

Burnley Group Practice St Peter's Centre

Tuesday 25th June

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

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Burnley Group Practice

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Surgery Contact:

Helen Harrison (Practice Manager)

Carol Tillotson (Practice Manager)

Date and Time of our Visit:

Tuesday 25th June 2024

10:00am – 12:00pm

Healthwatch Lancashire Authorised Representatives:

Steve Walmsley (Engagement Team Leader)

Emmy Walmsley (Senior Engagement Officer)

Introduction

Healthwatch Lancashire is the independent public voice for health and social care in Lancashire and exists to make services work for the people who use them. We believe that the best way to do this is by providing the people of Lancashire with opportunities to share their views and experiences.

Healthwatch Lancashire has statutory powers to listen, act, challenge and gather feedback to improve local services and promote excellence throughout the NHS and social care services.

To help achieve this Healthwatch have a statutory power to 'Enter and View' health and social care services that are publicly funded. The purpose of an Enter and View is to listen to people who access those services and observe service delivery.

Following the Enter and View visit a report is compiled identifying aspects of good surgery within the service visited along with any recommendations for any possible areas of improvement.

As we are an independent organisation, 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 service provider providing an opportunity to respond to any recommendations and comments before being published on the Healthwatch Lancashire website at:

www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk

The report is available to members of the public along with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Healthwatch England and any other relevant organisations. Where appropriate Healthwatch Lancashire may arrange a revisit to monitor the progress of improvements and celebrate any further successes.

General Information

Burnley Group Practice serves approximately 25,000 patients in the Burnley Area. There are practice sites operating at St Peter's Centre, Manchester Road and Kiddrow Medical Centre.

Acknowledgements

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

Glossary

MDT – Multi-disciplinary team

PCN – Primary Care Network

What did we do?

Healthwatch Lancashire Enter and View Representatives made an announced visit to Burnley Group Practice on the 25th June and received feedback from:



Pre-visit surgery survey

Healthwatch Lancashire emailed a pre-visit questionnaire to the Practice Manager to learn about the patient population, services offered and how the surgery manage appointments for patients. Information from this questionnaire is included in the summary below.

Introductory meeting with Surgery manager

At the beginning of the enter and view visit, Healthwatch Lancashire met with the Practice Management team to discuss the background of the surgery and to view the facilities. The appointment system was explained, along with support offered to patients who are accessing services within the Primary Care Network (PCN).

One to one discussions with patients and their relatives

Healthwatch Lancashire spoke with patients and their relatives about their experiences including appointment booking, how they felt about the service and the care and treatment delivered by the staff at the surgery.

Discussions with members of staff

Healthwatch Lancashire Representatives spoke with members of staff about their experiences of delivering services to patients. Questions centred around support for patients and any improvements staff felt could be made at the Medical Surgery.

Observations

Observations were made throughout the visit. This included patient and staff interactions, accessibility measures in place throughout the surgery and the condition and cleanliness of the facilities.

Summary



Healthwatch Lancashire Representatives viewed facilities that were available at the St Peter's Centre. This included the waiting area, reception office, areas used by the MDT and clinical rooms.

Overall, the feedback received from patients was positive with several patient responses describing satisfaction with the quality of care and the attitude of staff. Patients also praised the communications between the surgery and themselves, describing the usefulness of text message reminders and most patients remarking how the process of making an appointment was quick and easy.

However, some patients raised concerns about delays in the appointment making process, commenting on how it can take some time to get through on the phone at certain times during the day. One improvement that was suggested by patients, they would like to have more options to manage their care online. It was felt that this might help alleviate the need to ring the surgery in the morning if they could book an appointment online.

Throughout the visit staff members were observed to be kind, courteous and considerate towards the needs of patients with some complex enquiries being handled in a sensitive manner. Conversations with staff highlighted that they felt the team was able to meet the needs of patients and that there were robust procedures in place to help patients overcome barriers that they experienced. Praise was given to the management team for the way that they support staff and how they are approachable if staff members need support.

Surgery Overview

Location and public access



The site at St Peter's hosts a range of local NHS and leisure services which can be accessed by the residents of Burnley.

