



Rossendale Community Diagnostic Centre, Rawtenstall, BB4 7PL

Enter and View Report

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024

9:00am

# healthwatch

## Blackburn with Darwen

### DISCLAIMER

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

#### Contact Details:

Rossendale Community Diagnostic Centre, Bacup Road, Rawtenstall, BB4 7PL

#### Staff met during our visit:

Ammarah Suba (Project Manager - Pennine Lancashire Community Diagnostic Centre)

Dr Crossingham (Consultant) & Jacob Quigley (Senior Respiratory and Sleep Physiologists)

Mark Whitfield (Radiology Deputy Operations Manager)

Simon Stone (CHP Operations and Relationships Manager)

Dominika Siwerska (Radiographer)

Michelle Morris (Radiology Assistant)

#### Date and time of our visit:

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024, 9:00am.

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen Representatives

Sarah Johns (Lead)

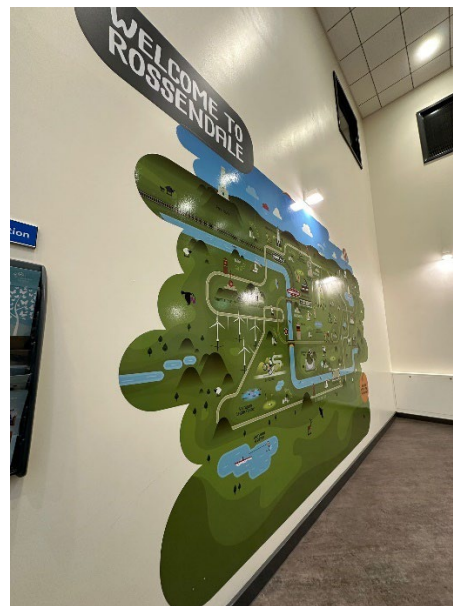
Liam Kershaw-Calvert (Healthwatch BwD staff)

Katie Merry (Healthwatch BwD Staff)

Jenny Hayes (Healthwatch BwD staff)

Bia Hashmi (Volunteer)

Alyson Mousley (Volunteer)



## Introduction

This was an announced Enter and View visit undertaken by authorised representatives from Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen who have the authority to enter health and social care premises, announced or unannounced, to observe and assess the nature and quality of services and obtain the view of those people using the services. The representatives observe and speak to respondents in communal areas only.

The team of trained Enter and View authorised representatives record their observations along with feedback from patients and staff.

A report is sent to the manager of the facility for validation of the facts. Any response from the manager is included with the final version of the report which is published on the Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen website at [www.healthwatchblackburnwithdarwen.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchblackburnwithdarwen.co.uk)

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen would like to thank Ammarah Suba, together with patients and staff for making us feel welcome and taking part in the visit.

## Background to Our Enter and View visit

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen have been commissioned by Healthwatch England, amongst other local Healthwatch branches across the country, to capture on the ground insight into people's experiences at Community Diagnostic Centres (CDCs).

Healthwatch England are interested in how CDCs are working across the country, making comparisons between different types of areas and types of CDCs. Our findings will contribute to a final report by Healthwatch England.

Setting up Community Diagnostic Centres (CDCs) is a flagship policy, and a crucial part of the elective care recovery plan. CDCs aim to transform diagnostics in England by reducing the pressure on acute services, ringfencing resources for elective diagnostics, and increasing diagnostic capacity. Little is known about the patient experience of CDCs. CDCs are new, having only been established in February 2022. NHS England only started publishing statistics on the performance of CDCs in March 2023, and no one has yet investigated people's experiences of using CDCs.

Healthwatch is uniquely placed to provide insight into performance against two of the aims of CDCs:

“To contribute to reducing health inequalities driven by unwarranted variation in referral, access, uptake, experience and outcomes of diagnostic provision.”

“To deliver a better and more personalised diagnostic experience for patients by providing a single point of access to a range of diagnostic services in the community.”

## Methodology

The Enter and View representatives made an announced visit on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and carried out a follow up accessibility audit on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

We spoke to 10 patients and the team also recorded their own observations of the environment and facilities. We also engaged with staff members whilst on the visit, however these were not formal interviews.

Our role at Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen is to gather the views of service users, especially those that are hard to reach and seldom heard, to give them the opportunity to express how they feel about a service regardless of their perceived ability to be able to do so.

We use templates to assess the environment of a facility and gather information from respondents, to ensure that reports are compiled in a fair and comparative manner.



## About Rossendale Community Diagnostic Centre

Rossendale Community Diagnostic Centre became operational in October 2022 following a £1.2m investment from national funding allocated to reduce scan waiting times and bring services closer to patients' homes.

