

Queen Square Medical Practice

Date: 24 July 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

2 Queen Square
Lancaster
LA1 1RP

Tel: 01524 843333

Registered Manager:

Adrian Eglington (Practice Manager)

Date and Time of our Visit:

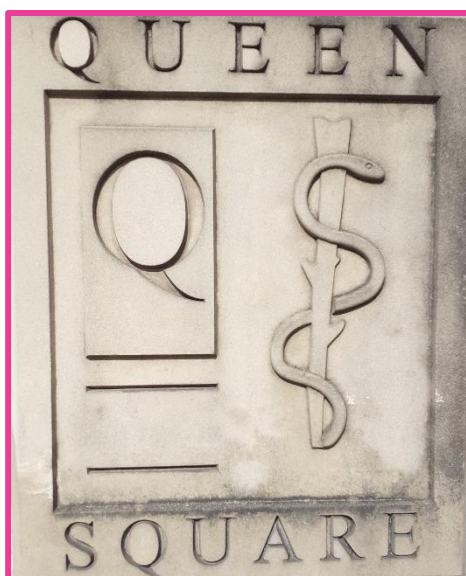
Date: 24 July 2025

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

Queen Square Medical Practice 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 Queen Square Medical Practice on July 24, 2025 and received feedback from eighteen patients and 1 member of staff.



Pre-visit practice survey

Prior to the visit a pre-visit questionnaire was completed by the practice manager for Healthwatch Lancashire 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 practice manager and trainee practice manager to discuss the practice and to view the facilities.

One to one discussions with patients

Healthwatch Lancashire representatives 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.

Staff feedback

At the time of the visit staff were seen to be busy and it was therefore deemed inappropriate to interrupt staff whilst they were carrying out their duties. However, one staff member provided written feedback anonymously to the practice manager, this is included in this report in a way guaranteed to maintain anonymity.

Observations

Observations were made throughout the visit. This included patient and staff interactions, accessibility measures in place throughout the practice, and the condition and cleanliness of the facilities.

Summary



Queen Square Medical Practice is located in the centre of Lancaster City. The medical practice consists of the Queen Square practice and Caton Health Centre which is located to the north east of Lancaster city centre. Patients have the option of attending either practice based on needs and preferences.

This report focuses on the Queen Square practice as a separate Enter and View was carried out at Caton Health Centre on May 29, 2025.

An announced visit was carried out at Queen Square Medical Practice on Thursday July 24, 2025, 10am-12 noon. Healthwatch Lancashire representatives gathered feedback from eighteen patients and one member of staff.

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.

Queen Square Medical Practice is partnered with Lancaster Medical Practice to form the Lancaster Primary Care Network (PCN).

When initially contacting the Queen Square Medical Practice they were welcoming to a proposed visit, and the Healthwatch Lancashire representatives found the practice staff to be helpful, friendly and approachable.

Overall patients were positive about the quality of care that they received at the health centre, with staff being praised as helpful, friendly and caring. Making appointments, waiting times from making an appointment to seeing a GP and waiting rooms times were raised by patients as requiring some improvement. Patients also felt that the waiting rooms could do with some improvement to be more welcoming.

Observations identified that there are some minor improvements required to the practice to enhance the patient experience, including replacing the carpeting by the reception area and refreshing the décor of the accessible toilet. However, the building was pleasantly presented overall, with the character of the building being maintained, and was seen to be well maintained and clean.

Staff were observed being professional and helpful and were seen to have good patient interactions throughout the visit.

Queen Square Medical Practice has an active Patient Participation Group (PPG) covering both Queen Square and Caton Health Centre, although the majority of patients spoken with had not heard of the group. The practice is due to start an active campaign promoting the PPG which will help increase patient numbers and allow for more diverse patient demographics where possible.

Practice Overview



Queen Square Medical Practice is located on Queen Square, along the A6, in Lancaster city centre.

The medical practice is based in a Grade II listed building, parts of which date back to the late 1700s, although there has been renovations and remodelling work carried out to different parts of the building from the 1800s to the 1930s.

