

# **The White Horse Medical Practice – Faringdon Enter and View Report**



**November 2024**



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### Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Oxfordshire would like to thank all the people we spoke to and heard from, and the staff at the White Horse Medical Practice, for their support and contribution to the Enter and View visit.

# 1. Visit details

## 1.1 Details of Visit

<b>Service Address</b>	<b>The White Horse Medical Practice, Volunteer Way, Faringdon, SN7 7YU</b>
<b>Service Provider</b>	White Horse Medical Practice
<b>Date and Time</b>	September 24th 2024. 10am to 1pm
<b>Authorised Representatives</b>	Veronica Barry, Amier Alagab
<b>Visit Status</b>	Announced
<b>Contact details</b>	01865 520520 Healthwatch Oxfordshire

## 1.2 Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, it is merely an account of observations and contributions made at the time of the visit.

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## 2. What is Enter and View?

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As the local Healthwatch for Oxfordshire, we have statutory powers under the Health and Care Act 2012, and Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, to carry out **'Enter and View'** visits to local health and care services.

Under this legislation, Enter and View visits can be made to any premises where health and social care is publicly funded – such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies.

Through an Enter and View visit we collect evidence of what is working well and identify how patient experience could be improved. We use what we hear and see on the day to report to providers and others with recommendations to inform change for health and care services we visit.

### 2.1 Purpose of the visit

- To observe how the facility operates and provides its services.
- To collect views from patients, volunteers and staff on services.
- To identify 'Best Practice' and highlight any areas of concern.
- To report what we see and hear to improve the quality of health and care services.

### 2.2 Strategic drivers

- Our visit to the White Horse Medical Practice at Faringdon was part of our ongoing Enter and View programme to listen to the health and social care experiences of people living in the county. We chose to visit a surgery in Faringdon because we were hearing from some members of the public about access issues to GPs in the area. We wanted to hear what is working well as well as where things could be improved.

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### 3. Summary of findings

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During our visit to the White Horse Medical Practice at Faringdon we heard from 20 patients and 11 staff members on the day. Please note these findings represent a portrayal of what we observed and heard about the experiences of the service users and staff on the day that we visited.

#### **Signage and information**

- The external signage is clear and informative, guiding visitors effectively throughout the parking area.
- We did not see a welcome sign at the entrance or the reception.
- The car park was very busy but well organised. There is dedicated disabled parking conveniently located near the building, making it accessible for individuals with mobility challenges. Bike racks are also available.
- The notice board regarding the Patient Participation Group (PPG) is a valuable resource, but currently lacks essential information that could enhance community engagement and participation.
- There was comprehensive information on display, including signs on self-care and vaccines.
- The practice has implemented a feedback mechanism that allows patients to share their comments and complaints. This system includes paper forms available in the reception area, along with a designated box for submitting these forms.
- In the main waiting room, there is an NHS screen that displays health information. However, some of the images shown on the screen were reported to be very blurred.
- The clinician's rooms feature personalised signage on their doors that includes the first name of the practitioner along with a nice image. This thoughtful design choice aims to create a more welcoming and humanised environment for patients.
- The practice opening hours are on display.

### **The general environment**

- The building's organisation, welcoming atmosphere and thoughtful decor, combined with engaging and informative notice boards, create an overall positive experience for anyone visiting the White Horse Medical Practice.
- The practice successfully maintains a clean and calm environment, supported by friendly staff. However, it is also noted that the staff seem very busy, indicating that the practice is experiencing a high volume of patients.
- There are two waiting rooms – one for the nurse's area and the other for the GP's area, with signage above the doors.
- The combination of well-maintained furniture and the availability of reading materials creates a welcoming and comfortable environment in the waiting rooms, enhancing the overall patient experience.
- There were wheelchairs at the entrance for people to use and the entrance was very bright with nice information on the boards about local community events etc.
- The practice runs digital cafes both in the surgery and in surrounding areas, which have gained popularity among community members. These cafes serve as a supportive environment where individuals can bring their devices, such as smartphones, and receive assistance in setting up essential accounts, including health-related services.
- There is a well maintained and tidy garden with seats.

