



Healthwatch Somerset
Enter and View visit to
Oakhill Surgery
13 November 2024

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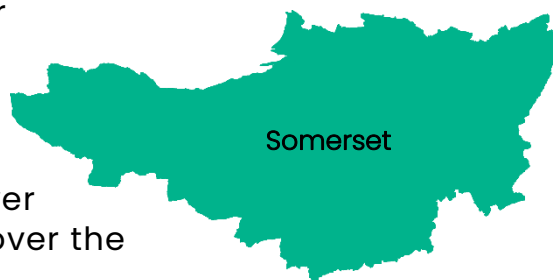
About Healthwatch Somerset

Healthwatch Somerset is your local health and social care champion. We make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve health and social care.

We're completely independent and impartial and anything you say is confidential. We also offer information and advice to help you to get the support you need. Our service is free, simple to use, and can make a real difference to people in Somerset.

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. This report is an example of how your views are shared.

Healthwatch Somerset is part of a network of over 150 local Healthwatch across the country. We cover the unitary local authority area of Somerset Council.



About our visit

Address

Oakhill Surgery
Shepton Road
Oakhill
Radstock
BA3 5HT

Date and time of our visit

Wednesday 13 November 2024
09:00 to 12:30

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.

Enter and View visits are carried out by our authorised representatives who have received training and been checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Healthwatch Somerset Authorised Representatives

Sheila Burridge
Mandy Starks
Helen Hancox
Lindsey Fish

Background

There were several reasons why we carried out this visit:

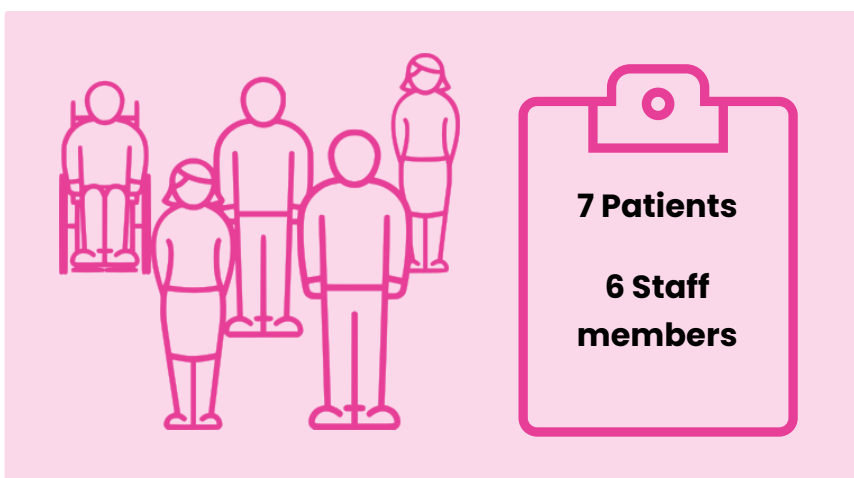
- We attended a carers event in June 2024 run by the surgery. Carers were very complimentary about the surgery.
- Somerset ICB was interested to understand some of the good practice happening here.
- We had only received positive feedback about this surgery.

What we did

- Ahead of our visit we liaised with the Practice Manager and so the surgery was expecting us
- Our visit had been advertised within the surgery and on the surgery website
- On the day we met with patients, staff and members of the Patient Participation Group (PPG)
- Observations were made throughout the visit. This included patient and staff interactions, accessibility measures in place and the general appearance of the surgery

This report was then formulated from those observations and conversations.

Who we spoke to



Seven patients

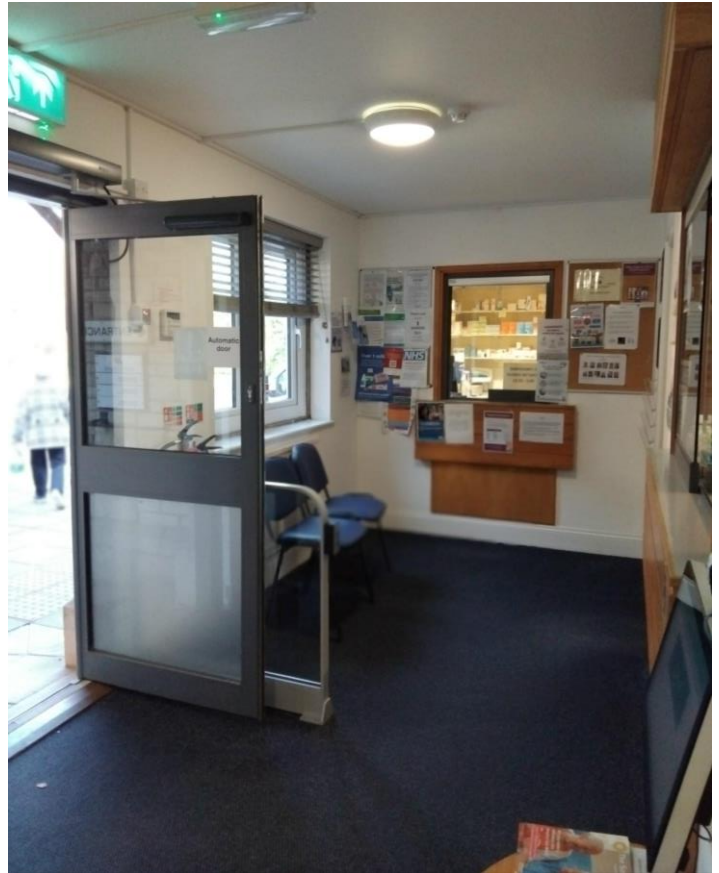
Six staff members including a GP, nurse and Practice Manager