The building is in the centre of Rossendale, East Lancashire, which lies south of the major towns of Burnley and Blackburn. It allows patients to be treated closer to home and reduces the need for them to travel and attend appointments at busy major hospitals locally.

Rossendale was chosen as a state-of-the-art health centre rooted in the local community with several key advantages. CHP buildings offer value for money within fit for purpose, modern facilities. Not only is Rossendale an example of this core message, it offered lead-lined rooms, necessary for diagnostic x-ray and CT scans but already had endoscopy facilities and several consulting rooms available.

At the time of writing this report, the following departments were open to patients within the CDC:-

Cardiology

Respiratory

X-ray and ultrasound

Magnetic Resistance Imaging (MRI scan)

A new CT scan is expected to be purchased soon and a phlebotomy department will open to patients in February 2024.



## Summary

Rossendale Community Diagnostic Centre is located within a primary care health centre, locally known as 'The Hub' which is easily accessible by public transport.

People's experiences of accessing diagnostic tests and scans at the centre were very positive with people finding the centre comfortable, tests took place on time and all found the staff lovely and reassuring. All patients who had any questions about their tests had these answered adequately by staff and all felt that their privacy and dignity were maintained at all times.

The location and ease of access of the centre was the most important factor for patients and although the majority of patients had not been offered a choice of location for their appointment, they did not feel this was important and one stated that they would always choose Rossendale CDC in future.

Some of the patients we spoke to did not feel they were well informed about what to expect from the appointment, therefore we would recommend that referring GPs and specialists ensure that patients are sufficiently prepared for the diagnostic test or scan. None of the patients we spoke with were given literature to take away with them after their scan, however they were all comfortable with not having this because they knew that their GP or specialist would talk them through the results and the CDC staff had explained next steps to them.

There was a lack of awareness of what a community diagnostic centre is amongst patients we spoke with and as such a lack of expectation of what this would be like. Increased promotion of the centre both with patients and primary care providers would be beneficial.

The building itself is accessible, bright, warm and clean. All of the staff we met were very welcoming and there was a wide range of information on health topics available. However, there are some areas which management may wish to consider in terms of accessibility of the building for more vulnerable patients, some of which are also being looked into. The flooring in several areas of the building is not dementia friendly and could be quite disorienting and signs, particularly indicating what services are available on different floors, were in small print and could not be seen easily by either patients with visual impairment or wheelchair users due to the height of the sign. Some of the waiting areas could be fairly small to manage for wheelchair users too.

The waiting area for cardiology and respiratory is rather confusing, however we felt that this is due to the fact that the building is in flux with new clinics being introduced across the last 12 months. Similarly there is no dedicated quiet space available for patients to access, however staff manage this on an adhoc basis.

Patients' experiences were very positive and the new offer of a CT scan and phlebotomy section at the CDC will both help alleviate waiting lists for local residents.

## Enter and View Observations

### Accessibility

#### *Getting to the Community Diagnostic Centre*

Rossendale Health Centre is located on Bacup Road and can be accessed from Rawtenstall Centre to the West via Bacup Road and accessed from the A682 to the West via Bacup Road .

Rossendale Health Centre has both standard and Blue Badge parking for staff and visitors.

There is a bus stop located just outside the Centre on Bacup Road, which is served by routes 464, 483 Irwell Line and 998 on a regular basis. The main bus centre in Rawtenstall is a 5 minute walk away and there are regular buses to Blackburn, Burnley, Accrington and other areas in Rossendale. Accrington is the nearest train station 5 miles away.

There is free carparking on site with spaces for standard and blue badge holders. However, it was noted that the carpark can get full quickly with one patient we spoke to stating that they could not find anywhere to park initially and another felt that the spaces were quite tight.

#### *Getting around the building*

There is a lift to all floors within the building, however signs indicating the location of the lift are not clearly visible from the entrance.

There are accessible toilets on each floor which have clear signs and are dementia friendly.

There is signage on the ground floor for services available on each floor, however the writing is rather small and this does not show that cardiology and respiratory are on the first floor and there is no signage for the MRI unit. However, patients found the MRI unit easy to locate on the carpark. The sign was not easily visible for our volunteer with visual impairment and it is also situated quite high up the wall which would make it difficult for wheelchair users to read.



The flooring throughout the building is not dementia friendly. Some flooring has patterns or colours which could be confusing and some flooring is shiny and could cause issues with glare or look slippery to some people.



