



Bentham Road Health Centre

Bentham Road, Blackburn, BB2 4QD

Enter and View Report

Thursday 15th January 2026

9:00am

healthwatch

Blackburn with Darwen

DISCLAIMER

This report relates to the service viewed at the time of the visit and is only representative of the views of the staff, visitors and residents who met members of the Enter and View team on that date.

Contact Details:

Bentham Road Health Centre

Bentham Road

Blackburn

BB2 4QD

Tel: 01254 965200

Staff met during our visit:

Site Manager and supporting team

Date and time of our visit:

Thursday 15th January 2026

9:00am

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen
Representatives

Sarah Johns (Chief Officer)

Liam Kershaw-Calvert (HW Staff)

Owen Pickles (HW Volunteer)

Introduction

This was an announced Enter and View visit undertaken by authorised representatives from Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen who have the authority to enter health and social care premises, announced or unannounced, to observe and assess the nature and quality of services and obtain the view of those people using the services. The representatives observe and speak to respondents in communal areas only.

This visit was arranged as part of Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen's Enter and View programme to review Accessibility, Approachability and Responsiveness. The team of trained Enter and View authorised representatives record their observations along with feedback from patients, staff and where possible, carers or family.

A report is sent to the practice manager of the facility for validation of the facts. Any response from the practice manager is included with the final version of the report which is published on the Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen website at www.healthwatchblackburnwithdarwen.co.uk

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen would like to thank the staff team together with patients for making us feel welcome and taking part in the visit.

General Information

Number of GPs /patients

5 GPs/ 8450 patients

CQC rating: Good (2017)

Methodology

The Enter and View representatives made an announced visit on Thursday 15th January 2026

We spoke to 14 patients and 5 members of staff, where possible within the constraints of the GP surgery routine, people's willingness, and ability to engage and access to people in public areas. Discussion was structured around 3 themes

- Accessibility
- Approachability
- Responsiveness.

The team also recorded their own observations of the environment and facilities.

Our role at Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen is to gather the views of service users, especially those that are hard to reach and seldom heard, to give them the opportunity to express how they feel about a service regardless of their perceived ability to be able to do so.

We use templates to assess the environment of a facility and gather information from respondents, to ensure that reports are compiled in a fair and comparative manner.

Summary:

Bentham Road Health Centre is located in the Mill Hill area of Blackburn and easily accessible for patients on foot or travelling on local transport.

The practice is bright, clean and hygienic; however, some areas may need review for accessibility for patients with dementia. There is good patient information available in the waiting room and a quiet space is available for patients who would benefit from this.

The website is informative and the patient information leaflet is useful, but the complaints procedure might be hard for patients to find.

Patients felt that the staff are courteous and polite and that they had enough time with the doctor, with some lovely feedback about the staff team with the majority of patients stating that they would recommend the practice.

Concerns were raised about being able to book appointments over the phone. The practice may wish to consider promoting the call back function to encourage more patients to use this facility. There was also some lack of understanding of the opening hours of the practice amongst patients we spoke with. Promotion of this within the practice itself and making this more immediately visible on the website would encourage a reduction in patients accessing Emergency Department instead of the practice.

There was a lack of understanding of social prescribing amongst patients, however all of the staff we spoke with clearly understood the role of social prescribing and how to make referrals therefore it was clear that the team would make appropriate referrals for patients who would benefit from this support.

The Practice has a wide skillset amongst the team to be able to meet the needs of patients and they also link well with other teams to support vulnerable patients.

Enter and View observations

Pre Visit

Representatives firstly looked at the practice website to establish contact and found the website to be informative with details about appointments, prescriptions, online services and wider health information. The practice is included within the Cornerstones group of practices website. There are no images of staff which may be helpful for new patients and little information about the GPs. However, information provided about the roles of advance practitioners and the healthcare assistant is useful for patients. The opening hours are not immediately visible on the website but are available on the contact page together with a short patient information leaflet.

