

Brierfield Health Care Centre

Patient Engagement Day

Contact Details:

Brierfield Health Care Centre
Arthur Street
Brierfield
BB9 5SN

Date and time of visits:

13th June, 2016 - 9am – 12.30pm
28th June, 2016 - 2pm – 5.30pm

**Healthwatch Lancashire
representatives:**

Amanda Higgins (Lead Project Officer)
Ilyas Patel (Project Officer)
Aysha Desai (Project Officer)
Lawrence Houston (Volunteer)
Carolyn Stuart (Volunteer)
Gill Green (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 Monday 13th and Tuesday 28th June, 2016, three project officers and three volunteers from Healthwatch Lancashire gathered survey responses from patients at Brierfield Health Care Centre, to obtain the views of people using the service, and to observe the environment.

This report summarises reviews from 28 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.

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General Information

Brierfield Health Care Centre is delivered by East Lancashire Medical Services Federated Practice and has 3697 registered patients. It is currently accepting new patients. The surgery opening times are usually 8.00am – 6.30pm and the surgery is closed at weekends. There are online facilities including booking appointments, ordering repeat prescriptions and viewing medical records. The surgery offers annual health checks for patients with learning disabilities. The Business Contracts Manager is David Massey and the Supervisor is Ann Molyneux.

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 28 people that 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 people 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 the surveys. We would also like to thank the Business Contracts Manager, David Massey, together with the staff at the surgery, for making us feel so welcome during the visits.



Patient Engagement Day Observations

Location

The surgery is in a residential area in Brierfield and is close to bus routes. There is a pharmacy on the same street as the surgery.

External Environment

Brierfield Health Care Centre is situated in a self-contained building on ground level. There is disabled access to the building via a ramp and wide doors throughout the surgery. A small car park at the front of the surgery was full on both visits, and many patients had parked on the road. There were spaces in a car park at the back of the surgery, which patients could use for a maximum of two hours with a Pendle Borough Council parking permit. There was clear signage to the surgery from outside of the building.

Internal Environment - First Impressions

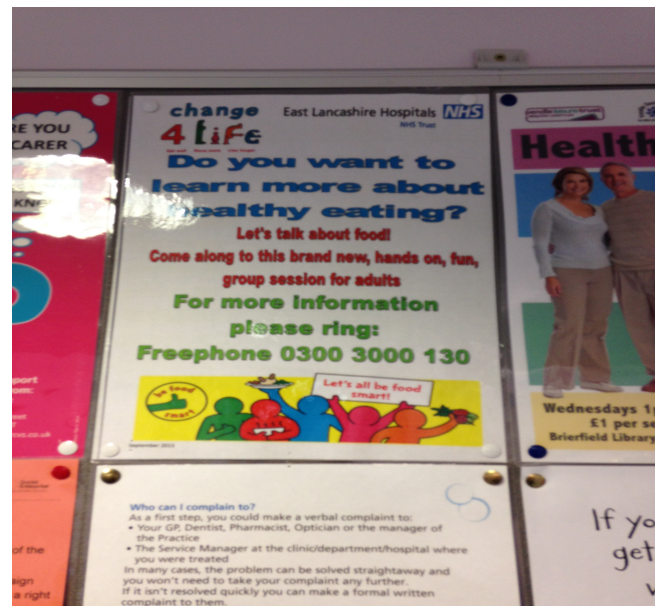
The internal environment was very welcoming, spacious, clean and in good condition. On the days of the visits, the surgery was very quiet. On the first visit, one GP's appointments were cancelled, as the GP could not attend work due to sickness. On the second visit, there was just one GP working. The seating in the surgery appeared adequate and we did not see any patients struggling to find a seat. Patients were called in to their appointments quickly by the GP or nurse, who appeared friendly, personable, caring and professional.

Reception

There were two receptionists on duty during both visits to the surgery and we did not see any patients waiting to be seen. Reception staff were receiving frequent telephone calls from patients. Interactions between reception staff and patients appeared professional and friendly at all times.

Patient Involvement

There was an informative and well-presented noticeboard in the waiting room that had details of health services and support groups available in the area. These were positioned in prominent places in the waiting room.



