



Enter and View Orchard Surgery

Semi-announced Visit
26 February 2025

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What is Enter and View

Part of the remit of Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent is to carry out Enter and View visits. Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent Authorised Representatives will carry out these visits to NHS health and social care premises to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. Revisits will also take place to track any progress made towards recommendations.

The Health and Social Care Act allows 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 that we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent Enter and View visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit, they are reported in accordance with our Safeguarding Policies, the Service Manager will be informed, and the visit will end. The local authority Safeguarding Team will also be informed.

Our details

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Healthwatch principles

Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent's Enter and View programme is linked to the eight principles of Healthwatch, and questions are asked around each one.

- 1. A healthy environment:** Right to live in an environment that promotes positive health and wellbeing.
- 2. Essential Services:** Right to a set of preventative, treatment and care services provided to a high standard to prevent patients reaching crisis.
- 3. Access:** Right to access services on an equal basis with others without fear of discrimination or harassment when they need them in a way that works for them and their family.
- 4. A safe, dignified and quality service:** Right to high quality, safe, confidential services that treat you with dignity, compassion, and respect.
- 5. Information and education:** Right to clear and accurate information that you can use to make decisions about health and care treatment. You want the right to education about how to take care of yourself and about what you are entitled to in the health and social care system.
- 6. Choice:** Right to choose from a range of high-quality services, products and providers within health and social care.
- 7. Being listened to:** Right to have your concerns and views listened to and acted upon. You want the right to be supported in taking action if you are not satisfied with the service you have received.
- 8. Being involved:** To be treated as an equal partner in determining your own health and wellbeing. You want the right to be involved in decisions that affect your life and those affecting services in your local community.

About the visit

Purpose of the visit

We had received intelligence from patients and members of the public about Orchard Surgery.

Details of the Visit

Service Address	Orchard Surgery, Knypersley Road, Norton, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 8HY.
Service Manager	Emma Clarke
Date and Time	26 February 2025, 14:00 – 17:00.
Authorised Representatives undertaking the visit	Sophia Leese Simon Fogell

Acknowledgments

Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent would like to thank all the staff and patients for their co-operation during our visit.

Disclaimer

Please note that this report is related to findings and observations made during our visit on 18 December 2024. The report does not claim to represent the views of all service users, only those who contributed during the visit.

Who we share the report with

This report and its findings will be shared with the service provider, commissioners, and Healthwatch England. The report will also be published on the Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent website.

Service Background

Orchard Surgery is based in Norton and is one of two sites. Its additional site is Endon Surgery which is situated ~4 miles away in Endon. Collectively the surgeries provide services to and support approximately 10,500 patients across the boundaries of both Stoke-on-Trent and the Staffordshire Moorlands.

Within the clinical team there are 2 GP Partners, 3 Salaried GPs, 4 Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPs), 1 Lead Nurse, 2 Practice Nurses, 1 Healthcare Assistant, and 1 Urgent Care Practitioner (UCP).

The surgeries are a part of the Whitfield Primary Care Network (PCN) where they receive additional support including access to a Social Prescriber, Physiotherapist, Dietician, Paramedic, Mental Health Practitioner, Pharmacist, Pharmacy Technician, and Extended Hours appointments.

The practice does not currently have an active Patient Participation Group (PPG) following the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic; however, they already have this recorded as an action and are looking to reinstate their PPG.

Our Findings

Environment

Orchard Surgery is a one-storey building with a dormer that is surrounded by its parking area. To the rear left of the building are some marked parking spaces, none of which are disabled parking spaces. The remainder of the parking area does not have any markings or dedicated spaces – meaning that the number of available spaces is not calculable and is dependent on how people choose to park.

The neighbouring bungalow also belongs to the practice. This additional building is staff-only and is not utilised by patients.

The surgery itself has a porch which includes a feedback box and an opportunity to submit requests, such as a repeat prescription, without the need to go online or wait in line. Although there is a hand sanitiser dispenser next to the feedback box, it was empty at the time of our visit.

The porch leads directly into the waiting room which is a fairly small space and has seating for 14 people. Immediately to the left upon entering is a window to

speak to the receptionist, a confidentiality room and beyond that, an isolation room. Opposite the seating area is a sign-in kiosk and a television which also had a hand sanitiser dispenser directly next to them.

Patients are surrounded by a plethora of information in the waiting room, including leaflets for external groups and organisations, notice boards guiding patients on using digital services, and on other internal offers available upon request. The television also displays a range of health and wellbeing information. Upon appointment time, the television will switch to a yellow screen with black text indicating appointment details and that it is the individual's time to be seen. In cases where patients missed this screen, we observed medical staff shortly after coming to the waiting room to call the individual's name.