The building consists of three floors and a basement, with patient services located on the first and second floor. Administration and offices are located on the third floor and in the basement, both of which are staff only areas. A lift travels between the first and second floor, and there are stairs connecting all levels.

There is good road access with the medical practice being sited on the A6 which links Lancaster and Preston. There is no patient parking available at the practice due to the location, and as the A6 is the main thoroughfare through Lancaster drop off/pick up outside the practice could be challenging at times. However, there are several car parks in the area including Spring Garden Street, Marketgate and King's Yard.

There are bus stops directly outside the medical practice, with buses running regularly to/from Lancaster city centre and the surrounding areas including Morecambe, Carnforth and Halton. Lancaster bus station is an approximate ten minute walk from the practice. Lancaster Park and Ride, which is located by Junction 34 of the M6, also has a stop directly outside the practice.

Queen Square Medical Practice also owns and manages Caton Health Centre, located to the north east of Lancaster city 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.

Healthwatch Lancashire undertook a separate Enter and View visit to Caton Health Centre on May 29, 2025 so this report focuses on the Queen Square practice.

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

Surgery Population



Lancaster and surrounding areas has a higher than national average population of white British residents, with the largest age group of working age (Lancaster City Council).

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.

Queen Square Medical Practice has access to interpreter services via the 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.

Patients can access out of hours appointments through the main practice in Queen Square, with extended hours available Thursday evenings and fortnightly Saturday mornings.

On arrival patients can self-check-in or check in with reception. As there are several waiting areas patients are directed to the most appropriate waiting room upon check-in.

Enter and View observations

External Environment

Queen Square Medical Practice is based in a three storey, sandstone building, with some parts dating back to the Georgian era when the building was a private residence. Decades of remodelling and renovating has resulted in the current layout, and the building was registered as Grade II listed in 1970 meaning that

there are restrictions on any changes to the structure and appearance. *This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest* (Historic England).

The medical practice is easy to find and is clearly identifiable on approach. The building is set on an angle to the A6 which allows for a small paved area to the front which is used by the GPs and senior management team as a parking area.

There are also bicycle stands available for any patient arriving by bike in order for them to be able to secure their bicycle whilst visiting the practice.

The building appears well presented and maintained, with cream and black paintwork and traditional style paving for parking. Overall the building maintains its character and sits comfortably within its surroundings.

Entrance into the building is via a single door, which is sufficiently wide enough for wheelchair access, and which has an electronic opening button. The door sits on ground level with no need for a ramp.

It was noted that there is a threshold lip at the entrance doors, which may be a trip hazard for those unsteady on their feet, have visual impairments or are wheelchair users; although this was not considered a major concern and it is therefore recommended that discussion with patients with lived experience will identify whether this needs rectifying or isn't considered a problem (Recommendation 1).



Internal Environment and Waiting Areas

The entrance doors lead directly into the reception area. There is a large reception desk which is clearly identifiable upon arrival, and which has two lower sections providing good accessibility for all patients.

Carpeting to the front of the reception desk was seen to look tired and in need of replacing/repairing in places (Recommendation 2).

Electronic check-in is available for patients, located close to the reception desk, and patients were observed using this throughout the visit. There is also a blood pressure monitor easily accessible for patients to use, located near to the reception area.

The retention of some of the original and/or replicated features, as well as the use of a cream



and blue colour scheme creates character to the practice and is in keeping with the Georgian history of the building and its listed status.

Several waiting areas are located around the practice, with one on the first floor and two on the second floor, a fourth waiting area on the first floor was not in use during the visit as it is due to be decorated. Each waiting area is different in size and style, although all were seen to be pleasant and clean. Several of the waiting areas have 'homely touches' such as book cases, old desks etc and this adds to the historic feel of the surgery.



Several of the waiting areas appear a little sparse and seating is limited, with Healthwatch Lancashire observing some patients standing due to all the seats being occupied. One patient was seen to find a waiting area too busy and overwhelming and was able to sit separately by the lift which was good. It was noted that seating in the waiting areas is of similar type and height, and it is therefore recommended that some varying seating types may benefit differing patient needs (Recommendation 3).

