

Westgate Medical Practice

Patient Engagement Day

Contact details:

Westgate Medical Practice
Braddon Close
Westgate
Morecambe
LA4 4UZ

Date and time of visit:

Thursday 14th July 2016 – 2.00pm – 7.30pm
Tuesday 26th July 2016 – 8.00am – 1.00pm

**Healthwatch Lancashire
representatives:**

Ilyas Patel (Lead Project Officer)
Becky Willshaw (Project Officer)
Keith Middleton (Volunteer)
David Barnett (Volunteer)

V2.1

Healthwatch Lancashire Patient Engagement Day Report

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 Thursday 14th July and Tuesday 26th July, two project officers and two volunteers from Healthwatch Lancashire gathered survey responses from patients at Westgate Medical Practice in Morecambe, to obtain the views of people using the service and to observe the environment.

This report summarises reviews from 30 patients.



DISCLAIMER

This report relates only to the service viewed at the times of the visits, and is only representative of the views of the patients who met members of the Patient Engagement Day team on those dates.

General Information

Westgate Medical Practice is a privately owned GP surgery and has 8119 patients registered. It is currently accepting new patients. The surgery opening times are usually between 8am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday with extended hours on Thursday until 8pm. 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 Helen Freschini.

Methodology

These visits were 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. This enabled the public to influence hospital services through Healthwatch Lancashire discussing the findings with hospital trusts, and requesting responses and action plans where necessary. As such a new phase of Patient Engagement Days began in June 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 speak with 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 the feedback gained. 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

This report reflects the views of 30 patients who we spoke with at the surgery, however, not all surveys were completed in full. This is often due to the patient being called in to their appointment during the questionnaire. As such, the total number of patients that answered each question will be detailed in brackets under the results of each question.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Lancashire would like to thank the patients for taking part in this survey. We would also like to thank the Practice Manager, Helen Freschini, together with the staff at the surgery, for making us feel so welcome during the visits.

Patient Engagement Day Observations

Location

The facility is based in Morecambe and has a pharmacy next door. The surgery is located close to the town centre and is accessible by bus.

External environment

All patient services are at ground floor level and have a wheelchair available for patient use. The car park is small with seven spaces available and one designated disabled parking space. There is on-street parking but this is limited. The surgery is accessible for disabled and elderly patients.

Internal environment – first impressions

On the days of the visits the surgery appeared clean and in good condition. During the first visit, the staff had not been informed that Healthwatch Lancashire were visiting but this was dealt with promptly by reception. The staff were very friendly and welcoming. The seating in the surgery appeared adequate and we did not see any patients struggling to find a seat. Patients were alerted to their appointments by a bell and their name appearing on a screen advising which room to go to and which GP they would be seeing. One doctor came out and called a patient by their name in person, as they had missed their name on the screen.

Reception

The majority of patients used a self-check in machine to notify the surgery that they had arrived for their appointment. However, it was observed that a minority of patients were unable to check-in using the self-check-in machine and had to speak to the reception. The reception staff helped with the matter and signed them in.

Patient involvement

There was an information board in the surgery which displayed leaflets and posters about local activities and support groups. Information on the surgery's Patient Participation Group was also displayed. The noticeboards were well presented and very colourful.

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The Patient Engagement Days at Westgate Medical Practice took place on Thursday 14th and Tuesday 26th July 2016. 30 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
84%	0%	13%	3%

(30 people answered)

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

0% said Yes

100% said No

(30 people answered)

3. We asked those that answered No to Question 2: 'why is this?'

Don't use a computer	Don't want to	Unaware of it	Don't have log in details yet	Can't book urgent appointments using it / unsuitable
22%	30%	30%	11%	7%

(27 people answered)

None of the patients we spoke with used the online booking system and the main reasons given were that they were unaware of it or did not want to. Some patients did not use a computer. One patient commented further to say that they did not use online booking due to the availability of appointments when using the service:

"I do not use the online booking system as you can never get the time you require. The repeat prescription is messed up and the pharmacy do not have it, the pharmacy said I need to speak to the practice. The receptionist was unhelpful when I complained about it."

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

45% said Yes

17% said No

38% were not applicable

(29 people answered)

Most of the patients surveyed received a reminder for their appointment on the days of the visits.

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

66% said yes

17% said No

17% said Not Applicable

(30 people answered)

The majority of patients surveyed said they found it difficult to book same day or urgent appointments at the surgery. The main reason given was waiting in a telephone queue for a long time:

"You have to wait so long on the phone and when you get through nothing is available."

"The phone line is always engaged."

"Sometimes I have been in a queue for 30 to 60 minutes."

"I called today and was on hold for a long time before someone answered the phone. It is always really busy in the surgery. I moved from Galgate Surgery and it seemed a lot quieter there."