The practice is located on the third floor of the St Peter's Centre at the edge of Burnley Town Centre. The centre is accessed on the road via a tunnel from Church Street which leads directly into the car park at the centre. Local bus services are accessed at a bus stop directly outside the front of the centre.

Surgery Population

The surgery has approximately 25,000 patients registered across the wider Burnley area. Patients can attend appointments at any of the three sites, St Peter's Centre, Kiddrow Lane or Manchester Road.

Discussion with practice management highlighted that the practice serves a high elderly population living in a deprived area with multiple comorbidities (having more than one disease or condition at the same time) and chronic long-term conditions. Some patients live in town centre areas, others are rural and semi-rural. There is a high number of patients from multiple ethnicities at the practice were said to present with language barriers.

Services available

The practice has a health and wellbeing team which includes Social Prescribers, Care Coordinators, Health and Wellbeing Coaches, Nursing Associates, Pharmacists, Physiotherapist, Pharmacy technician, Mental Health (MH) Practitioners, SNP's who look after Care Home patients, a Frailty Nurse all of which work within the PCN to provide additional services¹.

At the time of the visit, the practice, at St Peter's Centre, was staffed with 2 GPs, 2 pharmacists, 3 x Advanced Nurse Practitioners(ANP) a MH Practitioner and 3 Practice Nurses along with a team of 16 non-clinical staff to handle calls and enquiries.

An enhanced access service works from the St Peter's Centre four evenings a week and on Saturday mornings to provide additional capacity within the PCN.

Appointment Management

Appointments can be made by patients either on the phone or visiting any of the three sites to make an appointment. There is also an option for patients to send messages to the practice using the NHS App which is then sent through on the Accurx system and is then triaged / care navigated to make an appointment for the patient.



¹ <https://www.burnleywestnetwork.com/>

The practice is currently piloting a new total triage system which is in the early phase of being rolled out to patients. It has been reported that patients have expressed good levels of satisfaction with this process.

Enter and View observations

External Environment

The building has a car park that is used by people using other services in the centre and, as a result, was busy at the time of the visit. There were disabled parking spaces available near the entrance and there was level access throughout this area to allow people using wheelchairs, walking aids and prams to gain access to the centre. A zebra crossing was in place to allow patients to cross the access road at the front of the entrance to the centre.

The practice is located on the third floor of the centre and was accessible by a travelator and a lift to reach the third floor within the centre.

There was standardised signage present throughout the centre which directed patients to the right floor and area of the centre. These signs contained a wide range of information but were easy to use to aid navigation to the practice.



Internal Environment and Waiting Area

The practice has one main waiting area and one reception desk for patients to make enquiries and book in for appointments. A self check in system was present near the front door of the practice but it was out of use at the time of the visit.

Patients were called to their appointments using a visual screen mounted on the wall facing the seating area, this called patients with an audio alert, displayed the patient's name, the clinician's name and the room they needed to go to. Staff were also observed collecting patients in lieu of using this facility.

There was ample seating in the waiting area of a standard design and size, there were arms present on some chairs to provide assistance to patients with mobility impairments. The seating was placed to allow for the movement of wheelchairs and pushchairs around the waiting area.



The waiting room had multiple large displays containing information about the local social prescribing services, veteran and information about common conditions.

These were prominent as it had been explained by the practice manager that they encourage patients about the pharmacy first initiative, as it was a convenient and efficient way to discuss minor ailments. Health information for common conditions like colds and health checks available was also on display in the waiting area to highlight symptoms and ways to treat them.

Patient Interactions



Healthwatch Lancashire observed several interactions with patients who were at different stages of their appointment making journey.

Phone call enquiries were observed being handled by members of staff at the time of the visit. There had been 183 calls handled on the morning of the visit which had been answered within 5 minutes.

Two members of staff were on the reception desk to provide assistance to patients and their relatives. There was a wait for enquiries at the time of the visit due to the self-check in machine being out of use. However, staff worked with patients in a timely manner and the enquiries were handled in a polite and professional manner. Some patients were observed waiting in the waiting room for around 25 minutes, there were no updates given to patients about their delays observed at the time of the visit. One patient had arrived early for their appointment which was one explanation for a longer waiting time.