### ***Waiting Areas***

There is a good range of seating in the main reception and in each of the departments, with a range of heights and seats both with and without arm rests. There is sufficient space for a wheelchair user to use the waiting area and there is easy access to each of the departments.

The main reception desk is easily visible from both entrances to the building

The reception desks in each department all had a hearing loop and allowed space for privacy and dignity of patients.

However, we noted that there is not a designated place of safety which can be used by people with dementia, autism or learning disabilities. From speaking with Simon Stone, CHP Operations and Relationships Manager (lead tenant for the building) this is due to the fact that with increased clinics within the building there is never a space available at all times for either a quiet room or prayer room which they would like to have available. The staff can book rooms ahead for patients and will deal with any requests on an ad hoc basis.

The clock at the reception desk was dementia friendly but one in the main waiting room space was not dementia friendly.

The one department which is not easily accessible is the MRI unit, with main access via metal steps. However, staff informed us that the initial letter which is sent out to patients asks them to let them know if they have mobility issues and they will ensure that they have an MRI in a hospital setting rather than in the unit because although there is an external 'lift', it is not easy for patients so they

would prefer to see patients who have mobility issues in a more accessible hospital setting.

Some of the waiting areas were rather small and may be difficult to manage for wheelchair users.

### ***Accessible Information***

Although we noted information leaflets in a range of languages, there was a lack of information available in either Easy Read or large print. We made the suggestion that information be available with QR codes which can take people to relevant easy read materials on a website or which can then be made accessible in different formats for people with visual impairment.

Posters on noticeboards were generally small print and not suitable for patients with visual impairment or who need Easy Read. The noticeboards in the main waiting area were up to date and informative and there were good displays on health topics including cancer and dementia with information available in different languages. However, we noted that in some of the departments, notices were stuck on the glass on reception desks whilst there were noticeboards half empty. From speaking with Simon, Operations Manager, they have a 4 monthly 'poster amnesty' to encourage departments to keep these up to date.



## Environment

### Ground Floor Reception Area

The building is clean, bright and warm throughout. There is a large waiting area on the ground floor with a good range of seating and a water dispenser for patients to access drinks from. The notice boards are up to date with lots of health information and there were stands with a range of information booklets on topics including cancer, dementia and local services which were available in a range of languages.



### MRI unit

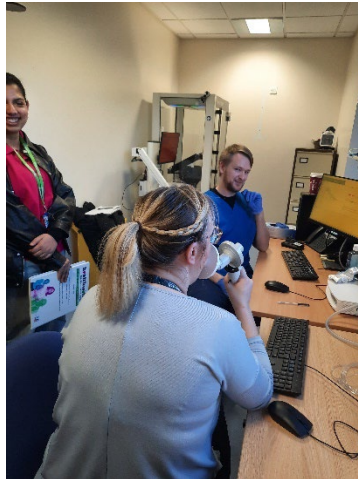
The unit is rather small inside therefore staff have to manage the flow of patients carefully. They often have to ask patients to wait in their care on in the main hub until their allocated timeslot but patients we spoke with seemed happy with this. From speaking with the staff, it can be difficult at times for the radiographer in the unit setting, if the patient has relatives in there too, to concentrate fully on the scan compared to in a hospital setting but otherwise it functions well. The unit was clean, bright and warm.

The waiting area was adequate and comfortable with lockers for patients to put their belongings in. The scan area had a calming atmosphere with 'blue sky' tiles on the ceiling and one wall had an image of a waterfall on it. Patients were provided with headphones to reduce the noise of the scanner.



## Cardio/Respiratory Department

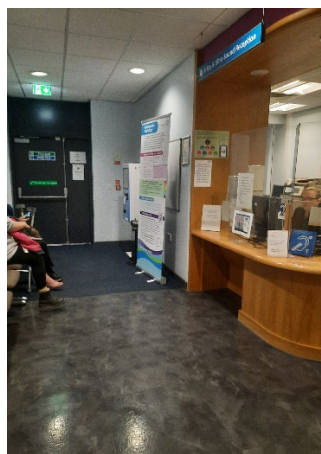
The opening of this unit was delayed from April 2023 to November 2023, due to IT issues therefore they are not at full capacity for appointments at present. However, the respiratory department equipment was technologically advanced, with Rossendale being the first community diagnostic centre to have this. The staff were very welcoming and demonstrated the equipment with our team.



There is a reception desk for this department which was staffed at all times during our visit, with a hearing loop and with an accessible counter. The seating arrangements for the CDC cardiology and respiratory departments was rather confusing due to lack of signage. This is due to the building being in a state of flux as new departments are added and could be reviewed by management at a point where clinic locations are stabilised.