### **Patient and staff feedback**

- Most patients expressed their appreciation for the interactions, medical care and support provided by staff. Many praised the nurses at the practice. Their feedback highlights dedication of the staff and commitment to creating a positive experience for patients.
- A number of patients reported difficulty in securing appointments with GPs. Some expressed frustration at the challenges of getting an appointment with a GP using the Engage Consult (eConsult) system. Some told us that this was significantly impacting on their experiences of support and care.
- Some patients expressed discomfort with having to wait outside for prescriptions to collect their medication from the dispensary window. This was particularly for those feeling unwell, elderly, with mobility issues, and during bad weather conditions.
- Some comments indicated difficulties with prescriptions, including repeats.
- Reception cover is essential for patients to navigate care. One patient was accessing the service for the first time, and with no one on reception was uncertain what to do and where to go.

- Not all patients understood which waiting room to sit in and felt uncertain they were in the right place. Signs for the waiting rooms were not clear.
- Whilst most patients understood the process for comments and complaints, they did not understand the way that their feedback would be managed or responded to. Not all patients were clear about how their comments have been taken.
- Staff feel supported in their career development and professional training.
- Staff said the demand for healthcare services is increasing, leading to tight space constraints within existing facilities. The issue has been raised with the Integrated Care Board (ICB), which is planning to invest in a new building on nearby land.
- The pressure on staff, as mentioned, is a critical issue that not only affects their wellbeing but also the quality of care they provided and the outcomes.

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## 4. Recommendations

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- Engage patients to understand the areas of challenge in accessing regular and one-off appointments via the eConsult and other routes. Building on patient feedback and experience, explore feasibility to address some of the concerns and communicate with patients. Focus on integrating technology, improving communication and streamlining operations to create a more efficient and patient-friendly experience.
- Review communication with patients and understand barriers and processes, including with accessing medications, and routes via eConsult, including one-off and repeat prescriptions and considering patient feedback.
- A welcome sign at the entrance of a healthcare practice would enhance the positive first impression for patients and visitors.
- Ensure translated materials and information about interpreting are available to ensure that all patients have equal access to important healthcare information.
- Review the process for outdoor waiting for prescriptions pick up, particularly for those who may have limited mobility, are vulnerable or unwell. Consider ways to enable people to sit if waiting longer.
- Clarify labelling, placement and visibility of signposting and notices for the two waiting areas so that patients are clear where they should be waiting for their appointment.

- Clarify process for comments and complaints to ensure that patients receive timely response and clear communication as to what happens next. 'You said, We did' can be communicated to patients for general comments and suggestions.

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## 5. Service response to recommendations

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### Response to Recommendations:

- 1. Clarify Labelling, Placement, and Visibility of Signposting for Waiting Areas**
  - A new check-in screen now informs patients of their designated waiting room.
  - Waiting rooms have been labelled A/B/C for clear identification.
- 2. Enhance First Impressions with a Welcome Sign**
  - This idea is under consideration and may align with future plans for a new building.
- 3. Review Communication Processes, Including eConsult and Prescription Access**
  - Multiple feedback channels are available: website, front desk, and Patient Participation Group (PPG).
  - The operations manager reviews feedback and implements service improvements as needed.
- 4. Outdoor Waiting for Prescription Pickup**
  - Benches and a covered waiting area have been provided to accommodate those with mobility challenges or who are unwell.
  - Plans are in progress to modify window access to allow two staff members to serve patients simultaneously, reducing waiting times.
- 5. Ensure Availability of Translated Materials and Interpretation Services**
  - Digital tools support translation.
  - Options for translated posters and additional resources are being explored to ensure equitable access to information.
- 6. Address Challenges in Accessing Appointments via EConsult and Other Routes**
  - A dedicated operations manager oversees patient support and feedback.
  - A digital transformation nurse focuses on streamlining internal processes.



- A "You Said, We Did" poster is displayed on feedback boards and the website to highlight actions taken based on patient input.
- Staff are trained to explain systems and encourage feedback.
- A digital café is held twice a month to help patients learn digital tools, set up accounts, and discuss issues.
- PPG meetings with Engage Consult have led to significant and welcomed changes.