The website was noted by representatives to be mobile friendly. There is an option for translation but there is not the facility to change the font size to make the page more accessible, although the accessibility statement states that this is possible. It was difficult to find the complaints procedure without putting this in the search function.

There is information about joining a Patient Participation Group (PPG) but no evidence on the website of the work of the PPG or who is a member.

We called the practice at 4pm on Tuesday 13th January and were 11th in the queue. It was noted that it took 1 minute to reach the main menu on the phone.

External environment



The surgery is located in a residential area in Mill Hill. The practice is clearly visible from Bentham Road and has a large car park with clear entry and exit signs.

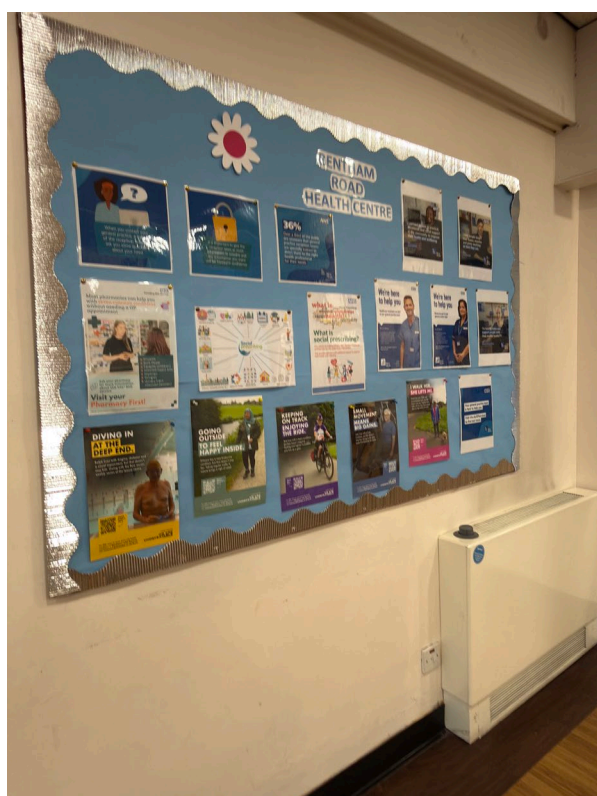
The spaces are clearly marked and there are dedicated disabled parking spaces available. The external area is well maintained, and the name of the surgery is clearly visible.

Internal environment

The practice has a large waiting room which was a warm and welcoming space with the reception directly visible on entering the building. The waiting room was bright and airy and clean. There were 25 seats available of which 6 had arms on for patients with mobility issues. We did not note any raised seats, but all of the seats were comfortable. All of the seating faces the TV screen, and we did not note any issues around privacy for patients at reception.

Patient appointments are announced on a TV screen with a voice over however representatives also noted members of staff coming into the waiting room to collect patients. The TV screen was also used to promote health information. There is good patient information available in the waiting room and there was pleasant music on at an appropriate level which created a calm environment. Signs for clinic rooms were clear in contrasting colours.

There is a clock on display in the waiting room however representatives noted that this and the flooring are not dementia friendly. However, the floor was non-slip and clean.

