

Peel House Medical Practice

Patient Engagement Day

Contact details:

Peel House Medical Practice
Accrington PALS Primary Care Centre
1 Paradise Street
Accrington
BB5 2EJ

Dates and times of visit:

17th May 8.30am - 1pm
24th May 1pm – 6.30pm

**Healthwatch Lancashire
representatives:**

Amanda Higgins (Lead Project Officer)
Ilyas Patel (Project Officer)
Barbara Everitt (Volunteer)

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Introduction

Healthwatch Lancashire is committed to listening to patients and members of the public in Lancashire and making sure their views and experiences are heard by those who run, plan and regulate health and social care services.

On the 17th and 24th May, 2016, two project officers and one volunteer from Healthwatch Lancashire gathered survey responses from patients at Peel House Medical Practice in Accrington, to obtain the views of people using the service and to observe the environment.

This report summarises reviews from 44 patients.



DISCLAIMER

This report relates only to the service viewed at the time of the visit, and is only representative of the views of the patients who met members of the Patient Engagement Day team on that date.

General Information

Peel House Medical Practice is a privately owned GP surgery with 14,759 registered patients. It is currently accepting new patients. The surgery opening times are usually between 8.30am and 6.30pm. There are online facilities including booking appointments, ordering repeat prescriptions and viewing test results. The surgery offers annual health checks for patients with learning disabilities. The Practice Manager is Melanie Walker.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Lancashire would like to thank the patients for taking part in the surveys. We would also like to thank the Practice Manager, Melanie Walker, together with the staff at the surgery, for making us feel so welcome during the visit.

Methodology

This visit was arranged as part of Healthwatch Lancashire's Patient Engagement Day schedule. From September 2015 to May 2016 these were undertaken in hospital settings and revealed the value of speaking with the public within the health setting being discussed. As such, a new phase of Patient Engagement Days began in May 2016, focusing on patients' experiences of GP surgeries.

The focus of this phase of Patient Engagement Days is to gather patients' views on the accessibility of their GP surgery, the quality of care provided and the awareness of patient involvement via Patient Participation Groups. The team of project officers and volunteers interview patients in the waiting room and record their feedback. The team also collates observations of what is seen on the visits.

The team compile a report reflecting these observations and feedback. The report is sent to the manager of the facility for validation of the facts. Any response from the manager is included with the final version of the report which is published on the Healthwatch Lancashire website at:

healthwatchlancashire.co.uk/reports



Patient Engagement Day Observations

Location

The facility is located close to the town centre and is accessible by bus. A pharmacy is located on site, with access from Accrington PALS Primary Health Care Centre.

External Environment

The car park appears to have adequate spaces, designated disabled parking and pedestrian crossings.

Internal Environment-First Impressions

Peel House Medical Practice is on the first floor of Accrington PALS Primary Health Care Centre. There is disabled access to the surgery via a lift from the ground floor and the surgery has wide doors throughout the building, including automatic doors at the entrance. There is clear signage to Peel House Medical Practice from the entrance to the building. On the days of the visits, the surgery was busy but appeared organised and clean. The seating in the surgery appeared adequate and we did not see any patients struggling to find a seat. There was music being played in the waiting room. Patients were called in quickly by the doctor or nurse to their appointments who came across as friendly, personable, caring and professional.

Reception

There was one receptionist on duty during both visits to the surgery, which seemed to be the reason why a queue quickly built up at reception. Patients did not tend to use the self-check in machine. Interactions between reception staff and patients appeared professional and friendly at all times.

Patient Involvement

There were several informative and well-presented noticeboards that were positioned in prominent places in the waiting room. There was information about the Patient Participation Group which had a 'you said, we did' section, detailing some of the issues raised by the group, and what actions the surgery had taken as a result.



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The Patient Engagement Days at Peel House Medical Practice took place on the 17th and 24th May, 2016. 44 people shared their views

Results - Access and Booking Appointments

1. We asked: 'How did you make your appointment for today?'

Telephone	Online	At reception	Repeat appointment
57 %	7 %	16 %	20 %

2. We asked: 'Do you use online booking?'

9 % said Yes

91 % said No

3. We asked those that answered No to Q2: 'why is this?'

Don't use a computer	Don't want to	Unaware of it	Don't have log in details yet
10 %	52 %	36 %	2 %

Most patients did not use online booking to make appointments because they did not want to or were unaware of the service. Some patients told us that routine appointments could only be booked online, which caused problems:

"I don't come that often, so wouldn't bother with online booking"

"I don't know how to use the online booking system"

"I use online booking when I can remember my password, but they can only be booked for none emergency appointments. If you don't get on the phone at 8.30am you won't get an appointment that day. Patients can't book routine appointments other than online so I have to book emergency appointments"



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4. We asked: 'Did you get a reminder for your appointment today?'