## X-ray Department

There is an accessible reception desk for the department with a hearing loop and there were staff on reception at all times during our visit. The waiting room was clean, bright and had sufficient seating. The receptionist was welcoming and helpful throughout. However, it was noted that the waiting area was rather small and could be problematic for wheelchair users.



## Patients' Feedback about the Community Diagnostic Centre

We spoke with 10 patients about their experiences of accessing the Community Diagnostic Centre and their appointments. Please find a summary of their feedback below.

### Experience of their Journey to the CDC

None of the patients we spoke with had any difficulties in coming to the health centre, with the majority coming from the Rossendale area and travelling less than half an hour for their appointment.

However, one person could not find a parking space at first and another found the spaces small. Those who had driven all appreciated the fact that parking was free on site.

### *Ease of Navigation once on Site*

All of the patients we spoke with found their relevant department easily once on site, with some having previously visited the health centre and friends informing them of whereabouts the MRI unit is located.

### *Convenience of location*

The majority of patients we spoke with found the location easy to get to because it was close to home, easy to park and parking was free. Two patients who travelled from outside of the Rossendale area felt that it was a bit far out but they were happy to travel to there in order to get an appointment sooner than they might elsewhere. One patient also commented that it was easier to have an appointment there than in a hospital setting.

### Experience of Getting the Appointment

#### *Referral Process*

5 out of the 10 patients we spoke with had been referred to the CDC by their GP, these were a mix of X-ray, Ultrasound, Cardiology and MRI patients. 1 had been referred by a private hospital and 4 had been referred by specialists within hospital settings (ENT department, TIA clinic and rheumatologist), mainly for MRI scans.

All of the patients had been seen at the CDC soon after their referral, with most of the X-rays and ultrasound appointments taking place within a week of referral and the MRI scans within 2-3 weeks of referral. The longest period for referral was 8-10 weeks for lung function testing within the respiratory department.



### ***Choice of location and time of diagnostic test or scan***

6 of the patients we spoke with had not been given a choice of location for their diagnostic test or scan. 4 of these were for MRI scans. 1 X-ray and 2 lung function testing.

4 patients had been given a choice - 3 of whom were X-ray or ultrasound and 1 MRI scan. All of these chose Rossendale CDC because it was closer to home.

All 6 patients who had not been given a choice of location did not feel that they needed to have a choice.

“I will go anywhere. Now I have been here I would always prefer to come here now”.

“I’m not really bothered as long as I’m not waiting too long for an appointment.”

6 out of 10 patients stated that they had not been given a choice regarding date and time of their appointment whilst 4 were offered a choice. All 6 who were not given a choice were not bothered by this.

“It’s fine, it’s got me a day off work!”

“We will fit in with the system”

“I’m not bothered so long as I’m within 2 weeks from referral.”

### ***Timing of other scans and tests***

Four patients we spoke with were waiting on other scans. However, when asked if they were offered the choice of having their test done at the same time as the ones they were at the CDC, all stated no because the other tests could not currently be offered at the CDC - blood tests, CT scan, TIA scans and tests for bladder cancer.

### ***Offer of choices around timing or location of future tests or scans***

The most important consideration for 7 out of 10 respondents for future tests or scans was location, with all stating that having somewhere close to home was most important to them. 2 respondents stated that timing was most important to fit appointments around work and studying commitments and a third wanted appointments to be at a time when driving was easiest for her, “after the morning rush traffic and I don’t really like driving in the dark.”





## Preparation for the appointment

### *Feeling informed about what to expect*

6 out of 10 respondents felt that they were well informed about what to expect about their appointment before attending. However, 4 respondents felt that they were not well informed before attending.

“No but I know a bit about MRIs”

“No the GP didn’t tell me what to expect.”

“No I was just given me a card saying I need to have an MRI on my head.”

### *How comfortable do you find the waiting area?*

All of the people we spoke with found the waiting area comfortable and welcoming. Only one person felt that the seating in the x-ray was slightly too high for her.

### *Do you feel the site provides adequate privacy and dignity?*

All of the people we spoke with felt that the site provided adequate privacy and dignity.

## Knowledge of Community Diagnostic Centres

8 out of the respondents had not heard of CDCs before speaking with our team.

One person had heard about them from Royal Blackburn Hospital who had made the referral but did not have any expectations about the centre or any concerns. The other person had heard about them through her studies and felt that she knew what to expect and that the centre met her expectations and she had no concerns about attending the centre.

## Experience of the appointment

All of the patients we spoke with had their appointment on time.