"You can never get appointments unless you keep ringing. Then it is a waiting game."

"Prior to booking this appointment, I rang on Monday and tried for an hour to get through, eventually I gave up. I thought the surgery had closed down."

"It has taken me 50 minutes to get through to book an appointment. It is a shame that you have to wait this long."

"It is difficult to get through on the phone but when you do get through the staff will try and help."

"Once you get through on the phone it is fine."

Some patients did not feel that the booking system was convenient for working people:

"Booking appointments could be more flexible around work commitments."

Some patients discussed the difficulties in not being permitted to book appointments in person at reception:

"If you come in person to book an appointment for the next day you get told that you will have to ring."

"If you come in and try to book an appointment they tell you they can't be released for the next day and I don't understand why not. More weekend and evening appointments would help. It is the nature of the game. You can't keep your illness within the hours of 9am to 5pm."

"You can never get through on phone, the line is always engaged. So I went to the surgery to request and appointment but was told I had to go home and ring."

Some patients felt it was easier to book appointments for their children:

"It is easier to get an urgent appointment for a child but it is difficult for me and my partner."

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Some patients felt that the waiting times for an appointment were too long:

"Waiting times are around four weeks to see your GP."

"I tried to get an appointment yesterday for an ongoing health condition but was told there was nothing available for seven weeks."

"It is usually fairly good but sometimes you wait a while."

Some patients struggled to phone the surgery between 8am and 9am:

"If you don't ring between 8am and 9am you will not be able to get an appointment for that day as all available slots are taken."

Some patients felt that booking appointments at the surgery had improved:

"The appointment system has definitely improved in the last 12 months."

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

38% said Yes

34% said No

28% said Not Applicable

(29 people answered)

Some patients struggled to book routine appointments although many patients did not have any difficulties:

"You cannot get a routine appointment, something always goes wrong."

"You cannot get a routine appointment for a month and a half."

"My routine appointments are really good; I never have any issues."

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7. We asked: 'Overall, how would you rate your experience of booking appointments at this surgery?'

24% said Poor **66%** said Could Be Improved **10%** said Excellent

(29 people answered)

The majority of patients we spoke with said that the booking system could be improved or was poor. A minority felt it was excellent:

"For me to get an appointment is very hard, sometimes it is near impossible."

"It is very hard to book an appointment."

"The appointment system here is a shambles."

"There could be more flexibility in appointments for people who work and cannot attend 9am to 5pm."

"It is easier to ring in the afternoon and book an appointment."

"The appointment availability could be better."



Some patients had suggestions on how they felt the booking system could be improved:

"Maybe have more people answering the phone."

"Maybe look at other surgeries and see how they handle a large volume of calls and try to use their system."

"The staff are really good and just need more help."

"It is definitely not big enough for the number of patients – we need more doctors."

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

24% said Yes **72%** said No **4%** said sometimes

(29 people answered)

The majority of patients did not have any difficulties getting to the surgery.

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

83% said Yes

17% said No

(29 people answered)

The majority of patients felt that the opening times were convenient. Some patients felt that extending the opening times would improve the service:

"Closing at 6pm is not ideal for me due to working out-of-town."

"Opening at the weekend would be a big help."

Results - Quality of Care

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

80% said happy with staff **20%** were happy with most staff **0%** were unhappy with staff

(29 people answered)

The majority of patients surveyed were happy with the staff whilst a small number of patients were happy with most of the staff. Some patients discussed how happy they were with reception staff:

"The reception staff go out of their way to help."

"The reception staff are very friendly."

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

72% said Yes

0% said No

28% said Sometimes

(29 people answered)

The majority of patients said that they felt listened to during their appointments although some felt that this depended on the doctor they had an appointment with:

"I went to see my doctor regarding my issue, rather than helping me he was busy talking about his life history. He was a locum but I felt this was not good."

"My GP is really good and listens to me."

Some patients felt that the limited appointment time affected the care they received:

"You can never see the same doctor; how can they look through all my medical notes, which are not short, in the time they have."

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

72% said Yes

4% said No

24% said Sometimes

(25 people answered)

The majority of patients said that they found the information received in their appointments helpful although some did not always find the information helpful.

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

24% said Very Satisfied

69% said Satisfied

7% said Unsatisfied

(29 people answered)

The majority of patients were either satisfied or very satisfied with the care provided:

"I have no issues here with the care."

"The care provided here has definitely improved."

One patient felt that the care provided would be improved if they could see their own GP:

"The care provided is really good but it could be even better if you could see your own GP rather than a different one when you go in."

"It would be a big help if there was a continuity of seeing the same GP. You can never see the same GP twice. You have to waste your time explaining everything again."

