

Enter and View report

Captain French Surgery, Kendal

Address: The Gillinggate Centre, Gillinggate, Kendal LA9 4JE

Telephone number: 01593 720241

Website: [Homepage - Captain French Surgery](#)

The practice's **I want great care page** is [here](#)

The practice's **CQC page** is [here](#)

Practice Manager

Rebecca Ware

Date and time of visit

Date: Tuesday 31st March, 2026

Time: 1.30pm-4pm

Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness authorised representatives:

Steve Walmsley, Operations Manager

Kate Rees, Assistant Head of Service

Introduction

Our role at Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness (HWW&F) is to gather people's views and experiences, especially those of communities which are under-represented, 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 or residents, carer, relatives and staff of a service and observe the environment to consider the quality of the service. This was an announced Enter and View visit undertaken by authorised representative who have the authority to enter health and social care premises, announced or unannounced.

HWW&F 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 our website at www.healthwatchWestmorland and Furness.co.uk.

Where appropriate, we may arrange a revisit to check the progress of improvements. The report is available to the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Healthwatch England and Lancashire South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (LSC ICB).

Acknowledgements

HWW&F 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.

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 and patients who met members of the Enter and View team on that date.

General information

The practice has 29 staff , including five partners, five salaried GPs, three nurses, three advanced nurse practitioners, two paramedics, two mental health practitioners.

[Kendal Integrated Care Community \(KICC\)](#) is also based in the building.

This is a multi-disciplinary team of health and support workers, voluntary sector organisations and others who work together to help the community stay healthy. There is also a sexual health clinic on-site.

Patient population

The practice serves a mixed population, including working-age adults, families, and a significant proportion of older people – including care home residents, as well as pockets of deprivation.

Feedback gathered during the visit indicates a notable number of patients managing long-term conditions, with some requiring regular monitoring and ongoing care.

Appointments

Patients can book by phone from 8.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday through the practice website and NHS App, or in person at reception. Medical enquiries and requests for non-urgent appointments can also be made through the Accurx link on the practice website.

Appointments are offered face to face and by telephone and are available up until 8:30pm every Thursday and at a weekend at Station House Surgery.

What the practice is proud of

The work undertaken to develop the teams:

- Frailty Team (Kendal Integrated Care Team)
- Care Home Team (as a PCN)

- Primary Care Network (PCN) Team (ARRS Staff) – additional roles working within Primary Care, such as Clinical Pharmacists, Physicians Assistants, First Contact Physiotherapists, GP Assistants.
 - Links with the other local practices as part of the PCN and Kendal Integrated Care Community (KICC).
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- The practice employs a counsellor who sees those who are bereaved. They also hold an after-hours clinic for children and teenagers. This provides support promptly rather than waiting on a list.
 - Captain French is a training practice. This supports a culture of learning and brings student doctors and nurses to the surgery.

Captain French Surgery has made significant changes in how they work over the last few years. This is linked to the changes to GP contracts, and this year will see a push to provide more on-the-day care.

Patient demand has greatly increased and the practice has worked hard to maximise staffing level and develop additional roles. As well as becoming a training practice, which helps develop medical students and GP Registrars. They have recently recruited an additional GP.

The team recognises that continuity of care is important and try to ensure patients can make routine appointments with their clinician of choice.

Methodology

During an Enter and View visit, HWW&F authorised representative ask the views and experiences of patients or residents, carer and relatives, and staff. Conversations with each are adapted to capture individual experiences to help consider the quality of services.

The team also record their own observations on the environment and staff-member interactions.

After an Enter and View visit, the HWW&F 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.

Our Enter and View representatives received feedback from 16 patients and spoke with 5 staff. We were also provided with information in our pre-visit questionnaire, which was completed by the Practice Manager.

Names, pronouns and identifiable details have been removed from quotes to maintain confidentiality.

Demographic information

Key summary figures

- **15** patients spoken to
- **Age range:** 19–88
- **Average age:** Approximately mid-50s
- **Gender split:** Predominantly female

- **Long-term condition:** Around half of respondents
- **Disability:** Small number identified
- **Work status:** Mixed, including retired, employed, and some unemployed.

Enter and View observations

general environment and accessibility

The practice website is clear, easy to navigate, and provides comprehensive information about appointments, prescriptions, and services.

The building is clean, modern, and well maintained. There is step-free access, automatic doors, and wide corridors, making movement throughout the building accessible. Disabled parking spaces are available, and additional support such as a wheelchair is provided. The surgery is located close to public transport links, with bus services within a short walking distance.

Signage is clear; however, the use of polished metal backgrounds makes some text difficult to read from certain angles due to glare.

Reception and booking-in

There is a clearly signposted check-in desk opposite the entrance. Staff were observed to be friendly, professional, and supportive, assisting patients with a range of queries including appointments, prescriptions, and test-related matters.

The practice demonstrates a proactive approach to patient support, with staff observed going beyond expectations – for example, assisting patients with mobility needs and arranging transport.

Patients can speak to reception staff privately if required, and an additional interview room provides a confidential and quiet space.

Waiting area and patient information

There is ample seating in both the main waiting area and a smaller, quieter space. Seating includes chairs with armrests, although all are of similar height. Staff were observed bringing out alternative seating where needed.

Notice boards are visible and up to date, including information about services and the Patient Participation Group.

Patients are called using a visual display system with a chime, although screens are positioned high, which affects readability for some patients.

Adaptations for specific needs

Accessible toilet

A large accessible toilet is available with appropriate facilities, including an emergency call cord. However, one toilet has a layout where the sink is positioned very close to the toilet, which may affect usability.

