

Colne Road Surgery

Enter and View Report

Wednesday 29th November 2023

10:00am – 12:00pm



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, visitors and patients who met members of the Enter and View team on that date.

Contact Details

Contact details:

Colne Road Surgery,
36 Colne Road,
Burnley,
BB10 1LG

01254 457784

<https://www.ssphealth.com/our-practices/colne-road-surgery>

Registered Manager:

Helen Slater

Date and Time of our Visit:

Wednesday 29th November 2023

10:00am-12:00pm

Healthwatch Lancashire Authorised Representatives:

Steven Walmsley (Engagement Team Leader)
Jodie Carney (Manager)

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. The aim of an Enter and View visit is to gather views and experiences of patients and staff of a service and observe the environment to assess the quality of the service.

This was an announced Enter and View visit undertaken by authorised representatives who have the authority to enter health and social care premises, announced or unannounced.

The team collate feedback gathered and observations made to compile a report. The report identifies aspects of good practice as well as possible areas of improvement. Healthwatch Lancashire is an independent organisation, therefore we do not make judgements or express personal opinions, but rely on feedback received and objective observations of the environment. The report is sent to the manager for their opportunity to respond before being published on the Healthwatch Lancashire website at www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk.

Where appropriate, Healthwatch Lancashire may arrange a revisit to check the progress of improvements. The report is available to the Care Quality Commission, Healthwatch England and any other relevant organisations.

General Information

Colne Road Surgery is located in Burnley and serves 7,697 patients. It is a part of the SSP group which hosts around 40 GP Practices across the North West.

The practice shares a building with a pharmacy. They provide general practice care and other services such as minor-surgery, well-person checkups and routine appointments.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Lancashire would like to thank patients, staff and management, for making us feel welcome and for taking the time to speak with us during the visit.

Methodology

The Healthwatch Lancashire Enter and View Representatives made an announced visit on Wednesday 30th November and received feedback from six patients and six staff members.

Healthwatch Lancashire obtain the views and experiences of patients, relatives, and staff. Conversations with each are adapted to capture individual experiences to help assess the quality of services.

Conversations with patients were structured around four themes (Environment, Care, Food and Activities). Conversations with staff included their experiences of staffing levels, support and training.

The Enter and View Representatives also recorded their own observations on the environment and staff-member interactions. To retain confidentiality and anonymity of respondents, names, pronouns and any identifiable details have been removed from quotes.



Summary

Prior to the visit a pre-visit questionnaire was sent to the Practice Manager to find out more about the services offered by the practice and how they manage appointments for patients.

Surgery Demographic

There are 7,697 patients registered at the practice, from the Burnley area which includes Brierfield and Nelson. The surgery is part of the Burnley East Primary Care Network (PCN) and uses other services within the PCN such as physiotherapy and social prescribers.

The building is shared with a pharmacy that allows patients the opportunity to use the services that are on offer.

The practice serves a diverse community with a wide array of ages being served. There is a varied demographic at the practice; with people registered who originate from the Far East, Eastern Europe and Italy.

Appointment Management

Appointments are made initially through a phone call or through the NHS app. Phone calls for this surgery are handled by a central call centre, by the SSP group, and patients are then sent through to the practice for their appointment. There is also the option to book appointments online through the practice website, to make medical requests, admin queries or access advice online.

Staff are trained to care-navigate patients and provide an explanation to the patient about the professional they are booked to see to make them aware that they don't always need to see a GP, all patients are booked with an appropriate professional to meet their needs.

There is an option for patients to receive a callback and the manager explained that if a patient was in a queue on the phone they would be given the option to receive a callback at a later time. The manager explained that "We are averaging around 20 callbacks a day."

Visit Summary

Healthwatch Lancashire Representatives viewed facilities that were available. This included the waiting areas, reception office and clinical rooms.

At the time of the visit, the following surgery staff were present; Practice Manager, Assistant Practice Manager, one GP, five Care Navigators, one Practice Nurse and a PPG member.

Several members of the staff team commented that it was not always easy to discuss patient's needs due to language barriers. The practice makes use of staff who speak some other languages, interpreters and facilities such as Language Line.

It was explained that the management team were in the process of exploring alternative methods for translation with patients to simplify the process of communicating, through the use of tablets at the surgery to facilitate communication between staff and patients.

Feedback from patients was, overall, positive with several patient responses complimenting the quality of care and the attitude of staff.



Enter and View observations

Location and External Environment

The practice is located on Colne Road in Burnley. There was no designated parking available for patients, patients are able to park on the road outside the practice but there was limited space available at the time of the visit. There is access to local bus services less than 200 metres away from the practice.

