

# Caton Health Centre

**Date: 29 May 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

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## Registered Manager:

Adrian Eglington (Practice Manager)

## Date and Time of our Visit:

Date: 29 May 2025

Time: 10:00-12:00

## Healthwatch Lancashire Authorised Representatives:

Sue Edwards (Senior Engagement Officer)

Austin Staunton (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](http://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

Caton Health Centre is part of the Queen Square Medical Practice which has approximately 15,900 registered patients including patients in local nursing/care homes and those who may be housebound.

Services include GP's, Trainee Advanced Nurse Practitioners, Nurse Practitioners and Associates, Research Nurses, Paramedics, Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians, Patient Care Advisors, Healthcare Assistants, Physiotherapist, and Reception and administration staff.

Patients also have access to a Mental Health Team and Social Prescribers.

## Acknowledgements

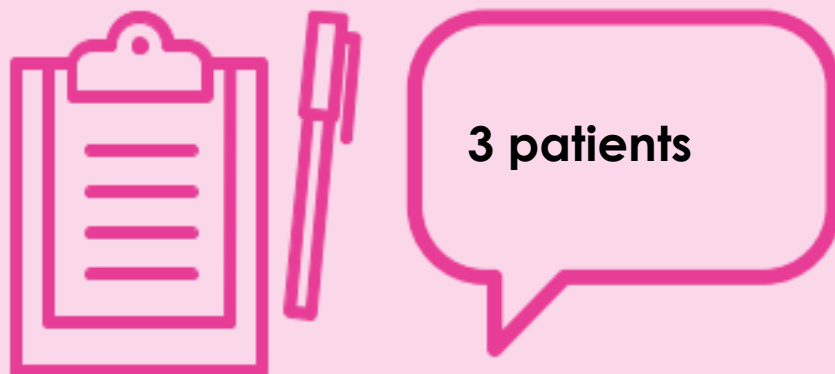
Healthwatch Lancashire would like to thank management, staff and patients for making us feel welcome and for taking the time to speak to us during the visit.





# What did we do?

The Enter and View Representatives made an announced visit to Caton Health Centre on May 29, 2025 and received feedback from three patients.



## **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 Trainee**

At the beginning of the enter and view visit Healthwatch Lancashire met with the trainee 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.

## **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



Caton Health Centre is located in the village of Caton, to the north east of Lancaster city centre.

The health centre is part of the Queen Square Medical practice which is based in the centre of Lancaster. Queen Square Medical Practice is partnered with Lancaster Medical Practice to form the Lancaster Primary Care Network.

An announced visit was carried out at Caton Health Centre, on Thursday May 29, 2025, 10-12am. Healthwatch Lancashire representatives gathered feedback from three patients.

Services provided at the health centre include GP's, Trainee Advanced Nurse Practitioners, Nurse Practitioners and Associates, Research Nurses, Paramedics, Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians, Patient Care Advisors, Healthcare Assistants, Physiotherapist, and Reception and administration staff. Patients also have access to a Mental Health Team and Social Prescribers.

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.

Overall patients were positive about the quality of care that they received at the health centre. Waiting times to see a GP and telephone appointments were raised by patients as requiring some improvement, as well as a desire for more online services. The ease of travelling to and parking at the health centre meant that the patients spoken with had preferred to use Caton Health Centre rather than accessing the Lancaster practice.

Observations identified that the entrance to the health centre needs highlighting more to reduce confusion, and that it would be good if the reception desk was more open and inclusive. There is also a need for an accessibility audit to be carried out in order to ensure that the disabled toilet meets is fully accessible and that the centre is dementia friendly.

Caton Health Centre has an active Patient Participation Group (PPG) as part of the Queen Square Medical Practice, although two of the patients spoken with had not heard of the group and one was unsure. Further promotion of the PPG will help increase patient numbers and allow for more diverse patient demographics where possible.

# Practice Overview



Caton Health Centre is located on Hornby Road in the village of Caton, to the north east of Lancaster city centre.

The health centre is based in a single storey, purpose built building, with parking to the rear.

Queen Square Medical Practice owns and manages Caton Health Centre with patients able to access either practice dependent on their needs and preferences. Services are primarily managed at the Lancaster city centre practice, with staff working at Caton Health Centre on a rota basis.

