a result.

During our visit there was a calm and friendly atmosphere both at the reception desk and in the waiting room.

## **Appointments**

The practice advised us that there are a number of options available to patients in relation to the types of appointments available and how they can make these. They advised that patients do have a choice in relation to the type of appointment and who they want to see but that sometimes this may result in delays (patients are advised of this).

The practice will also accommodate home visits for patients who are housebound or if there is a short-term clinical need, for example, post-surgery.

### **Phone calls**

The practice advised us that there are changes being made to the phone system that should improve the experience for the patients and reduce the pressure on calls first thing in the mornings. The key changes will be:

- When patients phone in the morning and they are placed in a queue, they can either opt to stay in the queue or request a call back.
- The new system will also automatically link to the patients clinical notes.

This is one of the two areas that we heard the most dissatisfaction from patients. The key points raised by patients are:

- The length of time it takes for calls to be answered.
- Patients reported being cut off while waiting in the queue for a call to be answered.
- Some patients disliked the music that is played while waiting in a queue.
- The challenge of having to call the practice first thing in the morning for an urgent appointment when trying to balance this against work/family commitments. The practice told us that patients can also phone later on in the day as they have urgent lists every morning and afternoon.

A few patients did tell us that to avoid having to wait on the phone for a long time they come into the practice to make appointments in person.

Some patients did report not having an issue getting through on the phone and from conversations it seemed that they called later in the day to avoid the morning rush.

### **Type and availability of appointments**

The majority of patients told us that they were able to choose the type of appointment, for example, face-to-face or over the phone, and that the reception staff were helpful when trying to arrange these.

On the whole patients advised that they were able to get an appointment if the issue was urgent. However, there were a couple of patients who felt this was not always the case.



The second area that we heard the most dissatisfaction from patients was in relation to getting a routine appointment with GPs and for reviews, for example with the diabetes nurse or for an asthma review. We did hear from the practice that they have had some staff absences that have impacted this.

## **General**

While there were some exceptions, on the whole patients felt:

- That the professional was aware of their history or reason for appointment.
- Listened to by the professional they were seeing.
- That they understood what is being discussed in the appointment and what the possible next steps are.
- That the appointments are long enough.
- That for ongoing issues they are able to see the same GP.

Some patients described feeling confident with the medical staff and that they have full confidence in them.

Some patients expressed that they were impressed with the level of diagnostics that the practice could carry out and likened it to what was available in a hospital.

We did hear from one patient who felt that if root causes of health issues were explored more this would have a positive impact on their overall health.

Some patients advised us that they are asked when they book an appointment if they would like an interpreter. We also observed patients being asked this during the visit.

During the visit some appointments were running late and some patients expressed frustration that the screen did not accurately reflect this.

## **Staff**

### **Interactions observed during the visit**

All interactions between staff and patients were observed to be managed in a calm and friendly manner.

Specific observations were:

- Patients who had arrived at the wrong time, particularly those who were late, were supported to either see someone at that time or to arrange an appointment at a different time.
- Patients were able to check in at the reception desk rather than using the self-check in option.
- Patients were spoken to if they had been waiting for a long time.

### **Feedback from patients**

We heard that the majority of patients were very happy with the staff, describing them as helpful, respectful, professional, very patient and friendly and that they deal with difficult situations calmly and helpfully.

One patient described being dyslexic and that staff are very understanding and supportive. Another patient, with hearing problems, described being well supported by reception and a GP.

Some patients said they worry that they have not registered their arrival correctly at the self-check in service, particularly if the appointment is running late. During the visit we observed a couple of patients speak to reception to make sure they had registered correctly. One patient told us that they prefer to speak to someone rather than using the self-check in option.

## General

We heard that although the new premises are further away for a lot of patients they have opted to remain with the practice. Some patients did tell us that they preferred the previous location as it was a shorter walk for them.

The majority of patients felt that they were kept up-to-date by the practice; examples of this were in relation to appointment reminders, practice coffee mornings, knit and natter groups, our visit etc. Patients explained that they were kept up-to-date via text messages. We did hear from some patients that did not have or use a mobile phone, who felt that they were not kept up-to-date.