A separate pharmacy is attached to the practice which is used by some patients to collect their prescriptions. At the time of the visit, patients were observed using this facility. The practice and pharmacy are both accessible for patients who use a wheelchair as there is a ramp and level access to the exterior of the building.

Internal Environment and Waiting Area

Colne Road surgery is built on the footprint of two terraced houses that have been converted for use as a surgery. There is level access throughout the lower floor of the building where all clinical appointments currently take place.

There are rooms on the first floor that are in the process of being repurposed into clinical rooms to increase the number of services available at the practice. It was explained that they would be used by staff in the PCN such as the Social Prescribing team to give them an operating base for appointments.

The reception desk area was located at the front of the practice which was reported to cause issues with patients needing to queue out of the practice doors when it was a busy period.

There was a member of staff assigned to help "Queue bust" by assisting patients in the queue to book into their appointments or to answer general enquiries. A small portable desk was set up at in the waiting room for patients to approach. It was signposted with "Happy to help" attached to the frame but it was not clear what type of assistance patients could approach this member of staff with. The member of staff on this desk would also approach patients to offer assistance and filter enquiries to minimise waiting times at the start of the appointment visit. However, some patients were observed appearing unsure about how to approach the member of staff at this station.



Patients were called to their appointments using a display which alerted them with an audio alert, displayed their name and room where patients needed to go. It was observed that the staff member responsible for assisting patients would also help direct patients to the correct room for their appointment.

The seating in the waiting area was of a consistent style with a high back which may not be suitable for all patients. There were other chairs available around the surgery which could have been used as needed. It was noted that on one of the seats a patient had left an empty prescription packet with their name and address on, this was handed to reception by a Healthwatch Lancashire representative to be destroyed.

Hand hygiene dispensers were available on the reception desk for patients to use if they needed. It was observed that the lock on the patient toilet displayed that it was occupied, even though the toilet was not locked or in use.

There were a number of displays around the waiting room which contained leaflets about different conditions, advice for carers, support groups, breast screening and a collection bin for local foodbanks.

Around the waiting room were collection points for different local causes such as foodbanks and local charities which staff at the practice had created to benefit patients who used the surgery, such as the 'Kindness Cabinet,' it was explained that these were set up as a self-serve facility for patients to use as needed. These were prominent around the waiting area but there was an example where it was not clear on how to use it, which could lead to some confusion from patients about how to make use of this bespoke facility.



Patient Interactions

Healthwatch Representatives observed several interactions between staff and patients in the waiting room, answering phone calls and answering enquiries at the end of consultations.

Different enquiries were being handled by members of staff, who were observed to be courteous and polite with patients, often addressing patients by name. At the time of the visit there was a small queue at the reception desk which was dealt with in a timely manner and patients were directed to the waiting area or signposted to another service.

Three patients were observed waiting over 30 minutes to be called for their appointment without being approached by a member of staff. They mentioned this to Healthwatch Lancashire Representatives but also did not know to approach staff to ask about their appointments.

Patient Involvement

The surgery has an active Patient Participation Group (PPG) which meets regularly. One member of the group was present at the surgery at the time of the visit and gave their input on how they supported the practice by working in collaboration with the staff at the practice. This PPG member explained how they were looking to encourage more people to get involved in the PPG to improve communication around the pharmacy and self-care for minor ailments.

They also explained how the PPG were investigating how to make better use of the information on display in the surgery as it was felt that the displays were not always accessible or used by patients.



There is a practice website which is easy to navigate and contains information about the appointments, services on offer at the practice and information videos that explain how to use the online services that are available through Patient Access. On the website, there is an option for patients to request online consultations, admin enquiries, medical requests or for general advice. The practice also has a Facebook account that is used to share events and information with patients.

Patient feedback

Healthwatch Representatives spoke with six patients during the visit. Observations were also made to look at the service that is provided by the surgery.

How did you make your appointment?

Four patients commented that the process of making an appointment was a simple process, two patients commented that they did not have to wait for a long time on the phone, "It was easy – we called and made an appointment. We didn't have to wait long."

However, two patients mentioned that it was difficult at times to ring up to book an appointment but they were able to make appointments when they tried later in the day. There was one patient who had attended the surgery a week prior to the visit, to make an appointment as they felt it was a simpler process.

Three patients commented that their appointment had been booked by the surgery as part of a repeated treatment or follow up.

One patient explained how they liked being provided choices about the way that their appointments were carried out. "I can choose if I want a face-to-face appointment."



