

Kirkham Health Centre

Date: 28 April 2025

Time: 10:00-12:00



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

Address

Moor Street
Kirkham
PR4 2DL

Tel: 01772 683420

Registered Manager:

Dr Jonathan Tobin (Practice Manager)

Date and Time of our Visit:

Date: 28 April 2025

Time: 10:00-12:00

Healthwatch Lancashire Authorised Representatives:

Sue Edwards (Senior Engagement Officer)

John Moore (Healthwatch Lancashire Volunteer)



Introduction

Our role at Healthwatch Lancashire is to gather people's views and experiences, especially those that are seldom heard, to give them the opportunity to express how they feel about a service. The aim of an Enter and View visit is to gather views and experiences of patients and staff of a service and observe the environment to assess the quality of the service.

This was an announced Enter and View visit undertaken by authorised representatives who have the authority to enter health and social care premises, announced or unannounced.

The team collate feedback gathered and observations made to compile a report. The report identifies aspects of good practice as well as possible areas of improvement. Healthwatch Lancashire is an independent organisation, therefore 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 manager for their opportunity to respond before being published on the Healthwatch Lancashire website at www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk.

Where appropriate, Healthwatch Lancashire may arrange a revisit to check the progress of improvements. The report is available to the Care Quality Commission, Healthwatch England and any other relevant organisations.

General Information

Kirkham Health Centre has approximately 10,000 registered patients, including patients in local nursing/care homes and those who may be housebound.

Services include GP's, Advanced Nurse Practitioners, Nurse Practitioners, a Paramedic Practitioner, a Clinical Pharmacist, a Pharmacist Practitioner, a Health Care Assistant, and Reception and administration staff.

The health centre also has access to a mental health team and are currently recruiting for a social prescriber.

Acknowledgements

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



What did we do?

The Enter and View Representatives made an announced visit to Kirkham Health Centre on April 28, 2025 and received feedback from twenty-nine patients and two staff members.



Pre-visit practice survey

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

Introductory meeting with Practice Manager

At the beginning of the enter and view visit Healthwatch Lancashire met with the practice manager to discuss the surgery and to view the facilities.

One to one discussions with patients

Healthwatch Lancashire spoke with patients 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 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



Kirkham Health Centre is located in the town of Kirkham, which is mid-way between Preston and Blackpool, in the borough of Fylde.

An announced visit was carried out at Kirkham Health Centre, on Monday April 28, 2025, 10-12am. Healthwatch Lancashire representatives gathered feedback from twenty-nine patients and two members of staff.

Services provided at the health centre include GP's, Advanced Nurse Practitioners, Nurse Practitioners, a Paramedic Practitioner, a Clinical Pharmacist, a Pharmacist Practitioner, a Health Care Assistant, and Reception and administration staff.

When initially contacting the health centre they were welcoming to a proposed visit, and the Healthwatch Lancashire representatives found the health centre staff to be helpful, friendly and approachable.

The health centre has recently undergone a transition from the Wyre Rural Extended Neighbourhood (WREN) Primary Care Network (PCN) to a smaller Kirkham based PCN, and at the time of the visit some services were still being finalised because of this.

There are proposals by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for the construction of a new health centre which will house both Kirkham Health Centre and Ash Tree House Surgery practices. Together these form the new PCN. Due to the potential move, Kirkham Health Centre is currently balancing the maintenance of their current building whilst also anticipating a move.

Overall patients were positive about the quality of care that they received at the health centre. Waiting times to see a GP, issues with the waiting room monitor and waiting room times were raised as areas requiring some improvement. Patients described staff as friendly, helpful and caring.

Staff felt well supported, sufficiently trained and able to provide person-centred care. Proposals for a new health centre was seen as a positive way forward by staff in order to continue to meet the needs of increasing numbers of patients.

Observations identified that there is a need for an accessibility audit to be carried out in order to ensure that the disabled toilet is fully accessible and that the centre is dementia friendly.

Kirkham Health Centre has an active Patient Participation Group (PPG), although only a few of the patients spoken with had heard of the group and further promotion will help increase patient numbers as well as allow for more diverse patient demographics where possible.

Practice Overview



Kirkham Health Centre is located on Moor Street in the town of Kirkham, in the Fylde Borough.

