



Enter & View

Boots Launceston Pharmacy

Contents

Contents	1
1 Introduction	2
2 Visit Summary	3
3 Service Overview	3
4 Observations	3
5 Patient Feedback	4
6 Staff Feedback	5
7 Manager Feedback	6
8 Recommendations	6
9 Provider Response	7

1 Introduction

1.1 Details of visit

Service provider: Boots Launceston Pharmacy

Service Address: 28 Broad Street

Launceston PL15 8AE

Date and time: 6th October 2025 9.30 – 1130am

Authorised representative: Nigel Oakes

1.2 Purpose of visit

This visit was conducted as part of a rolling programme of service visits across clinical service providers. Our goal was to observe the service in action, hear directly from patients, and make recommendations for improvement.

1.3 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Cornwall would like to thank patients and staff for providing a warm welcome and their positive contribution to this Enter and View visit and the subsequent report.

1.4 Disclaimer

This report relates to findings observed on the specific date above and is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all patients and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time of the visit.

1.5 About Healthwatch Cornwall

Healthwatch Cornwall is an independent organisation committed to amplifying the voices of Cornwall's residents in the planning and delivery of health and social care services. Through public engagement, we gather their views and experiences with these services. We ensure these perspectives are represented in decision-making processes both locally and nationally, driven by the belief that community feedback is vital to improving standards of care.

1.6 What is Enter and View?

As a local Healthwatch we are authorised to “Enter and View” health and social care services through the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and Local Authorities Regulations 2013 (part 4). These services can include hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists, and pharmacies.

Enter and View visits are an opportunity to see services in action, listen to and understand the experiences of individuals who use them, and make recommendations where there are areas

for improvement. The visits are organised based on feedback received about individual services or in response to themes identified in our research.

2 Visit Summary

Conversations with staff

Healthwatch Cornwall spoke with the pharmacy/store manager and pharmacy dispensers

Conversations with patients

Patients attending the pharmacy were asked about their experiences of the service

Observation of facilities

Observations were made throughout the visit, focussing on the condition of the facilities, administrative procedures and patient experience.

3 Service Overview

The pharmacy is located within the Boots retail store, which is situated in Launceston town centre. It is one of three pharmacies in the town and primarily dispenses medication prescribed by a large medical practice located nearby, as well as from several smaller rural surgeries. The service dispenses approximately 2400 prescription items a week, along with a smaller number of non-prescription medications. An on-site pharmacy first service is available to complete episodes of care for 7 common conditions following defined clinical pathways. The service has a permanent, full-time pharmacist in post and 4 dispensers, 1 of which is currently undergoing training.

4 Observations

The pharmacy is located within the boots store, which is in the town centre, close to several car parks and numerous on-street disabled parking bays. There are several informational signs on the door listing the health services available in store, details of prescription messaging and safeguarding/safe space information. All signs were current and neatly displayed. Entry to the store is via automatically opening double doors. The pharmacy counter is at the far end of the shop and easily accessible via a wide aisle. Patients formed a queue down the central aisle of

the store whilst waiting to be served. There was no seating available for queuing patients. The store was clean, brightly lit, and maintained at a suitable temperature

On entry we were welcomed, and appropriate ID checks were made. The manager entered details into the visitors log and gave fire and security advice.

On arrival, there were two dispensers observed serving customers and during the visit the queue waiting to be served varied between 2 and 7 customers. The longest waiting time observed during the visit was approximately 5 minutes. Staff spoke to customers in a calm tone and explained processes clearly. A patient was observed asking about pain relief for a specific condition and a dispenser listened to the patient's questions and provided information about available options.

There were several posters displayed around the store asking for customer feedback, these had QR codes with working links. Mobile phone signal was available throughout the store. There were also several health-related signs and posters throughout the store, all of which were clear and relevant. There was a clear display offering health MOT's and blood pressure checks and another detailing the 'Pharmacy first' services available in store.

5 Patient Feedback

16 patients were asked about their experience of the service they had received:

Attitude of staff

14 out of 16 patients made favourable comments about staff interactions. Ten said that the staff were 'Kind' and two said they were 'caring'. One patient who had come to ask about a non-prescription medication commented 'They were absolutely lovely to me', another told us 'They are always smiling, it's a pleasure to come in here'. A patient who had recently attended for a pharmacy first appointment told us 'I couldn't get to see the doctor, so I came here and saw the Pharmacist, he was very reassuring and although he didn't give me any drugs, he gave some advice which was all I needed. All in all, I'm glad I didn't have to wait to see a doctor, it was good to see a pharmacist so quickly'. A patient who lived 15 miles away said, 'I'd rather come here than my local chemist, that should tell you everything you need to know'.