In the last three years, this is the third practice I have joined and this is a surgery that I will remain at.



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

All six patients were satisfied with the care that they received. One patient explained how they had moved to the practice as a result of a relative receiving "really good care here." Another patient gave an example of how they had been invited for a consultation about a long-term condition that a relative had been given. They remarked that the Doctors pushed for a diagnosis that would allow treatment of their condition to be started. One patient described how the clinicians responded quickly to a possible issue and sent them straight to the nearest hospital for treatment.

One patient explained how they were able to speak to members of staff whenever they needed advice, "I never feel like I am an inconvenience." They explained that they always felt looked after at the practice. Another patient said that they, "managed to get treatment early on and they (the surgery) supported me." Two patients commented that they always felt listened to by members of staff at the practice.

There were three patients who commented that they found waiting times at the practice to be stressful, particularly if they waited a long time in the queue and needed to go to work afterwards.

"Waiting in reception is eating into my day, I cannot go home because of my wait here." Two other patients commented that they felt there were long waits in the waiting room for appointments which were not always communicated to them by staff.

How do you rate the communication between yourself and the surgery?

One patient described how the practice would ring to inform them about blood tests and vaccinations required, and the practice then arranged these appointments which made the process simpler for them.

Two patients commented that about communication before appointments, "always get a text before the appointment." Which helped to remember when they were due to attend the practice. Other patients praised the communication between themselves and the practice, making mention of the fact that "staff are very friendly."

While waiting to go into their appointment, one patient showed Healthwatch Lancashire representatives a text message they received from the practice requesting the patient book a blood test. They explained, "this is before I have even spoken to a doctor, so I am worrying about what the doctor is going to say while I am waiting." They were concerned about the reasons for booking a blood test as they were not aware of what condition was being investigated.

A member of the Patient participation group (PPG) explained how they were looking at ways to encourage patients to make better use of the information on the noticeboards at the practice to advertise the role of the PPG. They said that this would help the surgery communicate updates to patients to keep them informed about developments at the practice.

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

One patient commented that they found the practice difficult to navigate. "I still get lost even though it is signposted but I think that it is just me."

Four other patients commented that they felt that the practice was well maintained and clean.

One patient did say that they would like to see some children's toys for their children to use whilst they waited for appointments, this would help keep children occupied and make the surgery family friendly.

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

Four patients expressed uncertainty about who they would approach if they needed to raise a complaint with the practice. One patient said that they would "probably just ring and ask." They said that they would feel comfortable doing that whilst another patient said they would not want to make a fuss.

One patient explained that they would question if there was a change to their treatment and currently they were happy that their queries were always answered.

Any other comments

"I have been with this doctor for years and they have all been quite nice and really helpful."

Staff feedback

Healthwatch spoke to six members of the staff team during the visit.

Do you have enough staff when on duty?

All members of staff spoken with felt that they had the right number of staff to meet the needs of their patients. They explained that there were often queues in the morning at the reception desk which caused issues for patients in the past. To resolve this issue, the practice used a "Queue busting" system where a member of staff would be present in the waiting area to assist with enquiries and book patients in for their appointments. One member of staff commented that it had made a real difference to the queues as, "We can filter people from the queue and help them with their enquiries."

Do you feel supported to carry out a person-centred experience?

All staff spoken with felt that they were supported to give a person-centred experience. One member of staff explained how they made sure that the needs of patients were listened to in appointments. "I take my time with the patients to make sure that they get the best treatment that I can give, although this can sometimes cause delays with other appointments." They explained how they worked with patients to tackle misconceptions that are found within the communities that the practice serves. "We have to solve a lot of issues that patients present with and we try to educate them about their options." This was to help patients see an appropriate clinician instead of relying solely on a GP.

Another member of staff explained how they used patient information to target where they were signposted to. "If we have someone who lives in Brierfield we will signpost them to a pharmacy there then it is closer to where they live if they need it." This is intended to help make accessing services more convenient for patients.

Other staff members explained how the surgery was exploring utilising tablets with software, such as Google Translate, to help assist with basic patient enquiries. "This is something that we feel will really help with conversations."

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

All six staff members said that they felt they had enough training to meet the medical needs of their patients. "We have regular training on Safeguarding and clinical updates."

Another member of staff explained that the practice hosts medical student placements throughout the year to give them the opportunity to work with patients and develop their skills.

What is your experience of working here?

One member of staff explained that they loved the atmosphere at the practice. "It's a small practice and everyone is important."