All waiting areas have a large electronic monitor calling patients into their appointment with both visual and audio prompts. These monitors also display health and wellbeing advice and this also included the Healthwatch poster announcing the visit.

A filing cabinet was seen to be located in waiting room C, as this was locked there were no concerns around the storing of any sensitive information but it seemed out of place and needs relocating to a more suitable space to provide a more cohesive feel to the waiting room (Recommendation 4).

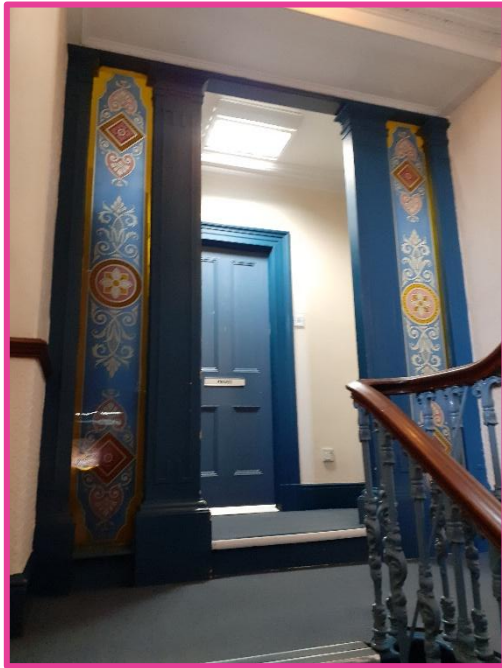
Due to the nature of the building the layout was seen to be a bit confusing and patients were observed struggling to find their way out at times. Some clearer signage to the exit may be of benefit for some patients (Recommendation 5).

A disabled toilet is available for patients on the first floor. The room appears a bit tired and in need of some attention. It was felt by the Healthwatch Lancashire representatives that the disabled toilet could be improved by way of features such as a contrasting toilet seat colour for people with dementia etc. It is also advisable to relocate the sanitary towel bin, possibly to the other side of the toilet, to allow for easier access to the red emergency pull cord, as well as allowing for freer/easier movement for wheelchair users when lifting on/off the toilet. It is recommended that the PPG is consulted to gather views as to the best layout from patients (Recommendation 6).



Information around health and wellbeing was on display in all the waiting areas, as well as practice information including staff structure, out of hours appointments, the triage process

and the Friends and Family Test (FFT). A box for FFT feedback was available on the reception desk, although it was noted that there were no forms available for patients to complete and the box was empty (Recommendation 7).



Patient Interactions



At the time of the visit the practice was seen to be busy, but staff appeared calm and coping well. Reception staff were observed being friendly and helpful, with the reception desk consistently manned throughout the visit.

Staff were observed interacting well with patients throughout the visit and were seen chatting with people as they were passing through some waiting areas.

Patient Involvement

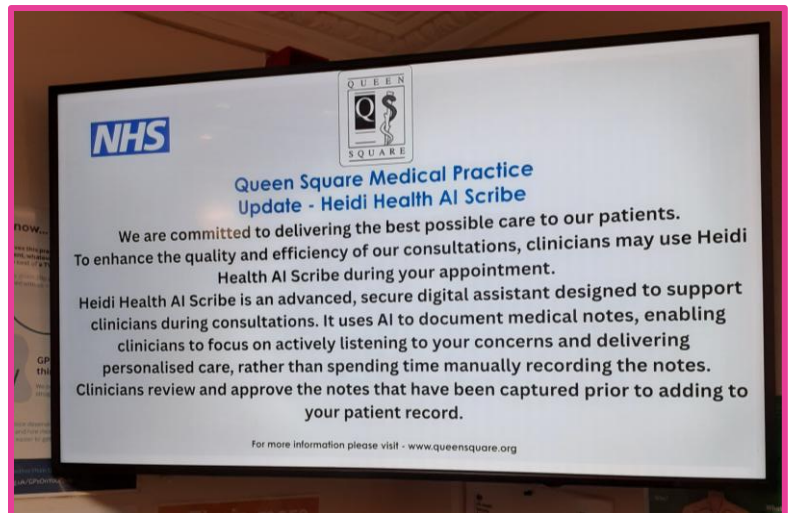
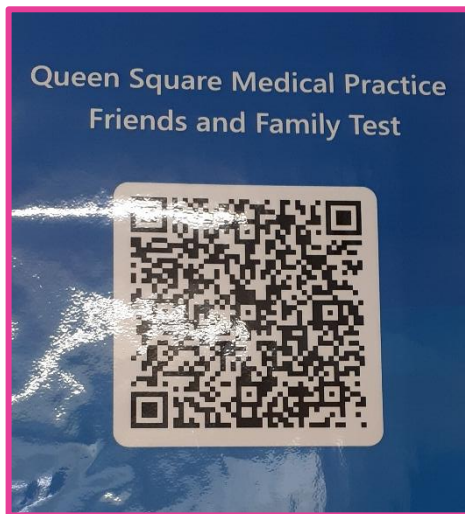