The health centre is based in a large, two storey building, possibly built around the late 1800s/early 1900s. There is patient parking to the front and rear of the building.

Kirkham Health Centre was previously part of the Wyre Rural Extended Neighbourhood (WREN) Primary Care Network (PCN). However, the WREN PCN was recently dissolved and a new PCN has been formed which includes Kirkham Health Centre and Ash Tree House Surgery, both of which are based in the town of Kirkham. As this is a relatively new development the health centre is still in the adjustment period meaning some services are yet to be finalised.

In 2016/2017 the Integrated Care Board (ICB) announced plans for a new Primary Care Centre to be built in the Kirkham and Wesham area, which Kirkham Health Centre will be moving into once completed. Currently the health centre is faced with a dilemma in continuing with budgeting for maintenance of their current building whilst anticipating a move to a new building. For the purpose of this report Healthwatch Lancashire focuses on the health centre in its current form.

Patients can also access same day healthcare at the Walk-in Centres at Whitegate Health Centre, Blackpool, and the Fleetwood Health and Wellbeing Centre, as well as at the Urgent Care Centre at Royal Preston Hospital; although for those who don't drive, have poor mobility or are on low income these can be lengthy distances to travel.

There is good road access with on-site parking at the health centre, although this is limited due to the location; there is also disabled parking to the rear of the health centre. Free parking is available in Kirkham town centre which is approximately five minutes' walk, and some street parking is available near to the health centre. There is good public transport to the area with regular buses, and Kirkham and Wesham railway station is an approximate ten minute walk away.

Surgery Population



Kirkham has a predominantly white British, working age demographic and this is reflected in the patient demographics of Kirkham Health Centre; with the highest number of patients being between 30-60 years old (Kirkham Health Centre).

There is one nursing home and three care homes in the Kirkham area, as well as a residential mobile home site in neighbouring Wesham. Kirkham is a rural town and the health centre covers the surrounding villages including Wesham, Wrea Green and Ribby, and there is a large farming community present in the area.

Appointment Management



Appointments can be made in person at reception, by telephone or online via the NHS, MyGP and Patient Access apps. The health centre has two call handlers available to take telephone calls; and patients have the option for face-to-face or telephone appointments dependant on their needs and preferences

Patients are able to access out-of-hours appointments at the Walk-in Centre at Whitegate Health Centre, Blackpool, and the Same-day Health Centre at the Fleetwood Health and Wellbeing Centre via Fylde Coast Medical Services.

Patients are triaged at point of contact and will be directed to the most appropriate clinician such as GP, Advanced Nurse Practitioner or Practice Nurse, although patients are still able to request a GP appointment if preferable.

Kirkham Health Centre has access to interpreter services via Dals and will look to book longer appointments for any patient who may need communication support. Available interpreter services includes British Sign Language (BSL).

When phoning the health centre to arrange our visit our call was answered quickly, and the call handler was friendly and helpful.

Enter and View observations

External Environment

Kirkham Health Centre was easy to find, and is pleasantly set into the surrounding landscape, offering a rural green feel to the site.

Signage for the health centre and disabled parking was seen to be partially hidden behind a hedge to the front of the centre and is in need of some attention (Recommendation 1).

There is a carpark to the front of the health centre. This is in need of some improvement; however it would be unreasonable to recommend resurfacing at this point in time due to the potential move to new premises.

A sign directs those needing more accessible parking to a small disabled carpark to the rear of the health centre. This disabled carpark is accessed via the Pear Tree School entrance, off Station Road, which could be confusing for new



patients, and it is recommended that information regarding access to this carpark is readily available for patients, such as on the website (Recommendation 2).

A Well Pharmacy and an audio clinic are located adjacent to the health centre, both of which utilise the same/adjacent carparks.

The health centre is elevated in height from the level of Moor Street due to being sited on a hill. This means that visitors entering from Moor Street access via steps, whilst those accessing from the Pear Tree School side are level with the building.

Two sets of steps lead to the health centre from Moor Street, with one set being of low tread for those who may have poor mobility, have pushchairs etc.

A small ramp and step leads to the health centre entrance doors. It was felt by the Healthwatch Lancashire representatives that the position of the step by the turning space for wheelchairs in and out of the building could be potentially hazardous and would benefit from some type of barrier to prevent wheelchairs, pushchairs etc tipping over the edge, especially if the patient has a visual impairment. The need for steps as well as the ramp is negligible and patient safety must be the priority (Recommendation 3).