Another member of staff explained how staff would support each other at busy times and make sure that they are looked after. "Sometimes we have issues when patients need assistance and there is always someone there to help."

One member of staff explained that ideas such as the "Queue buster" helped them to work with patients to make sure they were signposted to appropriate professionals. It was explained that there was always support available from management staff to help deal with complex patient enquiries or give advice.

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

Four members of staff described some of the barriers that patients were experiencing concerned the diverse nature of the demographics that the practice serves. "We have patients originating from South Asia, Italy, Bulgaria and all-around Europe. It is a lot of languages to deal with." One member of staff described some of the ideas that they had to improve the experience for people who speak other languages. "We want to use tablets with google translate then we can give them to patients to help them with communication." It was explained that this was a simple solution that would help especially at busier times.

One member of staff said that they were able to speak some languages with patients and it helps them, "there are times when I don't speak English all day. There are some that I need to have Language Line on Speed dial for." This was due to them encountering patients who used a language that the clinician could not speak.

One member of staff explained how the practice was putting on additional sessions to help patients improve their wellbeing and to increase the presence the practice has with the community. "We are looking at setting up Wake and Shake once a month behind the surgery for people to come and get more active. We have asked the council if we can use the land and invite patients to join in for their wellbeing." They also explained how they were looking into referring patients to local gyms to increase their level of physical activity.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been formulated based on observations of the environment and feedback gathered from patients and staff.

1. Ensure that patients are kept up to date about the status of their appointments, particularly if the consultations prior to their appointment have overrun
2. Consult with patients about the use of tablets to use apps like Google translate to help patients communicate with staff
3. Ensure that signage around the building is of a clear and consistent style to help patients navigate around the surgery
4. Investigate the use of a digital self-check in system to make booking in for an appointment simpler for patients
5. Review information and donation facilities that are on display around the practice to ensure it is clear what their purpose is and they are kept up to date
6. Improve the signage and information provided for the "Queue buster" to make patients aware of how they can use this facility.
7. Make sure that information about out of hours appointments and extended services is clear in the practice and on the website

Provider response

Recommendation	Action from provider	Timeframe	Comments
1. Ensure that patients are kept up to date about the status of their appointments, particularly if the consultations prior to their appointment have overrun	Staff usually always explain to all patients when a clinician is running late. This has been reiterated to staff, staff just felt a little embarrassed on the day in doing so due to healthwatch being present.		
2. Consult with patients about the use of tablets to use apps like Google translate to help patients communicate with staff	<p>The practice has tried to build up a good robust PPG to help with this, but this has proven slightly difficult engaging practice patients. The practice does feel this would help immensely with communication within the community and its practice patients. The practice is awaiting information on any funding available.</p> <p>The use of google translate on a tablet would help immensely with communication barriers.</p>		
3. Ensure that signage around the building is of a clear and consistent style to help patients navigate around the surgery	There was a laminated poster on our glass display window to the rear of the reception room and 2 other posters, but unfortunately these had been pulled off by our service users. We have replaced the posters again.		

	<p>All clinical doors are numbered and the calling in system indicates which room number to attend.</p> <p>The practice will look at coloured footsteps for the flooring.</p>		
4. Investigate the use of a self-check in system to make booking in for an appointment simpler for patients	The practice is awaiting information on any funding available. The practice did bring this to your attention to help with language barriers faced and help with queue cutting.		
5. Review information that is on display in the practice to ensure it is clear and up to date and informs patients about its purpose	All information is reviewed on a regular basis and the practice operates a monthly waiting room checklist.		
6. Improve the signage and information provided for the "Queue buster" to make patients aware of how they can use this facility.	We keep this to a minimal so not to create another queue forming. We actively approach our patients and ask if they need any help.		
6. Make sure that any updates provided on the website are also presented in an accessible	SSP practice website is enabled to that patients can translate the whole website into a language of their choice.		

format at the practice			
7. Make sure that information about out of hours appointments and extended services is clear in the practice and on the website	<p>This is clearly documented on our facebook page and our surgery website. A poster in large writing is now displayed in the waiting room that's says:</p> <p>Weekend and evening appointments are available as part of our extended access service, please ask at reception if you would like to use this service.</p>		

Any other comments



healthwatch
Lancashire

Healthwatch Lancashire
Leyland House
Lancashire Business Park
Centurion Way
Leyland
PR26 6TY

www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk
t: 01524 239100
e: info@healthwatchlancashire.co.uk
📱 @HW_Lancashire
📘 [Facebook.com/lancshealthwatch](https://www.facebook.com/lancshealthwatch)