The health centre has an active Patient Participation Group (PPG) covering both the Caton and Queen Square practices.

Healthwatch Lancashire representatives failed to find any information regarding the Patient Participant Group (PPG) and when asking a member of staff it was found that they were unfamiliar with the role of the PPG.

Discussion with the practice manager and trainee practice manager identified that Queen Square Medical is due to start an active campaign around the PPG in order to increase the number of members and ensure that there is

diverse patient representation. It is therefore deemed unnecessary at this point to make a recommendation around this



Patient feedback

Healthwatch representatives spoke with eighteen patients during the visit. Some of the patients in the waiting areas were seen quickly so conversations were short and patients preferred not to return to the conversation following their appointment.

One patient visited the practice solely to speak with Healthwatch Lancashire and had written their feedback prior to speaking with the Healthwatch representatives so did not complete a questionnaire. Their views have been included in the relevant sections as appropriate.

How did you make your appointment?

Seventeen patients answered this question, of which seven had made their appointment over the phone, two had booked online, six were at follow up appointments made for them by clinical/non-clinical staff, and two had made their appointments in person at reception.

Several patients spoke about long waiting times for appointments with two patients waiting over five weeks.

"I was surprised to be put on a six week list..."

"I made this one three weeks ago"

Three patients spoke about difficulty in making an appointment, talking about trying to get through at 8am, and two stating that they don't understand the

triage system. One patient found it difficult making appointments as they worked and weren't always able to fit in with the practice hours, such as for call backs, and one patient talked about how making appointments can be difficult as they need support.

"...it is difficult to make appointments; I can't use the phone easily. My carers are only available limited times of day, and these don't coincide with when you need to contact the surgery to get an appointment"

"I don't understand how the new system works, it's very confusing"

"There is a lack of triage when trying to get the initial appointment on the day, sometimes a request online is not deemed appropriate, so sometimes [there is a need to] call to 111"

One patient who provided feedback stated that they liked the call back service.

Long waiting room times was raised as an issue by eleven patients ***"Appointments usually run late, too long, sometimes up to 40 minutes"***. Only one of the patients spoken with had been made aware of the current waiting time when checking in for their appointment (Recommendation 8).

One patient talked about having an emergency and trying to notify Queen Square that they would be unable to attend ***"...I tried to contact the surgery but the lines were busy with appointments, I searched online but didn't discover the way to do it. This was stressful. I received a complaint for non-attendance..."***.

Making it easier for patients for notify the practice when unable to attend an appointment will help reduce non-attendance and free up appointments for those needing same day care (Recommendation 9).

One patient told Healthwatch Lancashire that they waited several months for an appointment to get medication that solved their ailment in a short time ***"I was left in discomfort for far too long"***.

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 practice staff including GPs, nurses and the reception team praised as caring, friendly and helpful.

"Staff are always really nice; I've not has a bad experience"

"Overall I feel I have an excellent service from my surgery"

One patient commented that they ***"feel that you are pressured in and out, which can make it difficult"*** [appointments].