Internal Environment and Waiting Area

When entering the health centre there is a small foyer with a sign notifying patients that there is CCVT in use, along with information regarding opening times, prescription request forms and a food bank basket for patients to donate food. This foyer leads directly into the main reception and waiting area.

The reception desk is clearly identifiable and has a lower section to allow for easier wheelchair access. However, at the time of the visit this space was being used for a Covid banner as well as a self-check-in screen. It is recommended that

the health centre look at whether a Covid banner is still deemed essential or whether this space should be freed up for better accessibility and inclusion (Recommendation 4).

Leading from the reception area is a corridor to treatment rooms and stairs to the first floor, along with smaller waiting spaces. Patients are directed to the most appropriate waiting area on check-in.

As there is no lift to the first floor, all patient facing services are located on the ground floor, with the exception of one treatment room. Staff ascertain if patients are able to use the stairs before arranging appointments in the upstairs room and will adjust if necessary. Patients accessing the first floor are accompanied by staff to and from the waiting areas. The first floor is primarily offices for administration, call-handling etc.



Seating in the waiting areas was seen to be of similar type and height, and it is recommended that some varying seating types may benefit differing patient needs (Recommendation 5).

Information around health and wellbeing was on display in the waiting areas, including the Healthwatch Lancashire poster announcing the visit, as well as a poster about the Patient Participation Group (PPG). All information displayed was seen to be relevant and up to date.

In the reception area there is also a weighing scale for patients to use.

A disabled toilet is available for patients close to the waiting room. It was noted that it was lacking a red emergency pull cord which could potentially make it difficult for patients to call for help in the event of an emergency. It was also felt by the Healthwatch Lancashire representatives that some of the features such as the hand towels would be difficult to reach for wheelchair users. The lock to the toilet door appears to have been temporarily fixed by the use of a screw to replace the sliding bolt handle. This would be difficult for anyone who has limited dexterity in their hands. This was pointed out to the practice manager at the time of the visit who stated that they would fix this following the visit. It is recommended that an accessibility audit of the toilet is carried out to identify where improvements can be made to ensure that it is accessible for all (Recommendation 6).



Kirkham Health Centre would also benefit from more dementia friendly signage such as for the toilet. (Recommendation 6).

Patient Interactions



During the visit the health centre was seen to be busy but coping well. Reception staff were observed being friendly and helpful, and all staff observed were professional. Clinical staff were seen to be supporting patients in and out of their appointments throughout the visit.

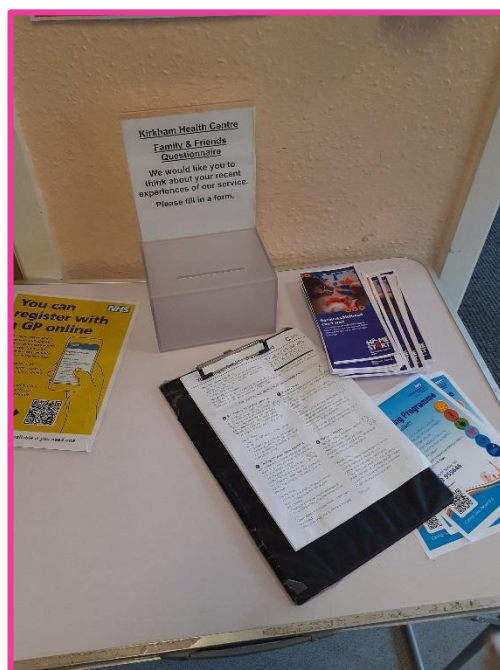
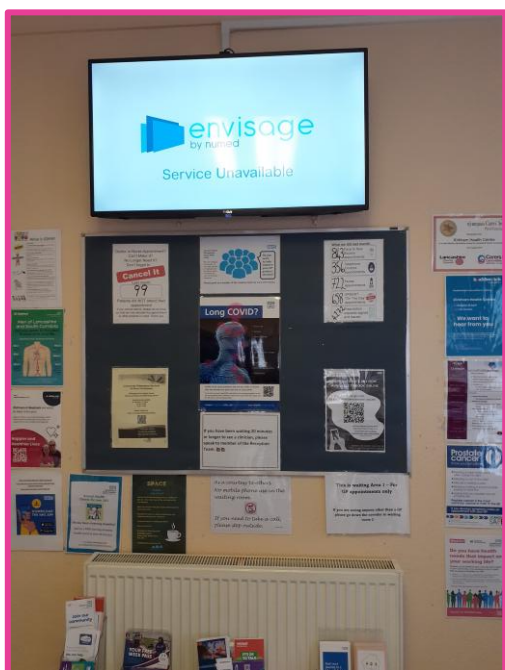
A large monitor in the main waiting room notifies patients of their appointments with both a visual and audio notification, and it was noted that patients were continually watching the monitor whilst waiting for their appointment. It was felt by the Healthwatch Lancashire representatives that the monitor is currently underused, and that there is an opportunity to provide further health and wellbeing, surgery and other relevant/topical information which would capture the attention of most patients already watching the screen (Recommendation 7).