Results - Patient Involvement

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

19% said Yes

81% said No

(27 people answered)

The majority of patients had not heard of the surgery's Patient Participation Group.

15. We asked those that answered No to Question 14: 'Is this something you would be interested in?'

10% said Yes

73% said No

17% said Maybe

(29 people answered)

The majority of patients were uninterested in joining the surgery's Patient Participation Group.

"I am not well enough."

"I have heard of it because I work in another surgery. They are not very advanced with it here."

16. We asked those that answered Yes or Maybe to Question 15, 'How would you like to be involved?'

Attend regular meetings only	Online only	Attend both meetings and online
67%	0%	33%

(3 people answered)

Patient stories

Here are some more in-depth comments we received during the two visits at Westgate Medical Practice:

"If you don't ring up between 8am and 9am you don't get an appointment. Last week I got through and I got an appointment for August. Since the surgeries have become part of Coastal Medical there have been more difficulties getting an appointment with the doctor you want to see. You need to see the same doctor but every time you come you see a different doctor. How can they build knowledge of my medical problems if it is a different doctor every time?"

"It is not possible to make a booking at reception unless your doctor has said you need one in your appointment. You have to wait so long on the phone. There are too many patients. Afternoons are better for getting through on the telephone but then they tell you that you have to phone back in the morning to make an appointment for the next day."

"It is difficult to phone in but they do always try and fit you in if they can. I never see the same doctor twice so I can't build up relationships. They used to know you and all your family. Now it is the third doctor I have seen for the same problem so I waste time explaining."

"I tried phoning yesterday for an appointment but I was told the next one would be in seven weeks for an on-going health problem. Weekends would be handy so I don't have to rely on out of hours' service, they can't prescribe certain medication for out of hours. Some reception staff are a bit harsh, but most are brilliant."

Here are some comments we have received from other community engagement activities, and from our website about Westgate Medical Practice:

"The appointment for the warfarin clinic is not frequent enough. This needs to be every two weeks, but at this surgery it can take up to four weeks."

"Appointments here are a shambles, it is not as good as Galgates. The locum doctor just talked about the British Medical Association. I always seem to see different doctors. Locums here are poor. Routine monitoring of long term health issues i.e. thyroid, doesn't happen."

"It is not fair that you cannot come in to the surgery to book a same day appointment. The phone is always busy. Sometimes I struggle with parking as all of the spaces are taken."

"I have a four week waiting time to see an allocated GP. I feel that the turnover of GPs is very high. The phone line is always engaged which means driving and calling in to the surgery is an easier option for making appointments."

"I feel I have extreme difficulties getting appointments so have decided to move to another surgery."

"The appointment system here is very poor. Sometimes you have to wait five to six weeks to see your designated GP."

Healthwatch Lancashire summary of findings

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

- The majority of patients made their appointments by phone or in person.
- None of the patients used the online booking system to book appointments and the main reasons given were that patients were unaware, did not want to or did not use a computer.
- Most of the patients received a reminder for their appointments on the days of the visits.
- 66% of patients found it difficult to get same day/urgent appointments. The most common problem was trying to get through on the phone and being on hold for a long time.
- The majority of patients said that the booking system could be improved or was poor.
- The majority of patients did not have any difficulties getting to the surgery.
- The majority of patients found the opening times of the surgery convenient. However, some patients commented that extending the opening times would be a beneficial due to work commitments.
- 80% of the patients were happy with staff and 20% of the patients were happy with most of the staff. Some patients were very complimentary about the reception staff.
- The majority of patients felt they were listened to during their appointments and found the information they received in their appointments helpful.
- The majority of patients were satisfied with the care provided and 24% said that they were very satisfied.
- 81% of the patients had not heard of the surgery's Patient Participation Group and most were uninterested in joining.

Response from provider

THE WESTGATE MEDICAL PRACTICE

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Action Statement

No.	Issues raised by patients	Response or action from provider	To be addressed by	Name of manager responsible
1.	Telephone access and access to urgent appointments	This will be addressed with the merger with Bay Medical Group 1 st October 2016 and subsequent development of improved access and services	Bay Medical Group	
2.	Access to regular GPs	Recruitment of regular GPs is underway as part of the merger with Bay Medical Group	Bay Medical Group	
3.	Access to Online Appointments	Improved advertising and availability of Online booking will take place during the coming months		Helen Freschini

Additional questions:

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

Yes, the report is factually accurate excluding one comment from a patient who said the service had deteriorated since we had merged with Coastal Medical Group as we have not yet merged with them.

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

The patient's responses represent a fair picture of the current service and the difficulties we are facing with an absence of regular GP staffing and a struggle to provide appointments and services.

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

The reception staff working during the times when Healthwatch visited found them to be very friendly and professional.

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