One patient spoke about seeing the same person more than once which they found positive ***"...it helps with the quality of care"***.

One patient stated ***"Sometimes the doctors give the impression of being uninterested"***.

Vaccination services and online prescription ordering were also praised by patients as being good.

Environment

Queen Square Medical Practice are currently reviewing their waiting areas and were interested in hearing the patients views around this. Overall patients spoken with were happy with the waiting room environments, although several patients had comments around how the waiting areas could be improved.

“Waiting rooms are still a bit ‘Covid-ish’, a bit sparse...”

“Waiting room B is horrendous, very hot”

“Aesthetically it could be better, things that add to the experience and make it as relaxing as possible”

One patient stated ***“radio in waiting rooms is off-putting when you are waiting”*** although another commented ***“I like the atmosphere and background music. It’s not a daunting place to visit”***.

One patient stated that there needs to be more chairs, and another commented that they find the chairs uncomfortable (Recommendation 3).

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

Seeing the same GP (continuity of care) was raised by several patients, although it was acknowledged that this is not always possible for those needing a quick appointment ***“have to work hard to see the same doctor”***.

Eight patients felt that making appointments needs to be improved, this included trying to get through by phone or online, as well as waiting times from booking to appointment date (although Healthwatch Lancashire acknowledges that GPs nationally are at capacity so some delays are inevitable) ***“Trying to book a double appointment is near-on impossible”***.

Waiting room times were also seen as needing addressing, most patients spoken with were late in for their appointments, and whilst most were understanding of why this may be most felt uninformed around current waiting room times ***“I’m always early but I don’t know why because they are always late”*** (recommendation 8).

Making waiting rooms more appealing was raised by some patients, including more seating and ‘homely’ touches.

More digital services for booking/cancelling appointments etc. was suggested by several patients ***“The lack of online facilities makes things difficult”*** (Recommendation 10).

One patient stated that they would like ***“...better guidance on over-the-counter medicines when a prescription isn’t needed”***.

One patient spoke about how some of the doors into consultation rooms are not very accessible as they don't fully open. As a listed building it is appreciated that there may not be scope to change the interior, however it is important that reasonable adjustments are made when treating patients **"...will book me into these rooms despite there being a note in my file..."** (recommendation 11).

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

Several patients had been called in to their appointments by this point so thirteen patients responded to this question, out of which nine were happy with the communication from the practice and four stated that it was ok but that they had struggled with some aspects

"I struggle to use the phone so it is difficult to make appointments and read information"

"It's ok, I've had to read notes sometimes which can be hard to understand on the app"

"The texts for appointments are good"

Staff were praised by patients for helping with any difficulty with communication **"They really are helpful..."**

One patient spoken with raised concerns around patient confidentiality with the electronic display system which calls patients into appointments by their full name on-screen which could be screenshotted, and which they felt could put patients at risk if they are trying to maintain anonymity due to domestic abuse, are young people/children or are vulnerable. There was acknowledgment that this is a national system commonly used by GP practices, however, they suggested that there should be an opt out option for this for any patient preferring to have their name called out by the clinician.

One patient commented **"...sometimes the patient does not know what is the right action for them and the surgery ought to listen and advise, not work to a sheet of guidelines. Remember the patient is human..."**

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

Out of the thirteen patients who answered this question nine were not aware of the PPG or its role, two had heard of it but were not interested in joining **"Yes, but I don't really know more"**.

At the time of the visit Queen Square Medical Practice were due to start an active campaign to promote the PPG and increase both numbers and diversity of their membership so it is not deemed necessary to make a recommendation around this.

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

Ten of the patients spoken with stated that they would not know how to make a complaint, although several talked about asking at reception if they needed to know the process. One patient told the Healthwatch Lancashire representatives that there are forms on the reception desk so would pick one up.

Two patients stated that they had made a complaint in the past *“a complaint was handled very well”*.



“The care here at Queen Square is excellent”



Staff feedback

At the time of the visit staff were seen to be busy in their roles and those approached declined to have conversations due to their time constraints. It was therefore deemed inappropriate to talk with staff at this time.