Queen Square Medical Practice is part of the Lancaster Primary Care Network (PCN) along with Lancaster Medical Practice, allowing for the sharing of resources such as Social Prescribers.

There is good road access with on-site parking at the health centre. The carpark is reserved for health centre patients and a Parkingeye system is in operation. Patients register their car details electronically in the reception area upon arrival.

There are bus stops directly outside the health centre, with buses running regularly to/from Lancaster city centre as well as into the outlying villages including Farleton, Hornby and Melling.

## Surgery Population



Caton is a rural village, with a large farming community and there is one nursing home in the area.

Lancaster and surrounding areas has a higher than national average population of white British residents, and the largest age group is of working age (Lancaster City Council). Caton may differ slightly due to being a rural village on the outskirts of the city with an attraction to those retired and preferring a quieter environment, although this was not confirmed at the time of this report.

## Appointment Management



Appointments can be made in person at reception, by telephone or online via the NHS, MyGP and Patient Access apps. Queen Square Medical Practice has up to eight call-handlers who take appointment bookings for both the Lancaster and Caton practices, with patients able to choose which practice they would prefer to attend. Patients have the option for face-to-face or telephone appointments dependant on their needs and preferences

Patients are triaged at point of contact and will be directed to the most appropriate clinician such as GP or practice nurse, although patients are still able to request a GP appointment if preferable. When triaging patients the practice uses a RAG (Red Amber Green) system to ensure patients needing an urgent appointment can be prioritised.

Patients can see a Patient Care Advisor if they would like to talk about their care and can also request a telephone consultation with a pharmacist to discuss medication.

Appointments have an allocated time of 15 minutes, with a 'one subject per appointment' policy, although patients can request a double appointment. Should they need more time they may be referred to a Patient Care Advisor for a more detailed conversation about their care.

Caton Health Centre has access to interpreter services via Prestige Network, and available interpreter services includes British Sign Language (BSL).

For more urgent care patients can access the Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department at Royal Lancaster Infirmary or the Urgent Treatment Centre at Westmorland General Hospital.

Whilst Caton Health Centre does not offer extended hour appointments patients can access these through the main practice in Lancaster city centre which has extended hours Thursday evenings and fortnightly Saturday mornings.

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

Healthwatch Lancashire representatives were informed by the Management Trainee that a self-check-in system and electronic monitor is due to be installed at the health centre the following week, which will allow for easier check-in by patients when arriving for their appointments as well as notifying them when to go in to their appointment.

# Enter and View observations

## External Environment

Caton Health Centre is situated in a single storey, purpose built building which is pebble-dashed in brown stone meaning it blends into the surrounding area well. The site feels rural and there is some established planting around the boundary.

Signage for the health centre is a little small for approaching vehicles, and



blends in due to its brown colour. However, as the health centre is set in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty there may be restrictions around types and sizes of roadside signage. As the centre is clearly visible from the road it is not deemed a concern.

There is a carpark to the rear of the health centre and this was seen to be in good condition. Parkingeye is in place in the health centre carpark to ensure that spaces are kept free for patients due to the proximity of local shops, and this is clearly signposted in the carpark.

Access into the health centre is to the rear via the carpark. It was felt by the Healthwatch Lancashire representatives that the entrance was unclear and would benefit from more signage. Especially as a ramp leads to a different door which is not public access and could confuse patients (Recommendation 1).



A large bin area is located by the main entrance and which blocks views to the main doors. It is unclear as to whether there is a reason that this must be in this location, and it is recommended that consideration is given to moving this to a more suitable area thus freeing up access and visibility to the main entrance (Recommendation 2).

The Healthwatch Lancashire representatives noted that there is a defibrillator on one of the outside walls of the health centre, close to the road, and they should be commended for this.

Entrance into the health centre is via a large single door with a gentle ramp. There is a door assist button for easier access, although this was missed at first due to being silver on a white background. Those who may have visual impairments may struggle to find the button, and it is therefore recommended that the button is highlighted more, possibly by use of signage or contrasting colour background (Recommendation 3).





