



Healthwatch Wirral

Enter & View Visit to Marine Lake & Estuary Medical Practice, Marine Lake Health & Wellbeing Centre, Orrysdale Road, West Kirby, Wirral, CH48 5AA

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Site Introduction



Marine Lake & Estuary Medical Practice is registered with CQC to deliver the following Regulated Activities : - diagnostic and screening procedures, family planning, maternity and midwifery services, surgical procedures and treatment of disease, disorder or injury.

The practice is situated within the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System (ICS) and delivers General Medical Services (GMS) to a patient population of about 19,500 patients. This is part of a contract held with NHS England. The practice is part of a wider network of GP practices called Healthier West Wirral (information taken from CQC website, picture from PCN website).

Acknowledgement

Healthwatch Wirral would like to thank the Practice team, PPG members and patients for their cooperation during our visit.

Foundations of Quality

Foundations of Quality Improvement should always have what patients tell us about their treatment and care at the heart of everything, as a system, that we plan and do. We must be able to evidence that all actions and decisions made come back to this, making certain that everyone feels respected, involved and valued at each and every part of the journey. We should all feel confident that we are either giving or receiving quality care.'

Healthwatch Wirral, Age UK Wirral, NHS England and ECIST, Wirral System

What is Enter & View?

Healthwatch has statutory powers and duties to carry out Enter and View visits to any site where regulated care is given. Local Healthwatch Authorised Representatives carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and can make recommendations where there are areas for improvement.

Section 221 of the Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch Authorised Representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service, but equally they can occur when services have a good reputation – so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who use, or provide, the service first-hand.

Healthwatch can also be invited in by Providers to seek a 'fresh pair of eyes' on their service and gain some external assurances that they are on the right track prior to their CQC inspections.

Purpose of Visit

This visit is not designed to be an inspection, audit, or investigation, rather it is an opportunity for Healthwatch Wirral to get a better understanding of the service by seeing it in action and talking to staff and service users. The visits are a snapshot view of the service and what we observed at the time of the visit.

Healthwatch Wirral seeks to identify and disseminate good practice wherever possible. If during a visit, Healthwatch Wirral considers there may be a serious concern then this will be referred to the appropriate regulator. This also applies if we have safeguarding concerns and these will be referred to the Local Authority or Commissioner for investigation and our visit will cease with immediate effect.

Once the report has been drafted by Healthwatch Authorised Representatives it will be sent to the provider for comments. After ten days the report will be published.

Disclaimer

The contents of this report are based on what the patients, staff and Manager told Healthwatch Authorised Representatives. The information within this report does not recommend or advocate on behalf of any service. Individuals should use a variety of information, such as CQC reports, when making a decision on where to reside and/or where to obtain care.

Name of Healthcare Setting: Marine Lake & Estuary Medical Practice

Name of Managers: Nadia Rose and Ken Fryer

Owners of building: Wirral Community Trust

Manager's email & phone number: nadia.rose@nhs.net - 0151 929 6040

HWW Representatives: Jacqueline Canning and Dave McGaw.

What Healthwatch Wirral Authorised Representatives (HWWAR) observed and were informed of during the visit

Environment and Access

This Practice is in a recently opened new-build building with very modern facilities. The car park appeared in very good condition with lots of spaces. There is a sensory garden at the back of the car park adjacent to open land where patients, staff and public can sit on benches. The garden is managed and tended by Age UK Wirral.

The building is over three floors and has a serviced lift. We were advised by the Manager that WCHC own the building. Many of WCHC Community Teams are based in the building and have clinic rooms.

On entering the building, photographs of the WCHC Trust Board are on display to the left with the reception to the GP Practice further over to the right. This could be a little confusing for patients attending Marine Lake Practice.

The reception area was spacious with plenty of seating. There were large screens used as information monitors, these are also used for the patient call system. The patient call system did not appear to have audio which could be a problem for those with a visual impairment.

The building has a café which is staffed by Age UK Wirral.

We were welcomed by the Practice Manager Ken Fryer who explained his position in the Practice and his responsibilities.

He told us facilities on site such as Phlebotomy and Community Nurses, allow patients' needs to be catered-for on a single site. There is potential for the WCHC to provide further services in the future. He said the Practice is also a Research Practice and may improve future outcomes for patients using the services provided.