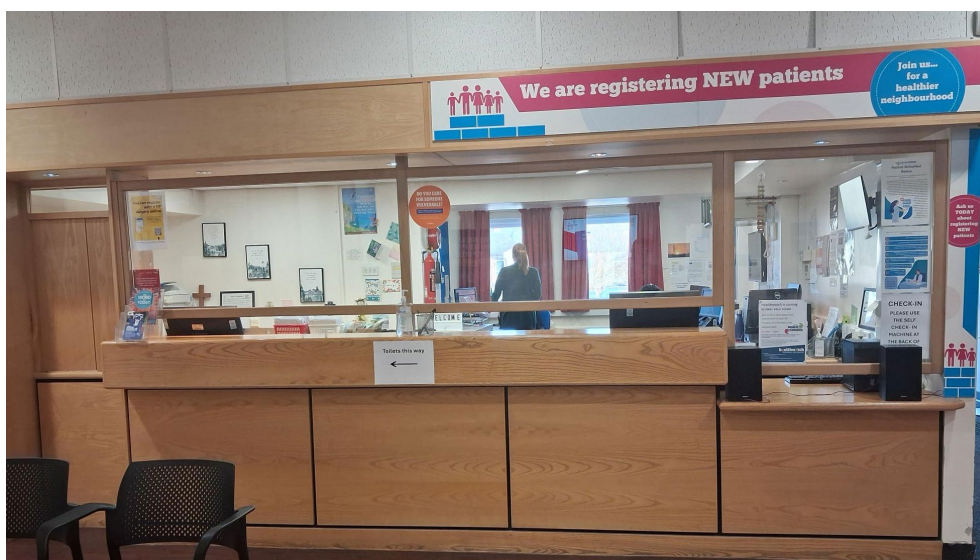




Patients check in for their appointments at a check in screen which did not seem to work for some patients, however we noted that the reception team were very welcome to checking patients in at the front desk.



The reception desk was a large area and at a good height for patients in wheelchairs and a hearing loop was available.



There is a quiet room available for patients which had five seats in and had a calming atmosphere.



The bathrooms were clean and hygienic with an accessible toilet with baby changing facilities available.

Whilst on our visit, we observed good interactions between staff and patients. A nurse came into the waiting room to chat with an elderly couple, and another member of staff gave a young girl a sticker for being brave.

Approachability/Flexibility of the Practice

We spoke with the Site Manager about different approaches the practice takes to meet patient needs, with her feedback detailed below.

There are about 8450 patients at the practice, with a real mix of demographics. The staff team is made up of 1 partner GP and 4 other GPs (one becoming a partner next month), 1 advanced nurse practitioner, 1 clinical nurse practitioner who is training to become an advanced nurse practitioner, 1 advanced clinical practitioner, 4 nurses, 6 care navigators and 2 pharmacists. Although there is no Learning Disabilities Champion at the practice, the team have access to the Learning Disability Champion for the group of practices who is based at Shadsworth Surgery, and Bentham Road staff work closely with their team.

The GPs make regular referrals into social prescribing. One of the nurses at the practice leads on ensuring patients attend clinic appointments for diabetes, asthma, and cancer screening. The practice also has a Mental Health Practitioner who attends Bentham Road on alternate Mondays. She is fully utilized and is a great asset to the site, enabling them to offer valuable support to patients.

The practice staff work as a team to ensure that patients with health anxieties are managed appropriately e.g., seeing a consistent GP or practitioner. Longer appointments are made for patients that the practice feels needs them e.g., when Language Line is used, patients who are hard of hearing or have learning disabilities. There is a quiet room available at the practice, which is also used as a prayer room and for bereavement conversations.

There is a centralized phone hub based at Shadsworth Surgery which covers the 4 practices in the group which has the benefit of a Triage GP who will allocate same day appointments for patients who need them. The team at Bentham Road will take calls too during busy times. The practice does have patients who 'DNA,' but these are mainly patients with health anxieties or mental health issues. The practice does have a 3-letter approach but prefer not to strike patients off and will work with them to get them to attend, including GPs making phone calls to patients. "We do the best we can and we know we can't get everything right 100% but we always look to rectify any errors. The team work really well together with the mixed skillset that we have."

One of the nurses gave further feedback around clinics and screening and vaccinations uptake at the practice. "Uptake of cervical screening is good at the practice - we send letters and text or ring patients. The flu uptake is very good - we've had some decline, but we try our best and we can do home visits for over 75s. We offer preschool boosters and send out text messages. Diabetes clinics take place on a Thursday afternoon with the first part with a Healthcare Assistant and the second part with a nurse offering advice and discussing how patients are managing. The nurse will discuss compliance of patients with the GP. We also run asthma clinics here too. We now do blood tests here which is a great benefit to patients."