Members of the PPG

Two patients provided online feedback

About the surgery

- There are 3,200 patients.
- The staff team consists of three GP's, two part time trainee GP's, a nurse prescriber, a Health Care Assistant, four dispensing staff, the Practice Manager and Deputy Practice Manager, a GP assistant, three reception staff and a medical secretary.
- There is a dispensary on site with opening hours 09:00-12:00 then 15:00-18:00.
- There is no pharmacist based here. The surgery can access a pharmacist within the Primary Care Network (PCN) area.
- GP's undertake the medication review for patients.
- Patients who are carers are asked to inform the surgery so their medical record can reflect their caring role.
- The surgery is Armed Forces Veteran Friendly accredited.
- A Learning Disability (LD) register is maintained, and annual health checks are carried out. One of the reception staff is the surgery's LD Champion.
- There are links to Pondsmead care home – one GP who has a particular interest in frailty, runs a weekly session at the care home.
- The surgery runs a clinic three times a week at Downside School.
- The surgery is part of the Improved Access rota within the PCN – giving access to evening and Saturday morning appointments.
- Accessibility – there is a hearing loop available at the surgery. Patients can access a language translation service, and a Chaperone is available upon request.
- There is a patient accessible toilet.



The external and internal environment

- There is good access to the surgery from the main road.
- The car park has plenty of spaces with level access to the surgery via an automatic door.
- There are disability spaces in the car park.
- Outside is well cared for with flowers, a bench and water bowl for dogs.



- The reception area is big enough for wheelchair access.
- The dispensary is within this area.
- There is a Patient Participation Group (PPG) information board.
- At reception there are signs to indicate:
 - a hearing loop is available.
 - that an interpreter can be booked for translation services.
- The waiting room is separate to reception, it is warm, clean and has good quality seating.
- Notice boards display surgery, community and carer information.
- There is a patient suggestion box and a notice about how to complain
- There is a TV screen with information messages – the font is small, and the page moves quickly so it is difficult to read.
- Staff come out to the waiting room to call the patient for their appointment.



What patients told us

What works well

This practice serves the local community, and patients feel it is an integral part of that community. Patients said staff are friendly, and go above and beyond to be helpful. We were told that staff get to know the patients and in turn patients feel listened to.

One patient suggested it would be helpful to have photos of staff displayed.

I would like to see photographs of staff so you can identify who's who, especially as I don't come in often.

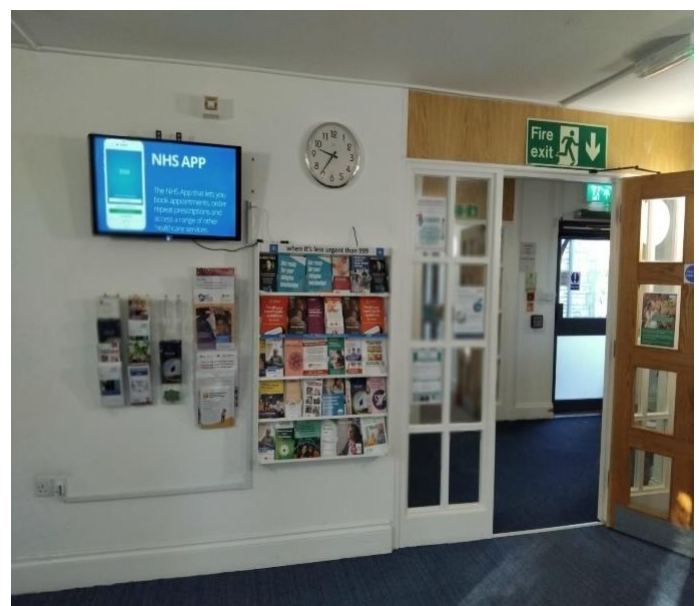
We spoke to the Practice Manager about this suggestion.