One patient was observed making an enquiry about registering at the practice as a new patient and they were informed that they needed to register using a phone line or go online and register using the practice website. The patients mentioned that they felt confused by the process to members of the Healthwatch Team as they thought they would have been able to register in person. (Recommendation 2)

One patient attended the practice on the advice of a member of the district nurse team to speak to a GP to save them needing to visit the hospital. Unfortunately, there was an issue with the advice given and the receptionist was unable to help at that time. They explained why they were unable to provide assistance for this enquiry and explained that they would need to contact the hospital for support.

One patient attended to enquire about a prescription, the receptionist supported with this, they then explained the process to the patient so that they knew to leave it 24 hours to allow the staff at the pharmacy to process the script.

Patient Involvement



A patient participation group is currently in operation and is advertised on the surgery website. The practice management have previously invited patients who raise complaints to the group in order to work with them to resolve issues that they have experienced in the past. The Practice manager explained that this helped patients understand how the practice was working towards making the experience better for patients.

Burnley Group Practice has a Facebook page that is regularly updated with information about health conditions and wellbeing. The surgery works closely with the Burnley West Primary Care Network in order to provide a range of options for patients in the Burnley area. This has involved the team joining in with community events to provide information and advice to patients.

There was information displayed about ways to contact the surgery available throughout the centre.

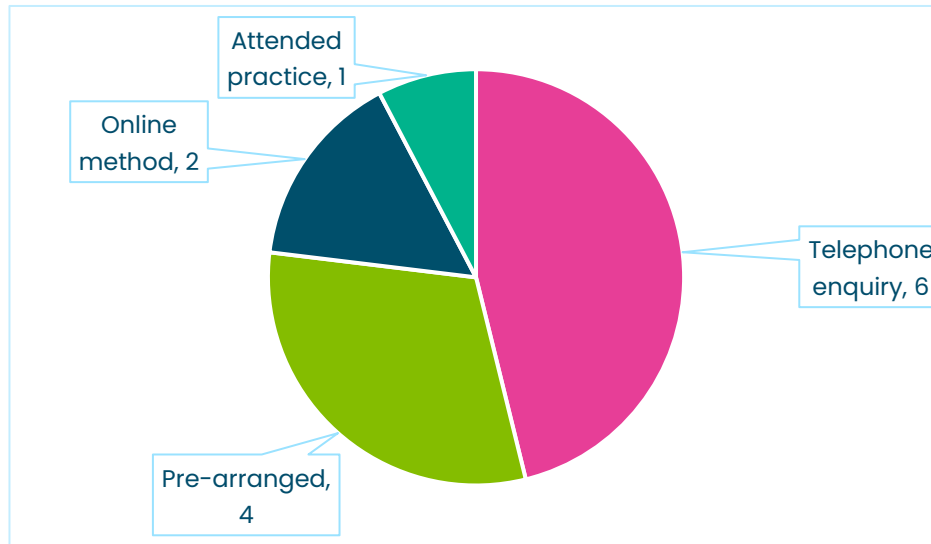
The website contains information about getting involved at the practice and information about making use of the NHS app to make contact.



Patient feedback

Healthwatch Representatives spoke with **fifteen** patients during the visit.

How did you make your appointment today?



Six of the patients spoken with had arranged their appointment using the telephone system and four appointments were pre-arranged by staff at the practice. One patient commented that the process was straightforward and they used the callback system which made things easier for them.

“I rang up and it was ok, I was 13th in the queue at 8am and I got a call back.”

They explained that they found the ability to receive a callback was helpful and made things easier for them at that time in the morning.

There were some issues raised about the length of time it could take for their calls to be answered, particularly at busier periods of the day. With some

“When you ring at 8am it’s a nightmare, you can never get through, you are around 28th in the queue and the new call back system is great but at number 28 you’ve no chance of getting an appointment.”