### Seeking feedback from patients

The practice advised that they use the Family and Friends Test and feedback forms (available in the waiting room and on the website) and an annual internal patient questionnaire to gain feedback from patients. If any changes are made as a result of the feedback received patients are advised of this on the 'You said, we did' board in the waiting room. Most of the patients we spoke to advised that they had not been asked to provide feedback to the practice.

### Raising concerns or complaints

The practice advised that these are managed on an individual basis. If a complaint is raised in writing the response will also be in writing and patients will be advised of what the next steps are if they are not happy with the outcome. During the visit, patients were asked if they knew how to make a complaint. Most responded that they did not know but would feel able to speak to reception staff or the practice manager about this or look on the website.

## What people told us

Below are some of the quotes from patients under a couple of broader headings.

### Describe your experience of this practice?

The positive feedback included:

- "All positive."
- "Very happy – I don't need to come very often."
- "All good – no complaints."
- "Not a regular user of the practice but they are there when needed."
- "Very confident that if I had a concern it would be dealt with promptly."
- "Pleased I am here. I think I am very lucky to be here, this is much more friendly."
- "I think it's brilliant. I feel they look after you, I've never had a problem."
- "I'm very lucky because I only come for jabs."
- "I trust everyone here."

One patient spoke to us about opting to register with this practice after issues with a previous practice where they felt unlistened to and misdiagnosed. Having registered with this practice they now feel: "Listened to, understood and been given good advice. First time ever that had been offered a course [for condition lived with] and was best course ever been on." They described their experiences as brilliant service.

The frustrations included:

- "I was caller number 34 once and had to wait an hour."
- "I've been waiting four weeks for a telephone appointment."
- "It can be six or seven weeks to get a routine appointment."
- "I have to be desperate to make a call as you have to wait forever on the phones."
- "I can't text and I don't have a computer so I don't know how to give feedback although I would like to."

## If there was one thing you would like to change [at the practice]?

A sample of these responses are:

- “Would like to have more availability [of appointments].”
- “Length of time to answer the phone.”
- “For the practice to be closer to home!”
- “Would like more access to NHS services via the App – repeat prescriptions, appointments etc.”
- “More appointments and phone is busy.”
- “Phone calls in the morning a bit difficult to get through.”
- “Easier to make an appointment, to ring up and not have to wait very long.”
- “Closer to town!”
- “Phone: change the music while waiting and length of time waiting to be answered.”

There were a few patients who said there was nothing they would change.

## Acknowledgements

The Healthwatch Gloucestershire Enter and View team would like to thank the Severnside Medical Practice for working with us and enabling us to be able to speak to patients to seek their feedback.

## Provider response

“We were pleased to host the Healthwatch Gloucestershire visit and appreciated the opportunity to conduct a thorough assessment of our patient accessibility.

“Currently, we are in the process of evaluating our telephone system and hope to introduce a new system that enhances patient access by allowing callers to request call backs rather than having to wait in a call queue.

“To ensure a comprehensive understanding of our accessibility, we actively seek feedback through both internal and national patient surveys. We strongly encourage participation in these surveys to facilitate ongoing improvements in our services. For patients who do not have access to the internet or a mobile phone these surveys are available from reception in paper form. Additionally, we maintain a continuous review of appointment and staffing capacity in alignment with the demand for our services, demonstrating our commitment to meeting patient needs effectively.

“We have noticed an increase in the use of our free patient car park by individuals who are not using our services. We are currently in discussions with our landlord to find a suitable resolution to this matter. We have also introduced an occasional staff presence in the car park to assist and guide visitors.

“In response to the valuable feedback received from our patients, we are currently in discussions with the relevant company to explore the possibility of adjusting the font on the patient call board for improved visibility. Additionally, we are committed to maintaining accurate running times on the board, a task currently completed manually by our receptionists. In an effort to improve the waiting room experience we have acquired clocks that display the time and the date. We have also reviewed and updated the directions to our practice on our website.

“Feedback from patients and other organisations is invaluable in our continuous efforts to enhance the quality of our services and appreciate the insights provided from Healthwatch Gloucestershire during this visit.”

# Contact us

## Healthwatch Gloucestershire

13 Wheatstone Court,  
Waterwells Business Park,  
Quedgeley, Gloucester, GL2 2AQ

[info@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk)

0800 652 5193

[healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk](http://healthwatchgloucestershire.co.uk)