Patient Involvement



The health centre has an active Patient Participation Group (PPG) and this was promoted within the health centre.

Kirkham Health Centre has a box for patient feedback prominently displayed in the main waiting area, although it was noted that at the time of the visit there were no forms out for patients to complete, and whilst patients are able to ask reception staff for one this may deter some patients from feeling confident in retaining anonymity. It is recommended that the health centre ensure that forms are available alongside the feedback box (Recommendation 8).



Patient feedback

Healthwatch representatives spoke with twenty-nine patients during the visit. Due to the high volume of patients seated in the waiting areas some patients fed back to Healthwatch as part of group conversations. Several patients were called in to their appointments whilst providing feedback and preferred not to continue with the conversation following their appointment.

How did you make your appointment?

Out of the fourteen patients who provided feedback to this question eight had phoned the practice, five had their appointment made for them by a clinician and one had made their appointment at reception.

Patients included in the group conversations also spoke about making appointments online as well as by telephone.

All patients spoken with found making an appointment straightforward and quick, although one patient had tried to book a few days earlier and was told to ring back at 8am on the day they wished to have an appointment. One patient commented that they were on hold on the phone for a while whilst waiting to make an appointment.

"I rang a few days ago. I was told to ring at 8 o'clock in the morning"

"It took about twenty minutes" [over the phone today]

"It didn't take long"

One patient talked about out of hours access ***"Out of hours is good, they send you to the clinic nurses..."***

Patients were also asked how long they had been in the waiting room, and times varied, although this could be down to which service they were waiting to see and arrival time.

"Just about five minutes"

"We've been waiting here for forty minutes"

"I'm here early, I have never had to wait"

Do you feel that you receive care and treatment that meets your needs?

All patients spoken with felt that their care and treatment was good, with staff being mentioned as caring, and good access to services being discussed.

"I've always found the service really good. The nurses are nice, friendly and efficient"

“The staff are really attentive and caring, all of them, that’s really important”

Is there anything that could be changed/added to meet your needs?

Two patients spoke about issues with the monitor in the waiting room *“It’s ok when the screen is working, otherwise it’s hard to hear them when they call out”* (recommendation 7)

Three patients talked about making appointments and accessing a GP or clinician

“Access to see someone, i.e. always waiting for a phone call, or 7-10 days to see a doctor”

“My [spouse] finds it difficult making an appointment” [due to health conditions/IT abilities]

One patient spoke about difficulty in getting home visits for an elderly relative who has limited mobility. Another patient commented that parking can be a bit tricky at times.

How do you rate the communication between yourself and the surgery?

All patients spoken with were happy with the communication from the practice, with reminder texts and emails being mentioned as a positive

“They give me the information I need”

Do you know what the PPG (Patient Participation Group) is?

The majority of patients spoken with were unaware of the PPG and it's role within the practice; some patients were aware but did not wish to join (Recommendation 9).

Do you know who to speak to if you are not happy with the service or wish to make a complaint?

The majority of patients spoken with were unclear on the procedure to make a complaint but stated that they would ask at reception, ask to speak to the manager or put their complaint in writing.



They do everything they can to help you



Staff feedback

Healthwatch received written feedback from two members of the staff team during the visit.

Do you have enough staff when on duty and able to manage your workload?