One patient felt that the call back, while useful during the initial contact, was not always guaranteed to give them access to an appointment as slots were filled by the time they received an answer. (recommendation 3)

Four patients had their appointments arranged by the staff as either follow on appointments or they had been invited in to receive vaccinations. One patient commented that the practice had sent them a link to book a screening appointment which they felt made the process straightforward and saved them time.

“I got a text to come in for my cervical screening test and I was sent a link via text which was easy to navigate”

Two patients had made their appointments using online methods such as the NHS app which they explained was useful but was somewhat inconsistent.

“I made the appointment for my child via the app which is easy for a baby but not so easy for an adult.”

They mentioned that it was more straightforward to make an appointment for children than it was for an adult. They were unsure as to the reasons why this was the case as they felt that the process using an app should make things straightforward for everyone using this method. (Recommendation 4)

The fifteen patients that Healthwatch Lancashire heard from experienced a varied waiting time for their appointment.

What works well at this surgery?



Eleven out of the fifteen patients commented on aspects of the surgery that worked well in order to help them. They felt they were able to approach staff at the surgery who were able to listen to their needs and respond appropriately.

“Staff are very good.”

Eight patients praised the care that they received from staff at the practice explaining that they felt the staff listened to them and gave them the time they needed in appointments. (recommendation 1)

“The diabetic nurse is very good, goes through everything with me and always asks if there is anything that I need.”

One patient described how they had contacted the surgery to resolve an urgent issue with their medication. They explained that they had unexpectedly run short of regular medication. They requested more and the staff were able to source it in a timely manner.

One patient, who had recently registered at the practice compared their experience of care at Burnley Group Practice to their previous GP and commented on how they received better care.

“We moved here from another practice as this one is better.”

They explained that the care they received was more effective and that they felt more listened to at their new practice.

Is there anything that can be changed to meet your needs?

Eight patients commented on how they felt that there needed to be some improvements made to the appointment making process with the length of time and misconceptions about the callback system being mentioned.

“They need to sort the phone lines out. We’d like to know how many staff are manning the phones at 8am as sometimes you can be waiting over 20 minutes.”

Other comments concerned how patients found it hard to fit making an appointment around their working commitments and wanted to know what there was in place to assist them, particularly if they were on the phone to the practice during their working hours. They were not aware that the callback system would hold their place in the queue. A common concern was that accepting the callback option would make them either lose their place in the queue or delay their contact until all appointments were allocated to other patients on the day. (recommendation info on call back and other options to make appts).

One patient gave an example of how they were unable to attend an appointment due to an unexpected delay which caused them to be more than ten minutes late for their appointment. They said that there needed to be clearer messaging about what patients needed to do if they were delayed for their appointment. (Recommendation 5)

“I wasn’t able to let them know that I would be delayed.”

Some issues with communication between the practice and patients were raised in conversations during the visit where patients felt that there was a disconnect between the practice and patients particularly concerning the nature of appointments that patients were attending. This was raised with practice management at the time of the visit who explained that they would investigate this matter.

“I was told I needed a face to face with the doctor for my results and they made me a face to face appointment I turned up at the practice to be told it was a telephone call and no one could see me today.”

One patient mentioned that they would like to have more information about how the practice was developing and changing as they had heard that the practice was moving to a “Total triage model” and felt that they needed more information about this if it was going to be happening.

“More communication with patients would be good, we hear whispers about total triage and about things happening within the Practice but I feel we are the last to know.”

Do you receive information from the surgery that is easy to understand?

Eleven patients were complimentary about the communications that they received from the surgery regarding appointments and referrals. One patient explained that there were sometimes issues with referrals between the practice and local hospitals which had caused delays in their treatment, but they appreciated that this was out of the hands of the practice and staff kept them informed about their progress. One patient explained how the practice would make contact after every appointment in order to gather feedback on their experiences, which they found helpful.



“After every appointment I get a text to ask how the service was and to leave feedback.”

One example was given where the patient had been contacted about some test results and they were invited for an appointment at the time of the visit. The patient felt that this was a positive measure that saved them needing to make the arrangements for the appointment themselves.

Do you know how to make a complaint if needed?

Ten patients were unsure about the procedure to make a complaint. One patient stated that they would ask at the practice if they had an issue to raise. One patient thought that the best route to take would be to contact the local Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

“I’ve no idea but I think I’d go to PALS.”