Response received by email on 02.12.24

from **Michelle Harfield | Operations Manager**

**PCN Learning Environment Lead | IEL Fellow PGCert**

White Horse Medical Practice| Volunteer Way| Faringdon | Oxfordshire|SN7 7YU|

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## 6. Report

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### Methodology

We follow Healthwatch England guidelines for Enter and View visits. The steps below summarise the process:

- **Plan:**
  - Appoint an Enter and View lead for the visit.
- **Communicate:**
  - Inform the provider of the visit, and relevant details including the purpose, date, time, estimation of how long it will take, how many people will be carrying out the visit, and the name of the lead person.
  - Prepare visit posters including the purpose of the visit, time and date, and dispatch these to the provider for display, so that people using the service are clear why the visit is taking place.
  - Include information about how members of the public can contact Healthwatch Oxfordshire if they are not able to when the visit is taking place.
- **Prepare:**
  - Prepare resources such as surveys and questionnaires.
  - Identify any requirements for special support necessary to facilitate the visit such as access or security. This must be done before the visit, as you may be refused entry.
  - Meet with the service provider before the visit.
- **Report:**
  - On completion of the visit a draft report is shared with the service provider requesting comments on factual accuracy and responses to any recommendations within 7 – 20 working days.
- **Follow up:**
  - The final report is published on Healthwatch Oxfordshire’s website and shared with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and service provider.

The visit took place from 10am to 1pm on September 24th 2024, with two trained Enter and View representatives.

During the visit, the team were able to spend time observing the daily work of the White Horse Medical Practice, noting the general environment, such as cleanliness, comfort and information displays, and to speak to both patients and staff.

Additional question sheets, with FREEPOST envelopes for return, were left with the staff and patients for comment and feedback.

### **Service background**

The White Horse Medical Practice at Faringdon is located at Volunteer Way, Faringdon, SN7 7YU.

The building was originally designed to accommodate two separate practices. This historical context has led to some ergonomic challenges in its current use as a single, larger practice, but much work has been done to rationalise the space and maximise clinical capacity. Much of the back-office team has been moved out to another premises. The practice is currently exploring potential permissions and funding on land for new premises in Faringdon for expansion and has been engaging patients in this process.

The site has 66 car parking spaces, which accommodate patients and staff, but there is parking pressure on the surrounding streets.

The practice currently serves approximately 19,000 patients, with an unweighted total of 20,500.

The practice has recently taken on 500 additional patients due to changes at the Botley surgery, indicating its growing role in the region's healthcare landscape.

The practice is recognised as a military-friendly practice, catering specifically to families from Shrivenham and the surrounding areas, including Faringdon.

Patients travel to the surgery from various locations, including Faringdon, Appleton, Southmoor, and Uffington, as well as from nearby communities.

The practice has multi-disciplinary workforce with 87 staff, including practice nurses, GPs, physiotherapists and care navigators. It has an active social prescribing team of four staff. There is also a pharmacy team and dispensing pharmacy for medications.

It supports a 'Practice Champions' programme supporting a range of prevention-based activities such as coffee mornings, men's health group and health walks 'Walk, Talk, Walk'. GPs and other health professionals also hold health information events and talks, such as focus on Menopause.

The practice has a Patient Participation Group (PPG) which meets quarterly, supported by a staff member. This enables patients to suggest improvements

and change and is developing to enable communication including 'You said, We did' responses.



The reception

During the visit to the White Horse Medical Practice on 24th September 2024, it was noted that the practice is organised into two distinct zones with waiting areas: one designated for General Practitioners (GPs) and the other for nurses' rooms. This layout is designed to streamline patient care and enhance the efficiency of medical services provided.

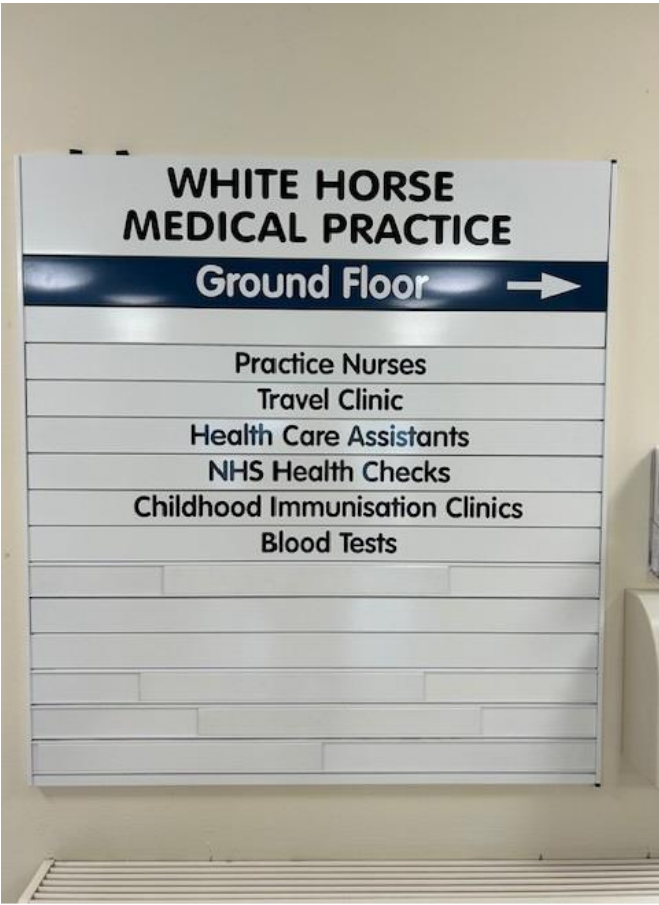
More details about the White Horse Medical Practice can be found at [www.whmp.co.uk](http://www.whmp.co.uk)