53 % said Yes

47 % said No

One patient told us how important they felt appointment reminders were:

"I have a habit of missing appointments or showing up on the wrong day, so getting text reminders are really useful for me"

5. We asked: 'Overall, how would you rate your experience of booking your appointment for today?'

27 % said Poor

25 % said Could Be Improved

48 % said Excellent

Almost half of patients found booking appointments excellent, although the majority felt that their experience was poor or could be improved. Of those that commented further, some patients told us they were unhappy with the service provided by reception staff:

"Reception staff are not very willing to book you appointments unless you insist, so I would say they are not very caring"

"Reception staff are unpleasant"

"I do not find the reception staff caringI think they ask too many questions"

"The phone manner of reception is terrible"

"The reception staff can be off hand. I don't like being asked personal details"

Some patients felt they had to wait too long for appointments:

"I've had this appointment booked since April, it's very poor" (Women's Health Contraception Team)

"It was excellent today, but sometimes I can't get appointments for months"

"I had to come back three times because my doctor was on holiday"

Other comments:

One patient struggled to hear his name being called by the doctor: *"I'm not happy because I am hard of hearing and GPs do not shout loud enough to call me in"*

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6. We asked: 'Do you find it difficult to get same day/urgent appointments?'

86 % said Yes

9% said No

5% were Not Applicable

Most patients struggled to book same day or urgent appointments at the surgery:

"It's very hard to get appointments. I was 17th in the queue at 8.30am. I need appointments in the afternoon which I get but it takes a long time. You've got to be really sick to bother trying"

"It's not good getting appointments here. They say to ring at 8.30am but then there's nothing left when you get through. If I get an appointment I am lucky"

"Today is the only time I have got an appointment easily. They don't answer the phone usually"

Some patients felt that the surgery's policy on not allowing appointments to be booked in advance, was problematic:

"When I phoned up yesterday to book an appointment, it told me I was first in line for about 40 minutes. When I got through, there were no appointments left, they booked me one for today, but they don't do this usually"

"It's difficult getting appointments. I find it strange that sometimes I can get an appointment for the next day but other times they don't let you do this. I can be stuck in the queue for 45 minutes. I find it strange that appointments cannot be booked in advance. The guidance on this is not clear"

Some patients found that by attending the surgery in person on the day, they were more likely to get a same day appointment:

"If you come to the surgery between 8am and 8.30am, you'll get an appointment there and then. They're pretty good here"

"I had to come to the surgery at 8.15am today to get an appointment. It says on the answer phone that no one is answering phone calls until 8.50am "this number is not taking calls at the moment"

Most patients that were working on the day found booking same day or urgent appointments more difficult than those that were not working:

"I work and so can't queue up at the door at 8.30am like other patients. It costs a lot of money phoning the surgery on my mobile. The waiting times are very long, particularly for seeing my own doctor, which is virtually impossible unless the doctor books it as a repeat"

"Being stuck on the phone for a long time is difficult when I work 9am - 5pm. I can't stay on the phone for a long time. Booking routine appointments is easy because the midwife books them"

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7. We asked: 'Do you find it difficult to get routine appointments?'

31% said Yes

26% said No

43% were Not Applicable

Patients tended to find it easier to make routine appointments than same day or urgent appointments:

"It's been good today but normally it is difficult. I can't get through to reception on the phone, they don't answer and it takes too long. The practice nurse booked my repeat appointment for today"
"My appointment was booked through the nurse so it was easy"

8. We asked: 'Do you have any difficulties getting to the surgery? E.g. transport, walking distance, parking'

9% said Yes

91% said No

Most patients did not have any difficulties getting to the surgery, although some patients did experience problems:

"I live far away so I have to come by taxi"
"The bus route is not convenient"
"I have to rely on my daughter"

One patient felt that the surgery should be located on the ground floor:

"I don't think they should have the surgery on the second floor. It means if you can't take the stairs you need to get in the lift"

Some patients felt that the check in system at reception required improvement:

"The check in machine never works, so once you've queued up for that and found it to not work, you have to re-join the reception queue. They have doubled or tripled their patient numbers but have reduced the number of reception staff. You can be waiting for over 10 minutes to be seen at the desk"
"Sometimes the desk is busy so it takes a while to be seen so you worry about missing your appointment"

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9. We asked: 'Are the opening times here convenient for you?'