### *How was your experience of the test, scan, procedure or appointment itself?*

All of the patients had a good experience of their appointment, although two women found the MRI scan overwhelming and claustrophobic but really appreciated the support of the staff members.

## Treatment by and communication with Staff

Feedback about staff in each of the departments was incredibly positive.

“They made me feel at ease and were lovely.”

“He was very welcoming.”

“Brilliant, first class!”



None of the patients we spoke with had any issues with communicating with the staff. They all felt that they were listened to and people commented,

“He gave me an opportunity to ask any questions”

“Very reassuring”

“Explained everything well”

### Next Steps After the Appointment

***Were you given information to take away with you? If no, would you have liked some?***

None of the patients we spoke with had been given information to take away with them after the appointment but they all felt that this was not needed because they knew that the next step would be a conversation with either the GP or specialist who had referred them.

They all confirmed that staff in each of the departments had explained to them what the next steps would be.

### Overall Feedback

***What, if anything would you say was particularly good about your overall experience today?***

“The CDC is very pleasant and welcoming”

“Everyone was lovely, it was just a nice experience”

“Friendly, quick and convenient. And it’s not the same size as a hospital so not too far to walk around.”

“Straightforward”

“The staff are great and the environment is very friendly”

“It’s all over!”

“Very quick”

“I like how quickly I was seen, I like the location of where it is. Ease of access!”

“How local it is and the waiting time is short.”

Just one person stated “Nothing really”, however, she had found the MRI scan rather overwhelming.

***What if anything could have been improved about your overall experience?***

All respondents stated that nothing could have been improved about their experience. One patient commented that the MRI unit is tight but felt that this was the nature of the unit and did not feel anything could have been improved.

## Follow up calls with patients

We made 4 follow up calls with patients about their experience of the CDC and their results. Their feedback is recorded below:-

***Now that you've had a bit of time to reflect, does anything stand out as being particularly good about your experience getting a diagnostic test or scan?***

“Just that the staff were all really lovely”

“It was just all really good.”

“It's so near to where I live, I was able to just walk down”

“I know how busy hospital settings are, going to Rossendale was much quieter and had a relaxed atmosphere.”

***Is there anything you think would make the experience better for people attending in future?***

“No not really, it's everything they do for you. The MRI unit is tight for space but they do really well with what they have available.”

“You can't really do anything about the MRI unit, it must get hard for the staff in there at times.”

“I didn't realise the x-ray wasn't open at weekends, I turned up initially on a Saturday but got seen easily when I came back.”

“No I don't think so it was all positive.”

***If you required an additional test or scan, and you were offered a choice of location, would you want to return to the same place?***

“Yes, just for ease of location and being able to get in and be seen really quickly.”

“Yes, there's no point travelling for an appointment when you can be seen so close to home.”

“Yes it's convenient for me, I can get the bus from Bacup straight to the door.”

“Yes I liked it there.”

***Final reflection from one patient,***

“It was all excellent, even down to the reception desk being very helpful.”

### ***Feedback about Scan Results***

Three out of the 4 patients we spoke with had already received their results and were all positive about the outcomes. They had all been contacted by either their GP or consultant who explained the results fully to them. One patient was glad that the consultant had offered him a telephone consultation to save him from having to go to Royal Blackburn Hospital.

The fourth patient who had not had her results through was not worried about this because it was still within the expected timeframe and stated that she would go back to her GP for the results if needed.



## Response from Provider:

The feedback is very positive which is encouraging to see and has been shared with all the teams. Staff acknowledge the positive impact of the CDC in providing accessible diagnostic tests to communities. Regarding Radiology / Imaging and results timeliness, as time scales for results can vary from week to week the staff provide a verbal up to date of when to expect the results to be available and ensure staff regularly explain this to all patients. As the MRI is a mobile unit it is unfortunately restrictive space wise, it does mean there isn't a waiting room on the unit and steps are needed for patients to access the unit. Whilst there is a lift we do try to scan patients with mobility issues at the main sites as there is more room to support patients.

The issues with parking and the building are recognised although they fall outside the CDCs remit as it is not CDC owned building, and we are unable to address these concerns directly but will be shared with the building owners, CHP.

Patient feedback remains a priority, as of this year we will participate in the NHS England EBD (Experienced Based Design) Survey and will continually monitor patient responses. We are working with the primary care communications team to update websites on CDC information and opening times, and we will explore alternative communication avenues to promote and share information on the CDC as suggested.

The trust is currently undertaking some work on the Accessible Information Standard. IT Systems & Performance Lead and our Admin Manager are engaged with this work.