They said that there was not much information available to direct patients on how to raise issues with the practice if required. (Recommendation 6)

Do you know what a Patient participation group is?

One patient was a representative of the patient participation group and was positive about the impact that the work the group carried out had with the practice.

“I am already part of the PPG and its very productive we have some new people coming to the PPG which is good.”

Eleven patients had not heard about the patient participation group but did not state whether it was something that they would be interested in joining.

Staff feedback

Healthwatch received feedback from **seven** staff members during the visit.



Do you have enough staff when on duty?

All seven members of staff felt that they had enough staff to meet the demand at the surgery. They gave examples of how the staff deployment was flexible and able to meet the needs of patients.

“We have a range of staff deployed across the sites in order to give the support to other staff when they need it.”

An example of this in practice was given in the call-handling team, where there were senior members of staff and a GP allocated to that team to provide additional support for complex enquiries or if additional triage was needed with a patient enquiry.

One member of staff explained how the practice had undergone a recruitment process in order to improve the capacity, particularly with patient enquiries across the group practice.

“We have just had a large recruitment drive of new staff, mostly to handle calls, to give us good coverage across the sites.”

They also explained how they made sure there was a minimum of three members of staff available to answer enquiries on both phonelines and taking on the extra staff would give them more flexibility to meet demand.

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



All seven members of staff commented on how the team was able to support people in different ways. One aspect that received praise was the support of the practice management staff and the team of doctors

“having someone there who can help us with difficult questions allows us to ensure that people are directed to the right place.”

They explained that they were always able to speak with someone on the team if they needed support or advice about how to support a patient. Staff complemented the support that they received from the management team and that they were always supported, particularly with their workload and wellbeing. (Recommendation 1)

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

Staff felt that the training that they received allowed them to meet the needs of the patients they serve. Most comments concerned regular mandatory training such as safeguarding and the sentiment was that it was well managed at the surgery. One member of staff explained that the regular afternoon closure once a month helped them keep up with training.

“We get regular updates and the protected learning time we have really helps us keep on top of that aspect of our workload.”

They mentioned that this meant their training was kept up to date and they could pursue training that they required for their role.

Two members of staff complemented the induction process in place at the practice in order to ensure that staff were given a supportive induction to their role. An example of this in practice was given in the call-handling team, where there were senior members of staff and a GP allocated to that team to give additional support with phonecalls and new members staff were paired up with another team member to give them guidance with handling patient enquiries.

“Having someone with them helps them learn the different pathways and helps them understand what they need to do if they get a complex enquiry.

“It just gives them that reassurance they need when they are handling several calls in quick succession and means that there is structure in place if they need support after a complicated phone call.”

What measures are in place for people with additional communication needs?

Three members of staff explained some of the measures that were in place for patients who required additional support through the use of Language line or Cosign if they were a British Sign Language (BSL) user. There was some uncertainty expressed by two staff members who said that they would seek guidance on this point as some times patients would bring a family member or ask the practice to make arrangements to book an interpreter. (recommendation 7).

What is your experience of working here?

All members of staff spoken with on the day felt that they had a positive experience working at the practice. They complimented the support from the management team and from other members of the team.

“I am very happy here and other members of my family come here as well.”

One member of staff complimented how the team would support each other particularly when they needed to resolve a challenging issue or deal with high demand from patients, particularly with phone enquiries.



“It’s very good here, I haven’t been here long but they are very supportive.”

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

One member of staff explained that the practice had identified a need to review the triage process for patients in order to make sure patients were allocated appointments with the right clinicians. They felt that one thing the practice needed to do was ensure that the changes were communicated in the right way to avoid any potential misunderstandings.

“Explaining the process will help the transition.”