The Manager escorted us to an upstairs meeting room to meet with Patient Participation Members (PPG) and GP James Perry. The Manager introduced everyone and HWWARs explained why we were there. We explained that members of the public had highlighted issues with getting through on the phone to the Practice when trying to make appointments, and that at the time there seemed to be no information available to patients about how to make a complaint.

The Manager presented us with their detailed complaints policy which is now available on their website.

He then explained their new phone system, which will hopefully make things easier for patients to contact them and that, although there had been teething problems initially, access had improved. He told us they had specialist Care Navigators who manage the calls and patient expectations, and that the wait for a patient to get through on a call can sometimes be up to 45 minutes.

The Manager told us the Practice operates within a 'Call Centre Framework,' with large monitors giving real-time information. The initial operators use first-line triage, this is then referred to a further triage team which is GP-led. Appointments are offered at this time, if needed.

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He explained how the system worked and about the large screen which enabled the staff to see calls waiting, time of wait, who was on a call, and the type of call. They have a dedicated room for calls with 20 lines; 10 incoming and 10 outgoing. They are hoping to improve connection wait times down to five minutes. We were informed by the Manager that this had led to much improved patient care whilst trying to manage patient expectations.

HWWAR did observe the call centre room and the teams operating the call system. We did inform the Manager that HWW had tried to call the day before to confirm our visit but the phone wasn't answered.

The Manager told us the Practice are not using the PATCHS system but have an upgraded version of eConsult. James Perry informed us that they have opted to stay with this system as it works better for their patients. He told us 60% of patients access the practice via eConsult and 40% by telephone.

We did suggest that PATCHS does have a translation facility to help with patient access. We were advised that they are aware PATCHS have the translation facility, but they have not needed that at this time.

General- The Manager told us

- The Practice is open 8am – 8pm Mon-Thurs, and 8am-6.30pm Fri. They host Enhanced Access Saturday appointments every four weeks from 9am-5pm.
- They have 19,483 patients registered.
- They have 11 GPs with five being salaried.
- 200-300 GP appointments are offered daily – 65% are face-to-face, triaged by need.
- Enhanced Access appointments are offered between 6.30pm – 8pm Monday to Thursday but can offer other appointments at other Practices within their PCN.

Complaints

The Manager told us all staff have access to the complaints procedure which is available on the front desk and via the Practice PC shared drive under their policies and procedures.

For patients, the policy is available on the Practice website, and patients can ask at the front desk for a printed copy.

He told us they manage complaints by:

- Acknowledging the complaint
- The complaint is allocated to appropriate team member or clinician
- Investigated
- Response is sent to patient.

In the year April 22-March 23 they had 61 complaints.

Depending on which channels the complaints come through, NHSE complaints are informed.

They make changes to the Practice based on complaints' feedback.

Staff- the Manager told us:

They employ 75 staff made up of:

- Advanced Nurse Practitioners/ Nurse Practitioners/ Phlebotomy/Social Prescribers/Clinical Pharmacy/ Practice Nurses/Physician Associates/HCA's and Paramedics.
- Teams have Managers and team leaders who carry out supervisions on a daily basis and annual appraisals.
- Training is conducted monthly and as when is required.
- Other training offered:
 1. Care Navigation training for administrative staff
 2. GP's completed various CPD courses in the last twelve months
 3. Health and Safety management training
 4. IPC training is scheduled for September 2023 for the Lead Nurse and Facilities Manager.

Staff Engagement

We asked staff about how they coped with patients who may appear aggressive. They told us they take a 'kindness' approach as instructed by Managers.

The staff told us many of them live locally, or just out of the area, and have been employed at the Practice for a number of years. The staff we spoke with said they are happy in their role and feel they have enough training to help and to give good care. They said they have enough supervision from line managers.

They have access to break rooms on each floor, with staff lockers and showers for their use. They can also use the garden outside for breaks.

Patient Engagement

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The Manager told us they collect feedback from patients using the eConsult survey/Friends and Family survey/Annual patient survey and the PPG.

We met with the Chair and members of the PPG who told us:

- The average age of patients is 67.
- Patients contact them regularly about issues such as the phone lines and about problems experienced with using eConsult. The Manager assured the PPG members this was going to be addressed by the Practice.
- The PPG members are a proactive group who appear to contribute to the Practice's future development particularly in relation to accessing the practice, such as phones and eConsult. They told us how they would like to see future clinics for patients. HWW will visit one of their PPG meetings in the future, and in the meantime the PPG will continue to attend the HWW BRIDGE Forum for PPG's for updates and information.