One staff member spoke about being able to manage their workload effectively, the other member of staff opted not to answer this question.

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



Both staff who provided feedback felt supported in order to carry out person-centred care.

"I can use extra time if required, this is assessed on a patients individual needs basis"

"I feel very supported, and appreciate the guidance and support provided by everyone"

What measures are there in place for people with disabilities such as people with physical impairments or who are Deaf?

Accessible rooms, interpreters, differing communication methods and ramps were mentioned by staff as measures in place for people with disabilities.

"We are always available to help/support people..."

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

Both staff who provided feedback felt sufficiently trained in order to carry out their duties and are open to further training if relevant to their positions.

"I am able to attend training as required, and also receive clinical support"

What is your experience of working here?

Working at Kirkham Health Centre was seen as a positive by both staff members, with support from colleagues and easily accessible appointments being mentioned.

"It has a good family run ethos, and appointments are easy to come by..."

"I enjoy my job, helping people access the quality of care that we provide"

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

One member of staff spoke about the need for a new building *"I appreciate that it is an old and dated building, and a new building is in the planning stage. I feel this is needed to accommodate the high amount of patient needs"*.



Recommendations

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

1. Trim the hedge around the health centre signage to ensure that all roadside signs are clearly visible
2. Look at how to effectively direct patients to the disabled carpark to ensure those who require disabled parking are able to access it easily
3. Look at adding a barrier for the step/ramp by the main doors to create a safer turning space for wheelchair/pushchair users
4. Review the necessity of a Covid banner and as to whether the lower section of reception could be used for better accessibility and inclusivity
5. Consider incorporating some varying types of chairs into the waiting areas to meet differing patient needs
6. Carry out an accessibility audit to identify where improvements to the disabled toilet are needed, as well as ensuring that the health centre is fully dementia friendly. This should be carried out by people with lived experience where possible
7. Investigate patient issues with the waiting room screen and look at how this can be utilised more to share health and wellbeing and surgery information. The PPG could help with this
8. Ensure that feedback forms are easily accessible for any patients wishing to provide feedback anonymously
9. Raise awareness of the PPG and look at actively recruiting more members, with further diversity where possible. Existing PPG members could support with this

Provider response

Recommendation	Action from provider	Timeframe	Comments
Accessibility & Inclusion			
Look at adding a barrier for the step/ramp by the main doors to create a safer turning space for wheelchair/pushchairs users	Contacting tradespeople to request quotes to upgrade	3 Months	May be impacted by building move?
Look at whether the lower section of reception could be used for better accessibility and inclusivity	COVID Banner removed – seeking alternative location for check in screen.	3 Months	
Consider incorporating some varying types of chairs into the waiting areas to meet differing patient needs	Request for quote for appropriate chairs	1 Month	
Carry out an accessibility audit to identify where improvements to the disabled toilet are needed, as well as ensuring that the health centre is fully dementia friendly	Dementia friendly signage added. Improvements to disabled toilet booked in	1 Month	
Environment			
Trim the hedge around the health centre signage to ensure that all roadside signs are clearly visible	Instructed gardening company to remove foliage obscuring signs.	1 Month	
Look at how to effectively direct patients to the disabled carpark to ensure those who require disabled parking are able to access it easily	As above. Directions also added to website.	1 Month	
Patient Involvement			
Ensure that feedback forms are easily accessible for any patients wishing to provide feedback anonymously	Feedback forms added to reception check list to ensure fully stocked at all times.	Actioned	

Raise awareness of the PPG and look at actively recruiting more members, with further diversity where possible	Discussed at PPG meeting 09.06.25. Advert for new members and contact information added to social media platforms	Actioned	
Investigate patient issues with the waiting room screen and look at how this can be utilised more to share health and wellbeing and surgery information	Intermittent issues result of internet connectivity – explored with IT. Exploring costs incurred for displaying helpful information	3 months	



healthwatch

Lancashire

Healthwatch Lancashire
Leyland House
Lancashire Business Park
Centurion Way
Leyland
PR26 6TY

www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk
t: 01524 239100
e: info@healthwatchlancashire.co.uk
📱 @HW_Lancashire
📘 [Facebook.com/lancshealthwatch](https://www.facebook.com/lancshealthwatch)