93% said Yes

7% said No

Most patients felt that the opening times were convenient. However, patients that attended the surgery later on in the evening, felt that, due to work restrictions, the opening times were inconvenient:

"The opening hours are not convenient for me. I need the surgery to be open longer hours into the evening"

"It's difficult to get appointments after 5pm, which I need because I work. I have to wait a long time"

"It is extremely difficult to get an appointment after 5pm. I first had a telephone appointment 6-7 weeks ago. I had to wait that long to see the doctor that they dealt with me on the phone. I wasn't given an option to see a different doctor but I wouldn't have wanted to, as I wanted to see the doctor that I had spoken to on the phone"

"I've been waiting weeks to get an appointment. Early morning appointments would be better. Getting appointments after 4.30pm is horrendous. I can't just keep coming out of work for appointments"

"The opening times are just about convenient. It closes at 6.30pm and I can get here for 6pm"

Results - Quality of Care

10. We asked: 'How do you find the staff?'

75% said Very Caring **2%** were Unhappy with Staff **23%** were Unhappy with Some Staff

11. We asked: 'Do you tend to feel listened to during your appointments?'

82% said Yes

2% said No

16% said Sometimes

Most patients tended to feel listened to in their appointments, although some felt that this depended on the doctor they had an appointment with:

"It depends what doctor I get to see in terms of the care. If I get my own doctor, the care is good otherwise I feel like I'm talking to myself"

"I definitely feel listened to during appointments"



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12. We asked: 'Do you tend to find the information you receive in your appointments helpful?'

81% said Yes

5% said No

14% said Sometimes

Most patients tended to find the information received in appointments helpful, although some felt that this depended on the doctor they had an appointment with:

"Seeing different doctors in every appointment has caused me problems. They kept telling me I had a problem with my stomach but eventually one of the doctors saved me and found the problem. I only feel listened to and get helpful information from that doctor"

"I feel too rushed in appointments to go into detail"

13. We asked: 'Overall, how satisfied are you with the care provided?'

0% said Unsatisfied

60% said Satisfied

40% said Very Satisfied

All patients were either satisfied or very satisfied with the care provided at the surgery, although one patient felt that her care was affected due to the age of one of the doctors:

"It's embarrassing talking to doctors that are a lot younger than yourself about women's problems. It's like talking to your son about it, so I end up not telling them anything and coming away with something else"

Some patients felt that the care provided depended on the doctor seen:

"I've not seen the same doctor for three years which causes a lack of consistency when prescribing"

"The quality of care depends on which doctor you see"

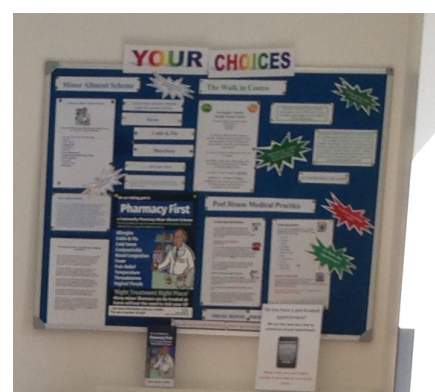
"The doctors change so much I couldn't comment much on the quality of care provided"

Results - Patient Involvement

14. We asked: 'Have you heard of the surgery's Patient Participation Group?'

7% said Yes

93% said No



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15. We asked those that answered No to Q14: 'Is this something you would be interested in?'

5% said Yes **75%** said No **18%** said Maybe **2%** were already a member

Most patients had not heard of their Patient Participation Group and most were uninterested in joining. Of those that commented on the reasons for not joining, lack of free time was the main reason given:

"I don't have time to join the PPG"

"I would join the PPG if I had more time"

Other comments about patient involvement:

"I read the newsletter and there is information about the surgery in there"

"I don't like the way the questions are asked in the friends and family test questions. It would be better if it just said press 1 etc"

"I would be interested in speaking with the PPG if I had an issue"

Patient Stories

Here are some patient stories we have received from other community engagement activities, and from our website about Peel House Medical Practice:

"I think it is very good when I get an appointment with my GP, but it usually takes around one to two weeks. The information I am given during appointments depends on the doctor I see, as I never get to see the same doctor. I think there is an issue with continuation of the service and the knowledge different GPs have of my care and treatment" (Patient from Accrington)

"It is very difficult to get an appointment when you have to phone up at 8.30am continuously. It can take two to three weeks for an appointment if you want to see a particular doctor. I would see anybody though - doctors, cleaners, nurse, anyone, so long as I get an appointment quickly" (Patient from Accrington)