We did engage with patients in the waiting room, they told us:

- They could not get through by telephone to make an appointment and shared their frustration; it took at least three attempts that morning to get a response. When they did get through, they were offered an appointment with a clinician but not at the right time or with a GP.
- One patient told us there was a complaints procedure in place, but they felt the digital app was not user-friendly and problems obtaining appointments was still going on.
- Most had not heard about the later appointments in the evening or on a Saturday (GP Enhanced Access) and were unaware of the improved access for patients.

- We did note on the patient notice board an out-of-date data protection policy – it referenced DPA 1998 which has been superseded by DPA 2018.

Community Support

- The Practice is supported by the café on site staffed by Age UK Wirral. Staff can give vouchers for a free tea/coffee to patients who appear lonely and can connect to Age UK Wirral services via the café.
- Wirral Community Health & Care Trust also share the building and the practice has access to a room with shower, etc., for use by people with special needs or disabilities.

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Plans moving forward

The Manager told us they are always looking to improve the services they provide. Their current focus is patient access via the phone system.

James Perry explained to us about the research programme the Practice have undertaken. The Centre is also used as a National Vaccine Centre, for vaccine programmes such as shingles and COVID-19.

Recommendations

- Check notice board for out-of-date information – e.g. data protection policy references DPA 1998 when it should be DPA 2018.
- Phone lines not always answered (HWW tried the day before). HWWAR recommend a queuing system to reassure caller they will be answered.
- Consider installing audio (or turn up the volume if audio exists) to the information screens for those who may be visually impaired.
- Photographs of Practice team should also be displayed in foyer to inform patients they are attending the GP Practice not just WCT clinics.

Conclusion

HWWAR noted that this is a very bright and spacious Practice with some real opportunities to develop services for the people in this area. The garden and café compliment the community feel.

We noted the ongoing issue regarding the phone lines and the drive to improve this issue. We will continue to monitor this with our calls to Practices as part of the GP Enhanced Access review currently underway with West Wirral PCN.

We do recommend the Practice looks at all areas of access such as language translation for patients using eConsult. The ongoing development should also consider those patients with sensory impairments.

We will endeavour to visit again in the next twelve months.

Glossary

| | |
|-----------|---|
| CQC- | Care Quality Commission |
| CPD- | Continuous Professional Development |
| DPA- | Data Protection Act |
| eConsult- | Brand of online consultation service |
| GMS- | General Medical Services |
| GP - | General Practitioner |
| HCA- | Health Care Assistant |
| HWWAR - | Healthwatch Wirral Authorised Representative |
| HWW- | Healthwatch Wirral |
| IPC- | Infection Prevention Control |
| NHSE- | NHS England |
| PATCHS- | Brand of online consultation service |
| PC- | Personal Computer |
| PCN- | Primary Care Network |
| PPG- | Patient Participation Group |
| WCT- | Wirral Community Trust |
| WCHC- | Wirral Community Health and Care (NHS Foundation Trust) |

Distribution

Healthwatch Wirral submit the report to the Provider, Commissioner and CQC. Healthwatch Wirral publish the report on its website and submit to Healthwatch England in the public interest.

Comment box

Thank you for the recent visit to our practice and for the constructive feedback on our services and processes.

We would like to inform you that we have 11 GP partners plus 5 salaried GPs and also that the phlebotomy service is the practices service and not the WCT as noted...(continued on p. 9)

Comment box (continued)

so we would appreciate if this can be amended in the report. In regard to your recommendations:

1. the data protection policy has been updated, thank you for bringing this to our attention.
2. We already have a queuing system in place on the phones and if the 10 incoming lines are all full patients will hear an engaged tone until a line becomes free. We are sorry your call to the practice was not answered, if you can let us have the date and time of your call along with the number you called from, we can try to investigate this to see what the cause of this may have been.
3. Our information/Envisage screens have their content pushed down from Wirral Place to ensure the information on them is relevant and up to date, unfortunately not all the content has audio but the call down system was and is working so patients would hear when they are being called for their appointments.
4. We do have a practice team board on display inside the building but take on board your comments on its visibility, we are in discussion with the Community Trust on moving this to a more prominent position.