What patients said	Number of patients who said this
Friendly and helpful staff	7 out of 9
Feeling listened to	6 out of 9
They get to know their patients	5 out of 9
Local service	5 out of 9
Helpful to have a dispensary onsite	4 out of 9
Knowledgeable Reception staff	5 out of 9

We observed several staff and patient interactions in the reception/dispensary area and in the waiting room.

Staff know patients; in the waiting room we observed staff acknowledge a gentleman by name whilst passing through.

We observed Dispensing staff giving helpful information to a patient about collecting prescriptions.



What patients said about what works well:

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“Personal relationships, I feel like they know me. Even though they are busy the doctors read your notes, so they know your background and you don’t have to keep repeating everything.”

“Pharmacy support is excellent – easy to contact and they respond quickly.”

“The receptionist is on the ball and makes everything run smoothly.”

“Slow staff turnover so they know me.”

“This is a service that meets the needs of, and is central to, our village and parish.”

“Registering as a new patient was easy – I did it online.”

“Couldn’t be more happy, they are all so professional and caring.”

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The Patient Participation Group (PPG)

The surgery has an active PPG, there are currently 14 members and others interested in joining.

Patients can join the PPG by leaving their name at reception.

The PPG has close links with the Practice Manager and can come in to chat with her if there are any issues. The Practice Manager and a GP are part of the PPG.

Last year members of the PPG attended the vaccination sessions and canvassed everyone who came in to ask if they were either carers or belonged to the veteran/military family community so this could be added to their GP record.

The PPG helps to organise the carers event that runs annually in June.

During this visit we met the PPG Chair who happily shared information from the patient’s perspective.



Making an appointment

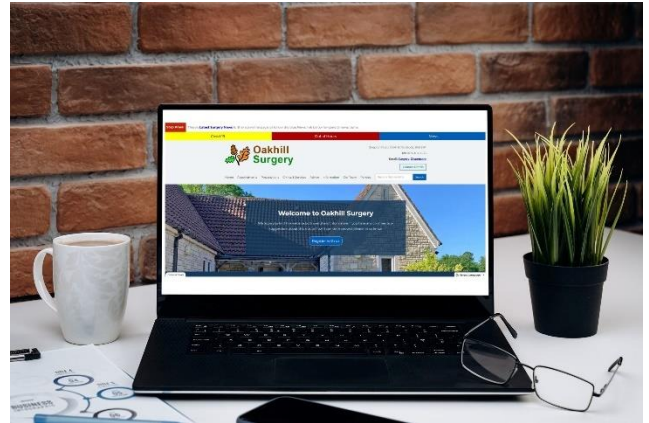
Appointments can be made by phone, in person, or online.

The phone is answered by the receptionist.

The telephone queue can hold up to 20 patients. The highest position in the queue that the surgery has reached is four.

Walk-ins are welcomed either for appointment bookings or for queries to be passed to the GP.

The online system for patients is ACCURX. Patients can communicate with the surgery via this online platform and reception staff pick this up throughout the day and forward to the GP's as necessary.



What patients said about booking an appointment:

6

“Sometimes I have to wait 2 or 3 weeks to see a specific doctor, waiting time has increased.”

“Easy, I telephone and usually get a same day appointment.”

“The maximum number in the telephone queue has been two!”

“Today I rang at 8.30 and got a same day appointment at 10.15.”

“You ring at 8.30, you might have to wait a few rings, then a person answers.”

“Very easy – if you don’t want to see a specific doctor then you usually get a same day appointment.”

“You can book online but don’t need to.”

9

Receiving information from or about the surgery

The surgery communicates with patients in a variety of ways:

- Facebook posts twice a week
- Practice website
- Text message e.g. about surgery closures
- Notice board
- Display screen in waiting room
- Quarterly newsletter
- Annual carers event
- Via the PPG and word of mouth
- Any concerns – patients can ask for a meeting, request a phone call or put their concern in writing



What patients said about receiving information:

6

“I would like to see information about the surgery in the parish magazine.”

“I read the newsletter.”

“I get email notifications and text messages from the surgery, and I use the NHS App. I rarely use the website.”

“I was sent a survey after my visit, I think it’s automatic this was irritating.”

“I’ve never had to complain but it’s clear on the website homepage how to do that.”

“I’m on the PPG so I see and participate with information. I think the website is excellent.”

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Do more with the NHS App!



What staff told us

Many staff had worked here a long time e.g. 10 years and 23 years.

A new staff member had worked here for six weeks.