Beyond the waiting room is a corridor, on the near side is a disabled/baby-changing bathroom followed by 7 consultation rooms, and additional toilets at the further end of the corridor.

Overall, we found that the internal environment was well-kept, clean, and utilised to the best that the facility can offer whereas externally, there were some minor issues externally that could potentially impact people's access to the service.

Using the service

We noted that the majority of patients that we spoke to informed us that they were from the Endon practice, with one noting that the Orchard site was often full whereas the Endon site was typically empty and therefore didn't understand why their appointments were not made at their local site. Another shared that appointments were timelier at the Norton site comparatively to their appointments at Endon. Although patients were sometimes dissatisfied with the internally decided location of their appointment, those who requested this to be changed had been honoured.

When asking patients if they felt listened to around their health needs, they shared that they did because staff would take their time to listen and try their best to help. One shared that as a parent/carer whether or not it was their personal appointment, that they would be acknowledged and still receive important information and advice to support themselves and those they care for. Only one person felt that they were sometimes not listened to, depending on who they saw.

Generally, patients did not feel that they encountered any barriers at the practice though a couple shared that there were occasional times where they faced issues with the phone lines, getting an appointment, and limited on-site parking. Despite these few occasions, patients still seemed to be pleased with the service as they emphasised that staff are nice, friendly, and helpful, they are

never 'pushed away', can get on-the-day appointments, feel that they receive good communications and are given clear instructions via the new phone system.

Staff

Staff shared with us that they did not feel they provided a consistent service regarding the Extended Access appointments as the services offering these appointments alternate bi-weekly and have differing criteria for which patients they will accept. For example, appointments supplied by Whitfield PCN are often rejected if the patient has ever previously been seen by their GP for a similar health concern. Whereas appointments provided internally at the Endon Surgery site do not face the same rate of rejection.

They also felt that communications that they received could be clearer and more tailored to their needs, as they found sometimes, they were missing important information or being bombarded by information that they did not always feel was relevant to their role.

Undeterred by these issues, staff continued to deliver the service with great passion and to the best of their abilities, as reflected by the patient's feedback. Due to their training, experience, and compassion, they were confident in handling any situations that may arise when supporting a patient whether that is with conflict resolution, offering patients choice, or advising patients on the best person to see.

The staff could identify areas for improvement that would benefit their patient's experience, which again reflected what patients had told us. Where money and time were not limited, staff creatively thought of ways to change the service to remove issues such as appointment access and cross-site inconsistencies.

"I think I give our patients a really good service."

Conclusion

Overall, we found that patients were very satisfied with the service despite the quirks of a dual-site GP surgery. To further improve the patient's experience, we advise the consideration and implementation of our following recommendations:

1	Extended Hours Appointments – Seek to reduce or eliminate any inconsistencies with the Extended Hours appointments by working with Whitfield PCN to identify a clear criteria for the appointments, which can be utilised across all sites to ensure the service patients receive does not differ from week-to-week.
2	Parking Facilities – Consider ways to improve the parking facilities such as dedicated disabled parking spots, adding markers to indicate individual parking spots or areas to keep clear to avoid block-ins, and an external sign to inform people of nearby parking alternatives.
3	Endon Site – Colleagues in Healthwatch Staffordshire to conduct a visit to the Endon site for a full Enter and View of the practice and to have a clear understanding of the cross-site operation.
4	Waiting Room Television – Ensure that the television is always at a sufficient volume so that patient's attention is diverted to the screen when their appointment is announced. If possible, it would be beneficial if it is able to read the appointment details aloud to minimise delays.
5	Hand Sanitiser – Ensure that sanitiser is available within the porch as it is a key touch point for those writing their feedback or admin requests, such as repeat prescriptions.

Provider comment

This report has been shared with the manager of Orchard Surgery and invited them to provide the following response to the report and our recommendations:

“Thank you for the report. I can now confirm we have reviewed it thoroughly and are satisfied with your findings.

We did note that in the Service Background some of the staffing details are inaccurate and ask if this can be updated with the following:

- ***Change 2 Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANP's) to 4***

- *Please also add 1 Urgent Care Practitioner (UCP)*

We will consider your recommendations and aim to implement changes where possible. Additionally, we would be pleased to welcome you to visit the branch surgery in Endon.

Upon investigation of the hand sanitiser, we believe that the unit does need a bit of pressure in order for it to release the hand sanitiser. However, we will feed this back to our cleaners and ensure this is monitored regularly.

With regards to the Extended Hours Appointments we agree that a clear criteria for the appointments is essential and we will work with our PCN, as Extended Hours Appointments service is run by the PCN, to address this."

healthwatch

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