Another member of staff felt that there was something that could be done to educate patients about how the service was running and what choices were available for patients in order to help manage expectations from patients, particularly in order to answer some of the rumours about the practice that were shared on social media about the staffing structure across the three sites. (Recommendation 8)

Recommendations

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

1. Celebrate successes and positive praise highlighted in this report in a team meeting and publishing on the surgery website and on social media
2. Consider displaying information about the new patient registration process and provide a link to the page using a QR code to speed the process up.
3. Share information on social media and through the text message service to inform patients about the call back process to address concerns patients may have
4. Consult with patients about the process for making an appointment online to ensure that it is a straightforward process for patients
5. Review information with patients about lateness for appointments on the practice website, social media and in the waiting areas
6. Alter the layout of the website to make the complaints procedure more prominent on the website
7. Brief staff about the procedure for booking interpreters for appointments particularly for BSL users
8. Work with patient participation group to host an information event to inform patients about the practice structure and updates to new developments at the practice

Appendix

- 1 <https://www.burnleywestnetwork.com/>

Provider response

Recommendation	Action from provider	Timeframe	Comments
<p>Celebrate successes and positive praise highlighted in this report in a team meeting and publishing on the surgery website and on social media</p>	<p>The draft report has already been shared with key team members, and will be shared with all team members once the final report is available by email and staff newsletter.</p> <p>Similarly the draft report has already been shared with Patient Participation Group (PPG) members and will be shared with all patients once finalised on our website, social media and in the next patient newsletter</p>	<p>Within two weeks of final report being available</p>	
<p>Amend information in the practice concerning the registration process and provide a link to the page using a qr code to speed the process up.</p>	<p>This observation is confusing as we're not currently switched on for online registration we still require a paper form to be completed, however this will be activated in the coming weeks, we will share information on the website, social media and ensure all reception staff are aware</p>	<p>End of October 2024</p>	
<p>Share information on social media and through the text message service to inform patients about the call back process to allay any concerns patients may have</p>	<p>We will include an article in the next patient newsletter and on social media regarding the callback option. Information regarding the new triage system has already been shared.</p>	<p>Next Patient Newsletter</p>	

Consult with patients about the process for making an appointment online to ensure that patients feel it is an equitable process	Currently very few appointments are available to all for online booking due to the different staff groups and competencies that our clinicians have. We do however send links for specific slots to patients to book – this should be the same process for adults as it is for children.	This is regularly discussed at our PPG meetings	
Review information with patients about lateness for appointments on the practice website, social media and in the waiting areas	Providing we have an up-to-date mobile number for patients they should be able to cancel their appointment from the text message reminder they have received however we will ensure it is clear on the website and include an article in the next newsletter and on social media. We will also add this information to our new patient registration process	Next newsletter	
Alter the layout of the website to make the complaints procedure clearer to patients by moving the link to the top of the page	Our website isn't currently as user friendly as it could be, we are looking at alternatives and intend to change closer to the renewal date of our current website, in the meantime we will make any alterations we can to make this clearer	One month / when we procure a new website supplier	
Brief staff about the procedure for booking interpreters for appointments	We have supervisors in our reception team who can answer queries such as this from the newer	Next reception meeting	

particularly for BSL users	members of staff to ensure they are supported however, we will cover this at our next reception team meeting. We will ensure this information is included in staff inductions.		
Work with patient participation group to host an information event to inform patients about the practice structure and updates to new developments at the practice	We have regular patient newsletters which share information such as this however we have also talked about an event in which we seek help from the PPG to increase our patients online access and this would be an opportunity to share other information such as this	Winter 2024/25	

Questions

Is the report factually accurate?

We've let you know about anything that isn't

Did you learn anything new about residents' views and experiences, or anything else, as a result of the Enter and View undertaken by Healthwatch Lancashire?

There were no surprises when reading the report, so we felt reassured by it

Any other comments?

One patient comments that at 28th in the queue they have no chance of getting an appointment – this is incorrect, patients don't often realise how big the practice is and how many appointments we offer. In addition, the new triage system has increased the number of patients the practice can deal with. This information has already been shared at PPG meetings and in the newsletter, but we will continue to try and keep patients informed

Similarly there are comments about rumours or not knowing what is going on in the practice; we issue regular patient newsletters (almost monthly), we have a website and a PPG – we'll try to send more invites out for the next PPG meeting.

Whilst I appreciate that patients have said they don't know how to make a complaint, this could be because they have never needed to look for this information!



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