"The doctors are not there for us when we need to get an appointment. When I can't get an appointment for my mum, we end up going to A&E at Royal Blackburn Hospital. They then tell us to go back to the GP. My mum doesn't speak English so I have to book her appointments. She gets mad with me because she thinks it is me not trying hard enough to get her an appointment. She doesn't understand how it can be so difficult. It's really upsetting" (Carer from Accrington)

Healthwatch Lancashire Summary of Findings

Here is a summary of findings from the visits to Peel House Medical Practice:

- Most patients booked their appointments over the telephone and most did not use online booking. Of those that did not use online booking, the main reasons given were that they did not want to or were unaware of it.
- 91% of patients said that they did not have any difficulties getting to the surgery.
- 86% of patients said that they found it difficult to book same day or urgent appointments.
- Some patients told us that routine appointments could only be booked online, and same day or urgent appointments could not be booked other than on the day, which caused problems.
- Almost half of patients found booking appointments excellent, although the majority felt that their experience was poor or could be improved. Of those that commented further, some patients told us they were unhappy with the service provided by reception staff.
- Most patients that attended the surgery later in the evening, felt that due to work restrictions, the opening times were inconvenient. They also tended to have more difficulties booking appointments, due to not being able to wait on the phone in a queue, or able to attend the surgery in person at 8am.
- Most patients found the staff caring, felt listened to during their appointments and found the information they received in their appointments helpful. No patients were unsatisfied with the care provided.
- Most patients had not heard of their Patient Participation Group and most were uninterested in joining. Of those that commented on the reasons for not joining, lack of free time was the main reason given.

Response from provider

Action Statement

No.	Issues raised by patients	Response or action from provider	To be addressed by	Name of manager responsible
1.	Queues at reception/reduced number of reception staff	We will endeavour to have 2 reception staff members on the front desk when staffing levels permit. 2 new staff have recently been recruited	November 2016	M Walker
2.	Discussing need for appointment with receptionist	This is to enable staff to direct patients to the most appropriate clinician	Ongoing	M Walker
3.	Check in machine often not working	We will ensure this is checked regularly to assist with a smooth check in service for patients	Ongoing	M Walker
4.	Patients unaware of online booking	Information is on our website and has been in our quarterly newsletter and there are notices up in Reception. We can add a note to the side of prescriptions and send a text message to patients who have provided their mobile number to the Practice	September	M Walker
5.	Confusion about what appointments can be booked online	Receptionist to provide as much information as possible to patients either at the desk or on the telephone	Ongoing	M Walker
6.	Long telephone queues in the morning	Unfortunately, we have no control over how many patients are ringing in to the Practice at any given time, although we do and will continue to have increased numbers of staff answering the telephone at peak times	Ongoing	M Walker
7.	Confusion about not being able to book appointments in advance	Increase awareness within Reception team of how important it is to continually explain the system to patients	Ongoing	M Walker
8.	Appointment booking system for people who work – less capacity to phone at 8am and hold in a queue	We offer telephone consultations to help working people, they also need to be encouraged to register for on-line services, this will help ease the pressure for them.	Ongoing	M Walker
9.	Appointments for people who work – less flexible appointment options (often late afternoon required so length of wait for appointment	We don't have any restrictions on who can book appointments and cannot hold slots back. Unfortunately, we would never know whether someone is working or not even if they say they are, however, we will always try to help and accommodate individual circumstances	Ongoing	M Walker

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	becomes longer)			
10.	Lack of awareness of PPG and options available for how to feed into it?	There is a large notice board in the main waiting/ reception area and information on our website. The PPG will be spending time on Saturday in the Practice whilst our Flu clinics take place, they will chat with patients about who they are and what they do	October 2016	M Walker

Additional questions:

1. Is the report factually accurate? If not, please state what needs to be changed and why

There seems to be a misconception amongst patients about what we do and how appointments can be booked.

2. Have you learnt anything new about the experiences of the patients at your surgery as a result of this exercise?

It is disappointing to read that some patients feel reception staff are unhelpful and think they ask too many questions.

There is also some misunderstanding of the appointment system too as we try to offer a variety of appointments each day. These include on the day appointments, book ahead up to 6 weeks in advance, telephone appointments and on-line appointments. I suppose the difficulty we have is two-fold; capacity and no control over what a patient will want on any particular day, hence the reason why we try to offer a variety.

I think the appointment system and our patients' satisfaction is something we need to improve, even if it is only to ensure each person feels they understand the system and have a choice of when to be seen.

Communication is at the heart of the report. It is important that we get this right to help patients understand our services to be able to access the right one for them.

3. What was your impression of Healthwatch Lancashire during this exercise? Do you think they could have done anything better?

The work you have done with our patients in collating this information is certainly very useful for our Practice to enable the shaping of future systems.

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