What works well here

There appears to be a good sense of working with, and for, each other which was evident in comments from staff:

“Close knit team”

“We are all very flexible, we cover for each other and this creates great team work”

“Good support from the whole team”

“Happy place to work”

Staff told us they feel supported and able to ask questions or make suggestions:

“Easy to speak freely with a GP if any issues”

“Know that we can speak to a manager whenever needed”

“There’s always staff around to speak to for support”

“Opportunities to put forward suggestions e.g. prescription item into our newsletter”

“Feel safe to challenge”

“Good links with other teams in the area (PCN)/ lots of information and advice sharing”

The ethos is about giving a good service to patients:

“Staff go above and beyond; we are really committed to person centred care.”

“The whole surgery ethos is to give a good service.”

“We are proud of what we do.”

Staff appear happy at work and are valued:

“Good annual leave”

“We pay well and this reflects the value we place on our staff.”

“The GP’s work four sessions per week and I think that allows for a work/life balance.”

“I feel we have adequate staff at this time”

Staff were complimentary about induction and access to training:

“Training courses readily available”

“Staff are encouraged to find out what training they would like to do”

“There’s a two week Induction – we get to know other staff and their roles, learn about the system”

“Quarterly half day surgery closure to enable staff training/wellbeing/opportunity to discuss any issues”

“Meet with GP to discuss training needs”

What makes for good patient experience

The most important thing is building relationships with patients. This requires time, and it seems that spending time with them contributes to a better experience for patients.

The surgery allocates 15-minute appointments.

The surgery places importance on good communication with patients. This includes knowing patients’ names and telling patients what is going on.

Staff told us they would try to rectify any issues and problem solve.

The surgery maintains a good relationship with the PPG and members of the PPG are very involved in surgery activity.

What staff told us about patient experience:



“We’re aware that some patients are isolated, so talking to them and building relationships is key.”

“We are here to make the patient experience the best.”

“The surgery carries out an annual review of complaints and this takes place within the context of a staff training event.”

“From a GP perspective time is the key factor. We recognise this and offer 15-minute appointments.”

“I take time with my patients, so they will leave with a plan.”

“We are trying to educate patients to be less dependent on the GP and think about self-prevention.”

“The practice is proactive in arranging reviews. ”



Summary

Oakhill surgery serves the local community, and patients feel it is an integral part of that community.

All of the Authorised Representatives reported good first impressions of the environment and culture at the surgery.

Patients said staff are friendly and go above and beyond to be helpful. We were told that staff get to know the patients and in turn patients feel listened to.

The staff team appear committed to the surgery and its patients; wanting to give the best patient experience they can. Staff told us they feel supported and clearly work together as a team.

We observed staff being polite and courteous to patients. Patients spoke highly about the attitude of staff and quality of care they receive.

The appointment booking system clearly works well for patients. Nobody complained about being held in a telephone queue or the inability to book appointments. This adds to the overall positive patient experience.

It is clear that the strong relationship between the surgery and PPG helps with communication to and from patients.

Recommendations

- Investigate the possibility of making patients aware of the turnaround time needed for some prescriptions e.g. when medications need ordering in. This could be done via a newsletter or poster.
- It would be helpful to have photos of the staff so that patients can recognise them.
- Investigate the possibility of enlarging the size of font on the TV screen and slowing the speed of screen changes.
- Continue to host the annual carers event (or similar) to showcase the surgery and to pass information to patients.
- Maintain the strong relationship between the surgery and PPG.
- Celebrate the positive praise highlighted in this report with both the staff team and patients.

Outcomes

- In 2024 the surgery carried out a big campaign on processing of prescriptions:
 - Text messages were sent to all dispensing patients, roughly 2800 people, which signposted patients to a page on our website. The webpage explains the prescription process, how it works, and what length of time is required.
[Oakhill Surgery Dispensary collection times](#)¹
 - They also highlighted the webpage on social media in a Facebook post.
- The Practice Manager has confirmed that staff photos will be uploaded onto the surgery website.
- The Practice Manager will investigate the possibility of enlarging the size of font on the TV screen and slowing the speed of screen changes.

Provider Response



“We were contacted by HW to discuss visiting the practice to perform an Enter and View. The process was explained, and we were made to feel that this was a supportive process.

The experience on the day was very positive and the HW team were friendly, unintrusive, flexible and understanding when listening to the views of the practice team and patients. From the surgery perspective the visit was a positive one.”



Thank you

We would like to thank all the patients, staff, and PPG members who gave us their time and feedback.

Thank you also to the Practice Manager and staff who welcomed us into their surgery, for giving us unlimited access during our visit, and being so open in their conversations with us.

¹ Website page for Oakhill Surgery Dispensary collection times: <https://www.oakhillsurgery.co.uk/dispensary.htm>

About this report

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.

This report relates to this specific visit to the service, at a particular point in time, and is not representative of all service users, only those who contributed. This report is written by the Lead Enter and View 'Authorised Representative' who carried out the visit on behalf of Healthwatch Somerset.



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