Feedback from Patients

ACCESSIBILITY

- **Are opening hours sufficient for your needs?**

All 14 patients we spoke with stated that opening hours were sufficient for their needs, however there was some lack of clarity on what opening hours actually were.

“Yes, they’re ok, maybe a bit earlier would be good.”

“Yes, but it might be better for patients if they did more evenings.”

“Yes, I think they stay open till 6.”

- **Is it easy to park or travel to?**

All 14 patients found the practice easy to travel to, with a mix of patients driving, walking or getting a taxi to the practice. Those who drove generally found parking easy, however one patient commented that the car park can be busy at school pick up and drop off times due to parents at the neighbouring Infant School using the practice car park.

- **How did you get your appointment today?**

Patients shared the feedback below, with some raising concerns about the length of time to get through on the phone, however those who used the callback option found this helpful. One patient commented that there was a variance between appointments available on the app to on the phone.

“I rang up which I find preferable to the app.”

“Sometimes I ring but I came in to speak to the receptionists at the desk this time.”

“This was a follow up appointment so was already booked. They’re really good at rescheduling if you can’t make an appointment.”

“I rang up but sometimes use the NHS app which I’m able to use no problem.”

“The practice nurse booked me in for this appointment but usually I ring and it’s normally ok.”

“I rang on Monday for today’s appointment. It took an hour and 20 minutes, but I went for the call back option. The text reminders are helpful.”

“Sometimes I walk in because it’s easier than on the phone.”

“I just turn up here because there’s no point ringing. I come down at 8am.”

“I came up to the practice earlier to book an appointment because I always leave it too late to see the doctor!”

“I rang this morning and got a call back which works well.”

“A lady from the practice phoned us last week but usually we make an appointment by phone, and the call back system works ok.”

“I was number 80 in the queue at 8.30am when I tried booking an appointment for my mum who is deaf on a different occasion, so I just came down here this morning.”

“It took about 50 minutes to get through on the phone in the 8am rush.”

“I booked by phone but it’s not easy, it took about an hour.”

APPROACHABILITY

- **Are staff courteous and polite?**

All 14 patients found the staff to be good, with one patient sharing some negative feedback. Feedback included: -

“Scott’s lovely. Some can be a bit pushy on the phone.”

“They’re really polite kind staff and help out if I’ve missed an appointment.”

“Brilliant, very understanding.”

“Yes, even though it can get busy.”

“They’re lovely, really helpful.”

“Absolutely wonderful.”

“They are wonderful, 100%. They are friendly and helpful.”

“They’re good, really lovely.”

- **Would you recommend this GP surgery?**

Only 1 out of 14 patients stated that they would not recommend the practice and that was due to the waiting time to get an appointment. Other feedback included: -

“Yes, because of the really good staff. One of the receptionists is really great.”

“Yes - I come here because of the doctors who know me.”

“Yes, definitely we were transferred over here from Shadsworth Surgery when we moved house.”

“Yes, I’ve always had a good experience.”

RESPONSIVENESS

- **Do you get enough time with the doctor?**

All 14 patients felt that they had enough time with the doctor. People stated: -

“Sometimes it’s slightly rushed but it’s ok. I’ve had to wait 30 minutes today though.

“They’re understanding, I’ve never felt rushed.”

“Yes, usually all sorted in the time.”

“I don’t come here very often and always get enough time.”

“I try not to see them too much but yes!”

“Yes, and they’ve always been great.”

- **Do you have any understanding/experience of social prescribing?**

Only 1 patient had heard of social prescribing and that was due to the nature of their employment.

- **Has there been an occasion when you have felt you had to attend A and E rather than get a GP appointment?**

3 out of the 14 patients stated that they had accessed A and E rather than get a GP appointment, with one commenting that it was due to the condition he had. One patient stated “Yes for my son especially. I have also tried the out of hours GP” whilst another reported “Yes a couple of times but not recently and when you ring 111, they don’t send you to the out of hours GP.”