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The Patient Engagement Days at Brierfield Health Care Centre took place on Monday 13th and Tuesday 28th June 2016. 28 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
50 %	0 %	46 %	4 %

(Out of 28 people)

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

7 % said Yes **93 %** said No

(Out of 28 people)

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
24 %	32 %	44 %	0 %

(Out of 25 people)

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

13 % said Yes **87 %** said No

(Out of 24 people)

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

38 % said Poor **31 %** said Could Be Improved **31 %** said Excellent

(Out of 26 people)

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

81 % Said Yes

15 % said No

4 % said Not Applicable

(Out of 26 people)

The majority of patients struggled to book same day or urgent appointments at the surgery:

"I phoned 42 times on redial to get an appointment today."

"I phoned 18 times on redial before I got through to them. It is always full. I phoned at 8.06am and got the last appointment available today. I have phoned many times in the past before getting through"

"I can't get through to them on the phone"

"Waiting to get through on the telephone is a problem."

"There are no appointments left by 8.10am. I telephone at 8am constantly"

"Between 8am - 8.30am, it is constantly engaged"

"It is not possible to get appointments by phone or in person. Why travel to Pendle Valley when you live 5 minutes away from this surgery"

A minority of patients did not have any problems getting urgent appointments:

"I ring at 10am and don't have any problems making appointments or getting through to reception"

"Very satisfied with the booking service"

Some patients said that the surgery did not allow appointments to be booked in advance:

"They don't let you book appointments in advance by phone. I had to come to the surgery to book this appointment"

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

"The phones are busy first thing in the morning. Patients need to come to the surgery to book an appointment"

"I struggled to get through on the telephone; I tried for over 10 minutes and then came in person"

"The lines are always engaged and when you get through all appointments are gone. I had to come in person to get this appointment"

Some patients felt that they had to wait too long to get an appointment:

"It has taken two weeks to be seen for an appointment"

"I have to wait two weeks sometimes to get an appointment"

"I've been trying to get an appointment since last week. I ended up getting an appointment with the nurse for my son who has a tummy ache. My son has been complaining since last week about it"

Some patients were unhappy about seeing different GPs:

"There is an inconsistency with seeing the same GP"

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

27 % said Yes

35 % said No

38 % said Not Applicable

(Out of 26 people)

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

15 % said Yes

85 % said No

(Out of 26 people)

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

88 % said Yes

12 % said No

(Out of 25 people)

Results - Quality of Care

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

64 % said Very Caring **4 %** were Unhappy with Staff **32 %** were Unhappy with Some Staff

(Out of 25 people)

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

68 % said Yes

4 % said No

28 % said Sometimes

(Out of 25 people)

Most patients felt listened to during their appointments, although some did not and some felt that this depended on how busy the surgery was:

"My main issue is getting appointments. Staff can get frustrated and rude sometimes. It depends how busy they are as to whether I feel listened to"

"I do not feel listened to by the GP"

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

67% said Yes

4% said No

29% said Sometimes

(Out of 24 people)

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

17% said Unsatisfied

58% said Satisfied

25% said Very Satisfied

(Out of 24 people)

Most patients were satisfied with the care received, although some felt that the difficulties in getting an appointment impacted on their care:

"I highly recommend the service and I am very happy with the care"

"There are a lack of GPs and they are different each time you come. It is very difficult to get an appointment but the care given is ok"

"I do my own diagnosis when there are no appointments available"

"It was difficult getting to see the GP today as the only GP available is only doing pre-bookable appointments. Doctors are very good when you can see them"

"The only problem is getting appointments. The care is fantastic"

"The staff are all very nice, however, I am unsatisfied because I often do not get care, because they do not answer the phone. The surgery is running on one part-time doctor. The doctor is often sick or on holiday"

Some patients felt that the quality of care received depended on whether they see their own GP:

"I would prefer to see the same doctor. They know me well"

"I'm not happy to be seen by different GPs, but I am happy with my GP"

Other issues raised:

"I had an appointment with a trainee doctor who kept referring to another GP for advice"

"I think the surgery is just trying to save money and that is why they will not employ more doctors. The councillors deal with the issues we have here. I'm happy to see nurses or the doctor"

Results - Patient Involvement

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

4 % said Yes

96 % said No

(Out of 25 people)

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

12 % said Yes

48 % said No

40 % said Maybe

(Out of 25 people)

Patient Stories

Here is a patient story that we received about Brierfield Health Care Centre:

“Since my regular doctors have retired, it has been very difficult for me to get appointments. I have been very ill over the last few months and have been upset that I can't even get through to them on the phone to book an appointment. I phone the surgery in the morning at 8.15am and keep redialling, but often, all of the appointments have gone when I get through. I don't want to leave this surgery though; I have been a patient here for decades”
(Patient from Brierfield)

Healthwatch Lancashire Summary of Findings

Here is a summary of findings from the visits to Brierfield Health Care Centre:

- Most patients booked their appointments over the telephone or in person at reception.
- Almost all patients did not use the surgery's online booking system. The main reason given was that they were unaware of it, although many patients also said that they did not want to use online booking or did not have access to a computer.
- Most patients had not received a reminder for their appointment on the days of the visits.
- 69% of patients felt that their experience of booking appointments was poor or could have been improved. 31% found the experience of booking appointments to be excellent.
- 81% of patients said that they found it difficult to book same day or urgent appointments. Of those that commented further, most said that getting through to reception on the phone was the main issue. As a result, many patients attended the surgery to book their appointments.
- 85% of patients said that they did not have any difficulties getting to the surgery.
- Most patients found the staff caring, felt listened to during their appointments, and found the information they received in their appointments helpful. 31% of patients felt that this depended on the GP that they saw.
- Most patients were satisfied with the care provided, although some patients' perspectives on their care was impacted upon by the challenges they faced in getting appointments.
- Most patients had not heard of their Patient Participation Group, although 52% said that they may be interested in joining.

Response from Provider



Action Statement

No.	Issues raised by patients	Response or action from provider	To be addressed by	Name of manager responsible
1.	2. & 3. Online Booking	We already advertise the online booking service in the practice but we will increase the profile of this and review the availability of these appointments to encourage more to register.	31 st August 2016	H. O'Brien
2.	4. Reminders	We do use the MJOG text messaging service to send appointment reminders to patients. This relies on us having an up to date mobile phone number for the patient. We advertise very widely the need for patients to provide up to date mobile phone numbers on all communications including letters and prescriptions and also through posters in practice and by direct contact by staff with patients. Unfortunately despite these efforts, patients do not proactively inform us of changes to these numbers. We send several thousand messages every week via MJOG but this facility could be much better utilised. We will revisit the reminders that we issue to patients for them to update their mobile number details to see if it can be better presented. We will also work with our customer facing staff to remind them to request that patients confirm their up to date details.	31 st August 2016	H. O'Brien/ D. Massey
3.	6. Same day appts.	When the surgery was run by the PCT, they provided a drop in service at the practice. This type of service is now widely regarded as clinically unsafe and leads to high proportion of inappropriate attendances. Our clinicians are unwilling to accept the risk involved in this type of clinic where typically as many as 70 patients a day were being seen by individual clinicians in very short appointments, so we stopped them. However, this provision drove and supported a culture of seeking immediate access to the clinician often inappropriately which has been difficult to change. Under the PCT more than 70% of the appointments offered were on the day and we have changed the system to reflect the generally accepted view that about a third of appointments should be on the day while still making provision for genuinely urgent cases and children. National	Immediate	D. Massey