Availability of medication

During the visit a patient was told that their medication was not ready for collection. He told us 'I think it's the doctor's surgery fault, they said they would send it urgently but it's not here. The staff here were good though and said they would call the surgery for me and ask for an urgent prescription' A patient who had been using the pharmacy for several years reported 'I've had

problems in the past with things not being ready when I come in' they went on to say 'Things have got better the last six months though, I've not had any problems lately'

2 of the 16 patients we spoke to had a positive experience with the prescription text messaging service offered by Boots pharmacies, one commented 'It's brilliant, I wait until I get a text to say my tablets are in, so I don't have a wasted journey' another told us 'It's nice to have a reminder to come in and pick up your medicines'

One patient told us 'I heard on the radio about having a 'flu jab, but was worried there may be shortages, so I rang here, and they gave me an appointment, which I've just had, and they did the jab. It was very simple and no fuss'.

Length of wait

2 of the 16 patients we spoke to told us that they didn't like having to queue for so long to be served, one saying 'I don't need to have a prescription, just some over the counter things but I have to wait with everyone else who needs to see the chemist'. Another commented 'It's hit and miss, sometimes you're seen right away but today I've come in at the wrong time and there are loads of people ahead of me'

A patient who was waiting to collect an urgent prescription told us that they had come straight from the doctor's surgery and that there had been a delay whilst the pharmacist was checking the dosage of prescribed medication, they said 'I've had to wait a bit today, but it's not been too bad. I suppose they must be careful with the checking, but I'd really like to get home and take the tablets'

A long-term resident of the town reported 'I sometimes go to the Tesco pharmacy but the queue there can be massive, at least here they put 2 people on the desk when it gets busy and the pharmacist is always popping in and out of the back, so he helps out as well'

6 Staff Feedback

Two staff members gave feedback about working in the pharmacy. One reported that it could be busy and stressful at times but that they felt well supported by the management team. They said that they were frustrated by the number of manual green prescriptions that they had to deal with and thought that this was leading to delays in issuing medication.

Another staff member described the pharmacy as having 'a great work ethic and a pleasant environment' but they thought that there could be a better relationship with the local GP practice as currently there seemed to be a lack of cooperative working.

7 Manager Feedback

The manager was welcoming and talked openly about the challenges that the pharmacy faced. They were happy to allow us access to all areas of the pharmacy and gave ample time for staff to talk with us.

The store manager is a pharmacy dispenser, and they told us they spend most of their time working in their dispenser role. They said that they didn't always see as many 'pharmacy first' patients as they would like, as they felt that the local doctor's surgery wasn't referring eligible patients to them for some services, such as contraception. The manager reported that they were unsure why these referrals were not being made and had planned to meet with the surgery management team to discuss the situation. They explained that most of the prescriptions issued by the surgery came in on manual green prescription forms, which was frustrating as it takes significantly longer to process than an electronic prescription would. The manager believed these delays were linked to processes at the GP surgery and told us that they had been promised that things would change but they had seen no improvement. The doctor's surgery had reportedly told them that computer problems were to blame.

They reported that prescriptions were being processed within 3 to 5 days of receipt, with urgent requests being picked out and dealt with the same day. A dedicated courier service collects prescriptions from the main local surgery once a day, so if a prescription is issued after this collection there will be a further 24-hour delay. They told us that turnaround times for issuing prescriptions had improved lately and that there were no outstanding complaints being dealt with.

They have recorded an increased number of seasonal influenza vaccination appointments made this year and reported that they were top in the region for uptake.

8 Recommendations

Healthwatch Cornwall have offered some recommendations based on observations and feedback from patients and staff to improve experiences with the service.

- 1) Staff reported frustration with the volume of manual prescriptions, which they felt contributed to delays. Exploring ways to increase use of electronic prescribing, in collaboration with the GP surgery, may help streamline processes.

- 2) Staff reported that some eligible Pharmacy First referrals were not being received from the GP surgery. Discussing referral pathways collaboratively may support more consistent access for patients.
- 3) Several patients commented that standing for long periods was difficult. Providing seating options may improve accessibility and comfort.
- 4) Patients shared mixed views about waiting times. Monitoring peak periods and considering staffing patterns may help reduce delays.

9 Provider Response

Boots Launceston Pharmacy appreciates the feedback provided by Healthwatch Cornwall and welcomes the opportunity to reflect on the observations and recommendations. We are committed to delivering a high-quality, patient-focused service and recognise the importance of continuous improvement. We acknowledge the concerns raised around manual prescriptions and waiting times and will continue working closely with the local GP practice to encourage greater use of electronic prescribing, which we believe will help streamline processes and reduce delays.

In response to feedback about patient comfort, we will explore options for providing seating within the store to improve accessibility for those who may find standing difficult. Our team remains dedicated to monitoring peak periods and adjusting staffing where possible to minimise queues and maintain a positive experience for all visitors. We value the constructive input from Healthwatch Cornwall and look forward to ongoing collaboration to enhance the service we provide to the community.

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