## Internal Environment and Waiting Area

The main doors lead directly into the reception and waiting areas. The reception desk was clearly identifiable and consisted of a glass hatch which reception staff open to speak with patients as required. It was felt by the Healthwatch Lancashire representatives that a lower reception section for wheelchair users would be more inclusive, as well as reducing the need for reception staff to get up to open the 'window', which would also reduce any perception patients may have that they are 'bothering' reception staff (Recommendation 4).

The waiting area was seen to be clean and with sufficient seating, although it was noted that seating in the waiting areas was seen to be of similar type and height, and it is therefore recommended that some varying seating types may benefit differing patient needs (Recommendation 5).



Information around health and wellbeing was on display in the waiting area, including the Healthwatch Lancashire poster announcing the visit and a poster about the Patient Participation Group (PPG). All information displayed was seen to be relevant and up to date. It was noted that some of the notice boards were themed but some of the information on them didn't match the theme which was a little confusing and it would be good to keep to the themes where possible (Recommendation 6).

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 noted that the emergency light is inside the toilet room rather than the outside where it can be seen by others.



It was felt by the Healthwatch Lancashire representatives that the toilet it is not currently of an inclusive design. Dementia friendly signage is also required in order for patients with further needs to quickly identify it as a toilet. In order to ensure that the toilet is fully inclusive it is recommended that an accessibility audit is carried out and improvements made accordingly. This should be carried out with people with lived experience where possible (Recommendation 7).

A blood pressure monitor was also available for patients in the waiting room, and during the visit the Healthwatch Lancashire representatives suggested that some information around blood pressure readings would be beneficial to any patients using it, i.e. what is considered high blood pressure.

## Patient Interactions



At the time of the visit there were practice nurse appointments only. As there was no GP on-site the number of patients in the waiting room was low and they were seen quickly. There was however a steady footfall of patients in and out of the practice dropping off prescriptions, booking appointments and with general enquiries.

Reception staff were observed being friendly and helpful. One person came into the practice to enquire about registering with the practice due to recently moving into the area, and the reception staff signposted them to the registration section of the Queen Square Medical Practice website as well as offering some advice around the process, which appeared well received.

Whilst talking with a patient in the waiting room Healthwatch Lancashire representatives heard the practice nurse tell the patient that there was no rush and to go in when they were ready. This was a pleasant exchange and the patient clearly appreciated it.

## Patient Involvement



The health centre has an active Patient Participation Group (PPG) covering both the Caton and Lancaster practices, and this was promoted within the health centre by way of a poster. Discussion with the Practice Manager Trainee determined that Queen Square Medical Practice is eager to increase the PPG involvement, and that they are looking to increase the PPGs members and diversity.



# Patient feedback

Healthwatch representatives spoke with three patients during the visit. Patients in the waiting room were seen quickly so conversations were short and two patients preferred not to return to the conversation following their appointment. Two patients spoken with were accompanied by family and friends who also offered their views on some aspects.

## How did you make your appointment?

Out of the three patients who provided feedback to this question one had made their appointment at reception, one patient had their appointment made for them by a clinician and one was unsure as someone else (spouse) had made their appointment for them.

One patient stated that they struggle to get appointments for their elderly parent as there's not always appointments available which can mean a long wait. They found this worrying due to their parents age and vulnerability.

One patient stated that they would like to be able to make appointments online.

***"Book appointments online with the app would be good"***

***"It took a while for my appointment (six weeks), but it wasn't an emergency"***

***"The majority of the time is ok, but there can be long waiting times when phoning, especially on a Monday morning"*** [to make an appointment].

Two patients who provided feedback stated that they opt to come to the Caton practice as it is easier to access despite living closer to the Lancaster practice.

## 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 helpful.

***"The nurse rang me and squeezed me in"*** [same day]

***"Prescriptions are quick"***

***"Very satisfied with everything"***

## Environment

Queen Square Medical Practice are currently reviewing their waiting areas and were interested in hearing the patients views around this. All patients spoken with were happy with the waiting room, and an accompanying patients friend also commented positively.

*"It's perfect"*

*"Lot's of leaflets of local things which is good"*

*"It's a nice environment"*

Two patients discussed how parking is good and the health centre is easy to get to  
*"I always prefer to come here rather than Lancaster because it's so easy".*

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

One patient and their accompanying family stated that they would like to see water available in the waiting rooms *"...would like to see water available like there used to be"* (Recommendation 8).