One member of staff provided written feedback in a sealed envelope to the practice manager. In order to maintain guaranteed anonymity the feedback has not been included directly into in this report. However Healthwatch Lancashire values the feedback and has incorporated it into the proposed recommendations in line with observations, patient feedback and as appropriate.



Recommendations

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

1. Consult with patients and/or the PPG as to whether the entrance door threshold lip needs removing,
2. Look at replacing the carpet in front of the reception desk
3. Add some more seating to the waiting areas and incorporate some varying types of chairs to meet differing patient needs, consider how the waiting areas can be aesthetically enhanced
4. Look at moving the filing cabinet in waiting room C to a more appropriate location
5. Consider clearer signage to the practice exit for patients who those who may be visually impaired etc.
6. Consult with the PPG and patients with lived experience as to the best layout for the disabled toilet and look at creating a fresher more appealing environment
7. Ensure that Friends and Family Test (FFT) forms are available for patients to be able to provide feedback
8. Look at notifying patients of approximate waiting times when checking in for their appointments so that they feel fully informed
9. Investigate clearer, easier methods for patients to notify the practice when unable to attend an appointment
10. Investigate how digital platforms such as the GP apps and website can be utilised more, especially for appointment booking/cancelling which would help free up phone lines for those not digital savvy
11. Ensure reasonable adjustments are made wherever possible for individual patient needs

Provider response

Recommendation	Action from provider	Timeframe	Comments
Accessibility & Inclusion			
Consult with patients and/or the PPG as to whether the threshold lip needs removing,		3 months	Questionnaire sent out to the PPG re suggested improvements, will be discussed at upcoming PPG meeting.
Ensure reasonable adjustments are made wherever possible for individual patient needs		Ongoing	We try to be as accommodating as possible, and if a patient makes us aware of an access issue, we will always try and accommodate beforehand. However, due to the age of the building and its set up, we are aware that access isn't always ideal in some areas. This is something we are hoping to look at and discuss with patients affected, to see how we can help.
Consult with the PPG and patients with lived experience as to the best layout for the disabled toilet and look at creating a fresher more appealing environment		6 months	Questionnaire sent out to the PPG re suggested improvements, will be discussed at PPG meeting.
Environment			
Look at replacing the carpet in front of the reception desk	Ongoing	6 months	Carpet in waiting areas and reception will be replaced with vinyl flooring.
Add some more seating to the waiting areas and incorporate some varying types of chairs to meet differing patient needs, and consider how the waiting areas can be aesthetically enhanced	Ongoing	6 months	Seating will be reviewed and some chairs with arms as well as high back & bariatric chairs will be ordered during ongoing patient area project. A refresh of the waiting room is planned, with decorating as a priority.
Look at moving the filing cabinet in waiting room C to a more appropriate location	Ongoing	3 months	Ongoing project into waiting areas, all filing cabinets, furniture and trolleys etc will

			be moved into a more suitable place.
Consider clearer signage to the practice exit for patients who may be visually impaired etc.	Ongoing	6 months	Signage is going to be reviewed during ongoing project, including corridor signs for each clinical room for patient to see clearly where their consulting room is.
Patient Involvement			
Ensure that Friends and Family Test (FFT) forms are available for patients to be able to provide feedback		1 month	Email sent to the IT lead to replace these forms and reminded staff responsible to keep an eye on quantity levels.
Look at notifying patients of approximate waiting times when checking in for their appointments so that they feel fully informed		1 month.	I have raised this with our IT lead to see if this is something our new check in system can do.
Investigate clearer, easier methods for patients to notify the practice when unable to attend an appointment	N/A	N/A	Patients if unable to get through via the telephone can cancel online via the apps or we have a designated cancellation line attached to our telephone system – it is in the options when calling.
Investigate how digital platforms such as the GP apps and website can be utilised more	Ongoing	Ongoing	We have already adopted use of the NHS app and an online consultation tool – AccuRx, where people can submit online medical and admin queries, request appointments, sick notes and more. Our practice website has recently been reviewed and now aligns much better with the NHS website standards. This will be continually improved over time.



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)