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		surveys have shown that about a third of patients <u>need</u> to be seen on the day. Patients often refuse or are disinclined to pre-book appointments preferring to ring daily at 8am to try and access on the day. The current waiting time (9.15am 29/07/16) is 4 days for a pre-bookable appointment which if you set against a national average of 13 days is not too bad. There will be times when this waiting time rises particularly during holiday periods etc. We have all available staff answering the phones from 8am and have upgraded the telephone system to provide more incoming lines. However, the concentration of calls at this time of the day exceeds our capacity, and it is impractical to employ staff just for an hour per day to answer the phone during this period. We regularly review our appointments system to ensure that capacity is maximised and will explore any ideas for improving call-handling capacity. Pre-bookable appointments are always available up to 6 weeks in advance and it is not true to say that we do not let patients book them by phone, in fact we would much prefer this. Pre-booking an appointment can be done anytime during opening hours by telephone, in person or on-line allowing patients to avoid the 8am to 9am rush on the phones or at the desk. We do accept that it is difficult to access the surgery by telephone particularly between 8am and 9am and we do request that unless the need is urgent, patients ring at other times. Patients may find it better to take their place in the queue on the phone than immediately hanging up and re-dialling when they hear the recorded message. "There are no appointments left by 8.10am". There are always pre-bookable appointments available but I accept there may not always be on the day appointments as we try to reserve those for genuine medical need rather than want. We always maintain appointments for clinically urgent cases and children. The only time I can think that a patient would have to wait for two weeks is when they have requested an appointment to see a specific clinician, perhaps at a specific time, rather than take an earlier available appointment; the waiting time for pre-bookable appointments at Brierfield Surgery should		
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		not rise that high unless it has been adversely affected in the short term by absence of a clinician for some reason. We have a strictly enforced policy that unwell children are seen the same day and it may have been totally appropriate for them to be seen by a nurse, there are patients who refuse to see a nurse or Advanced Nurse Practitioner and prefer to wait for a GP. In these cases it is recorded in the patients' notes that they have been offered an appointment but preferred to wait despite advice. I will ensure that all staff are reminded of the policy regarding appointments for unwell children. We have a fulltime male GP and a half time female GP plus one and a half whole time equivalent Advanced Nurse Practitioners based at Brierfield Surgery, plus a full nursing support team. These are permanent staff and only when they are off through sickness or holiday do we consider placing locums in the practice. This is to prevent too much "inconsistency in seeing the same GP". Locum cover nationally is becoming increasingly hard to source, both GPs and nurses. This has led to occasions when the cover in surgery has not been as we would want, although a safe level of cover is always maintained. This problem is likely to get worse before it gets better as the numbers of GPs leaving the profession continues to exceed those joining.		
4.	13. Satisfied	"Lack of GPs". We have a total of 2.55 GP equivalents (including ANPs), this equates to 1 per 1380 patients (approx.). I believe this is far above the East Lancs. (1 per 1800) and wider English average. Last year we provided 27,361 appointments (with all clinicians) at Brierfield equating to about 7.8 per registered patient. A recent survey we carried out identified that about 29.6% of appointments were inappropriate for the clinician attended and we had over 5000 DNAs in a 12 month period. I would suggest that while there is the perception that we have too few clinicians the fact is that a huge proportion of the appointments are wasted leading to this impression. We do not have "one part time doctor" we have 1 fulltime and one half time permanent GPs plus a full support team including 1 fulltime and one half time ANPs. (Recently we have included an extra		

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		ANP once per week, although this is not permanent). If the doctor is sick or on holiday then cover is provided as appropriate and subject to availability either from within our wider workforce or by locum. The GPs do not have significantly more sickness or holiday than expected. We do not have a “trainee doctor” at Brierfield Surgery; it is not an accredited training practice. Since inheriting the practice from the PCT we have to manage the issues at the practice within a restricted funding envelope. Simply employing more GPs is not an option for us. We are a not for profit organisation and all funding is invested in providing services, so we do have to ‘save money’. The funding for primary care services nationally does not keep pace with cost inflation and does not adequately reflect deprivation and the associated health consequences. This and the devolving of more services from secondary to primary care whilst simultaneously cutting the social care budget means that primary care is coming under ever increasing pressure and the nature of our community means we are particularly badly affected. We do meet regularly with the local councillors and the CCG who understand the issues that we have in the practice and are very supportive of the efforts that we are making. They accept that there are cultural issues that we have to deal with and are working alongside us to try and find solutions. I hope that we are starting to build a good relationship with them that we can continue to develop in the future.		
5.	14.	We do have a PPG and posters advertising it in practice. The group meets monthly in Brierfield Surgery. It would be good to have an increased presence at the group particularly from the BME community and we will explore what options we have to advertise the group more widely and to encourage greater participation.	31 st August	D. Massey

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Additional questions:

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

On the whole the report is factually accurate. There are some inaccuracies in patient statements reflecting their perception rather than fact.

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

The exercise has highlighted our suspicions that the patients' perception of the practice differs from our own in some respects and highlights that there is work to do to try and change that perception and also to manage the expectation of what can be provided in a GP practice under the current circumstances in primary care. We acknowledge that we still have work to do and will strive to continue to make improvements to the service and team at Brierfield and we welcome input from all agencies and patients to try and help achieve this.

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

Healthwatch Lancashire have been very helpful and supportive during this exercise and since we approached them. They have conducted themselves very professionally during the patient interview process and both prior and subsequent to this in our communications and meetings. It would be useful if there was a mechanism to share learning experience or identified good practice from other sites that have been visited as even small changes can often make a significant difference.

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