Phone appointments times were discussed as needing some improvement, with one patient stating that they are not given any indication of the proposed time of their telephone appointment which can prove difficult when working.

One patient stated *"they insist on a telephone appointment first, and it was hard to insist when I wanted to see a GP, they really weren't having it"* (Recommendation 9).

One patient would like more opportunity to book appointments online.

## 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 being mentioned as a positive

*"I love the app, very clear, text messages to remind me – more of that please"*

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

Two of the patients spoken with were unaware of the PPG and its role within the practice, one patient said that it sounded familiar but wasn't sure  
(Recommendation 10).

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

Two of the patients spoken with had been called into their appointments at this point, the patient who answered this question was unsure and stated that they would ask at reception.

 *It's fabulous!* 



# Staff feedback

At the time of the visit there were two members of staff working at reception who were sorting prescriptions requests and the practice nurse who was seeing patients. It was deemed inappropriate to talk to staff at this time due to the nature of their work.

## Recommendations

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

1. Look at clearer signs directing to the health centre entrance
2. Investigate whether the bin storage could be moved to a more suitable location
3. Look at highlighting the assisted door opening button i.e. by use of contrasting colours
4. Review the reception desk and how it can be more inclusive for patients, as well as reducing a perceived barrier for patients who don't want to 'bother' staff
5. Consider incorporating some varying types of chairs into the waiting areas to meet differing patient needs
6. Ensure that any themed notice boards display information relevant to the theme
7. Replace the red emergency pull cord and move the emergency red light to a location where it can be seen by others. Carry out an accessibility audit of the toilet and undertake improvements as identified. Include people with lived experience where possible with this audit.
8. Consider having water available for patients whilst they are in the waiting area
9. Ensure that any patient wishing for a face to face appointment rather than a telephone appointment is able to access these
10. Continue to 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 highlighting the assisted door opening button	This will be reviewed, and we will look to improve the visibility of push button.	12 months.	We will look into signage around the push button or a more distinctive push button
Review the reception desk and how it can be more inclusive for patients	N/A	N/A	Due to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> receptionist to the rear of the desk being on the phones to patients, it isn't suitable to keep the hatch continuously open for confidentiality purposes, as well to reduce noise in the waiting area.
Consider incorporating some varying types of chairs into the waiting areas to meet differing patient needs		12 months.	This will be reviewed, and we will look to improve seating.
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	Audit will be done, and affordable adaptations will be made.	ASAP.	As discussed at visit, if you could pass on a contact for this audit, it would be much appreciated.
Replace the red emergency pull cord and move the emergency light to where others can see it	Our repairman has been made aware and this will be completed as soon as possible.		
Environment			
Look at clearer signs directing to the health centre entrance		12 months.	We will review this, however as stated in your report. Caton is a rural area, implementing large colourful signs would not suit the surrounding area.

Investigate whether the bin storage could be moved to a more suitable location		12 months,	We will review this and make any changes if financially viable.
Consider having water available for patients whilst they are in the waiting area	If a patient requested a drink of water, we would always provide this.	N/A	The water dispenser in the waiting room previously was for staff use, however there was no space in the office to keep it, so we needed to keep it out in the waiting room. This was removed due to COVID.
Ensure that any themed notice boards display information relevant to the theme	Aware of this and will review now that the digital information screens are now up in Caton Health Centre.  We will also create a space for blood pressure information by the machine.	Full review of all notice boards will be complete before flu season in September. (2months)	Due to the need to make space for themed boards such as flu, we will be completing a full review of boards at both sites.
<b>Patient Involvement</b>			
Ensure that any patient wishing for a face-to-face appointment rather than a telephone appointment is able to access these		Ongoing.	We already provide both Face to Face at both sites, as well as telephone appointments where needed and at patient's request.
Raise awareness of the PPG and look at actively recruiting more members, with further diversity where possible		Ongoing.	Have created and posted new comms for the digital screens to help boost our numbers. Next PPG meeting is planned for September, and we will ask the attending members to help recruit.



# healthwatch

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