Colour contrast within the toilet could be improved, as some features (e.g. seat and grab rails) do not stand out clearly against the background.

Communication support

A hearing loop is available, although signage was not initially visible. This was addressed during the visit.

Translation services are available, although the process for accessing these was not directly observed.

Dementia-friendly features

While signage is clear, some improvements could enhance accessibility for patients with dementia or visual impairments. For example:

- The clock does not display the day and date.
- Some signage may be harder to read due to glare.

Quiet space

A smaller waiting area and a private interview room provide effective options for patients who may require a quieter or less stimulating

environment. Staff demonstrated awareness of patient needs and proactively directed individuals to these spaces.

Patient feedback

We spoke with 16 patients during our visit. The following themes emerged from their feedback:

Appointments

Overall experience

Most patients reported **positive experiences** when booking appointments, particularly when contacting the practice by phone. Several noted quick response times and efficient triage processes.

"I rang this morning... it couldn't be better."

"They called me back within an hour and I'm being seen today."

However, some patients highlighted challenges, particularly with phone access and triage questions:

"It isn't easy ringing up normally as it takes a while."

“I don’t like having to answer lots of questions when I phone up... they’re not medical.”

There were also isolated concerns about waiting times and communication around appointments:

“I have been waiting over 20 minutes and haven’t been told there is a delay.”

“I’m not sure who I am seeing or why I have this appointment.”

Communication

Patients generally felt communication was strong, with staff described as helpful, clear, and supportive.

“They explain what you need and tell you who you are seeing.”

Digital communication received mixed feedback. While some valued text reminders and app functionality:

“The reminders are very helpful.”

Others experienced barriers, particularly around digital access:

“I don’t have a smart phone... I just phone.”

“It’s hard to set up even if you are good with technology.”

A recurring theme was preference for speaking to staff directly, even where digital options were available.

Some patients also highlighted issues with communication between services:

“Systems don’t talk to each other... I have to chase information between the hospital and GP.”

Care and treatment

Patients consistently reported that care provided by clinicians met their needs and that staff were caring and attentive.

“They make time for you... I never feel rushed.”

“It feels like they care about me.”

Patients with long-term conditions particularly valued continuity and familiarity with staff.

However, a small number expressed concerns about confidence in processes or decision-making:

“I am worried that I won’t be listened to.”

Despite this, overall sentiment remained strongly positive.

Premises

Patients were overwhelmingly satisfied with the environment:

“Very clean, very welcoming.”

“There is plenty of space... I have never had to ask someone to move.”

Accessibility was generally praised, though a few practical issues were raised:

- Screen visibility for appointment calls.
- Navigation challenges due to local road layout.

Feedback and complaints

Awareness of how to provide feedback or make a complaint was mixed.

Some patients referred to digital surveys or the website, while others were unsure:

“I’m not sure.”

“I’d ask to speak to a member of management.”

This suggests reliance on informal routes rather than clear understanding of the formal complaints process.

No patient we spoke with was aware of the feedback box between the door and reception.

Other comments

Patients highlighted several additional strengths:

- Integrated pharmacy access
- Rapid response for urgent medication needs
- Strong relationships with staff

“They always make sure you get what you need and quickly.”

Conclusion

Captain French Surgery is a highly regarded and patient-centred practice, with strong feedback on staff professionalism, responsiveness, and quality of care. Patients consistently described staff as approachable, kind, and attentive, and many valued the continuity of care provided.

The practice demonstrates clear strengths in its welcoming environment, inclusive layout, and proactive staff support, particularly for patients with additional needs.

While most experiences were positive, some areas for improvement were identified, particularly around communication clarity, digital accessibility, and visibility of feedback processes. Addressing these areas would further strengthen an already well-performing service.

Recommendations

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

1. Improve clarity of appointment information

Some patients were unsure about the purpose of appointments or which clinician they were seeing. Providing clearer confirmation (for example, text or verbal explanation) would help reduce anxiety and improve patient confidence.

2. Review visibility of waiting room displays

The position and visibility of appointment and information TV screens make them difficult to read for some patients. Adjustments such as improved contrast and brightness, or additional audio prompts could improve accessibility.

3. Enhance dementia-friendly adaptations

Small changes could improve accessibility, including:

- Installing a dementia-friendly clock displaying day and date.
- Reviewing signage materials to reduce glare.
- Improving colour contrast in accessible toilets.

4. Provide clearer information on feedback and complaints

Patients would benefit from clear, visible information explaining how to raise concerns or provide feedback, including non-digital options such as using the feedback box already in the waiting room.

5. Consider seating accessibility

Providing chairs of varying heights in the waiting area would better support patients with mobility needs and reduce reliance on staff intervention.

Recommendation	Action from provider	Timeframe	Comments
1. Improve clarity of appointment information.	This will be discussed at a future partners meeting.		When we book patients appointments over the phone the staff always inform the patient of the appointment day, time, and clinician. We also send every patient with a mobile number a text message reminder of their booked appointment which includes the same information.
2. Review accessibility of	This will be discussed at a future partners meeting.		As we are in a leased building, we are limited to

waiting room displays.			the work we can complete without the landlord's approval. Our TV screen and waiting room displays were fixed at the point the premises was refurbished.
3. Enhance dementia-friendly adaptations.	This will be discussed at a future partners meeting.		In the last 12 months we have had some work completed in our accessible toilets to ensure that this meets the standards required.
4. Improve visibility of feedback process.	This will be discussed at a future partners meeting.		
5. Provide varied seating heights.	We have an ongoing premises improvement plan, and the surgery seating is an item that is on this for review.		