Any Other Comments

“Everything is 100%. I can’t fault them at all.”

“I can’t always see the GP, but all the staff are lovely.”

“They’re all really nice and professional. I can’t fault them.”

“I don’t find the phone message very helpful it goes on a long time and the check in screen is hit and miss.”

“They really do meet all the community’s needs; they are really good for everyone.”

“Wait times can be quite long, around 30 minutes at a time but I did ask to see the same doctor.”

“No problems, it runs as it should.”

“Scott is very helpful.”

Staff views

ACCESSIBILITY

- **How easy/difficult do you think it is to get an appointment with the GP (i.e. availability of GP appointments. Time spent on the telephone to get an appointment)?**

“It’s a mixture. We can do clinician same day appointments so there is access to appointments, and the hub has been helpful, and the callback service is good for patients who cannot stay on hold.”

“I know there’s been a lot of improvement since we’ve had the hub. Patients can always get clinician advice. We’re blessed to have a range of clinicians. A patient can always get in if they need a same day appointment.”

“It’s been easier since the variety of options has been established including Patches online. The phone queue can be off-putting I know. The hub triage calls and there is a call back option for patients.”

- **Do people generally get to see the GP on time?**

“I would say so.”

“We tell people that if you’ve been waiting do let us know. Most tend to run to time. If we are aware of a wait we will inform the patient. Generally, patients are seen on time.”

“I would say so. It’s rare we see it go over half an hour. We do try to look out for patients who have waited a while and after 30 minutes encourage them to come to the desk. Patients are understanding of why there are delays.”

APPROACHABILITY

- **How do you identify and support more vulnerable patients (for example those with learning difficulties)**

“We note this on their records with coding for example for patients with learning disabilities. Sometimes patients will tell you. We have a quiet space available if the main waiting room is too much for patients and we let the GPs know that they are in there.”

“For patients we know are vulnerable we have a note alert on their records, so we are aware of it. We keep accessibility in mind when booking appointments, including addressing language barriers. We get to know our patients well.”

“There are alerts on the screen if patients are ringing for an appointment. We are aware of our vulnerable patients as a team and help where we can. We use language line to address language barriers and there are different languages spoken by staff.”

RESPONSIVENESS

- **Do you have a Social Prescriber attached to the practice and do you refer to them?**

“We have the information as to how to send a patient to social prescribing.”

“GPs generally refer patients, but we can too.”

“GPs refer to them, but I am aware of the service.”

- **How do you manage DNA appointments. Why do you think that some people seem to access A and E rather than primary care?**

“We have a 3-strike rule with letters, and we do get a lot of DNAs, but we try other things rather than striking off. I don’t think we have many who go straight to A and E.”

“I’m not aware of any regarding A and E. They trust us to chase up a consultant, and I would say that they come here first.”

“DNAs are identified by alerts, and the admin team are aware. It’s not been an issue recently. The hub system is working to reduce the need to go to A and E.”

“Patients do go to A and E instead of getting an appointment sometimes.”

Any other comments?

“I’ve worked here for 14 years and I love it.”

“I think we do go above and beyond to help patients. We try to reach a solution with any interaction. I feel that we are an accessible practice, we have a lovely family.”

“I enjoy it. It’s nice to feel that you make a difference and we have a close trust amongst the team - we’re a family here.”

“I’ve been here 10 years I like it. The other staff and patients make it worthwhile. I’ve always felt well supported here; we care. Parking can be an issue in school pick up and drop off times. Most of the time it’s ok, busy times can be difficult.”

Response from provider

"We are very pleased with Healthwatch's report and grateful for the recognition of our team's efforts. We will continue striving for excellence in all that we do."

Site Manager, Bentham Road Health Centre

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