**Access and signage**

There was clear signage provided from the car parks to the main entrance. The practice was accessible, and disabled parking located near the entrance. Wheelchairs were available at the entrance for those who needed.

During the visit to the White Horse Medical Practice, it was observed that the internal signage from the main reception could be clearer. Patients told us it was confusing understanding which waiting room to sit in, as signage was not prominent and visible located high above the doors.



Signs for GPs and nurses waiting rooms

## **The practice environment**

The atmosphere at the White Horse Medical Practice was very peaceful. It is clean throughout, and staff seem friendly but very busy. There were lots of patients coming and going. Staff were welcoming.

Upon our arrival, the reception was managed by a care coordinator. Patients sign in for their appointments on a screen pad.

Face masks and hand sanitisers were available at the main reception and in several different areas.

The waiting areas at the White Horse Medical Practice are thoughtfully equipped with amenities such as a television, reading materials and informational posters. Information includes guidance for patients on navigating care, including understanding the role of care coordinators.

The practice is an active research practice, with several ongoing research links with universities. Patients are encouraged to take part in clinical research for example depression, eczema and food allergies.

Toilets are clean with hand gel and clear signage.

There were wheelchairs at the entrance for people to use and the entrance was very bright with nice information on the boards about local community events etc.

In the main waiting room of the practice, there is an NHS screen that displays various health information. However, some of the images shown on the screen were very blurred. A staff member clarified that the images were provided by the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB), indicating that the practice does not have control over the content displayed on the screen.





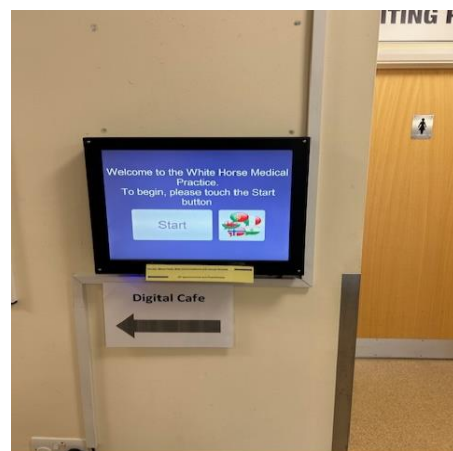
NHS screen

There is a clean and tidy garden with benches used by staff and visitors.



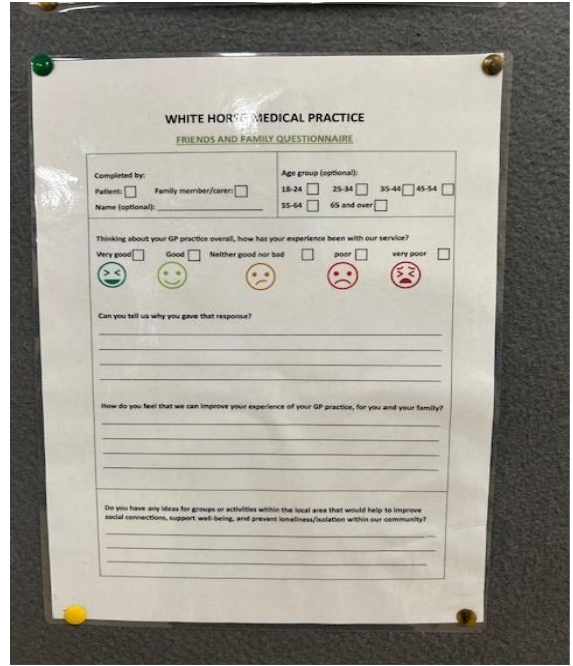
The garden

Patients and visitors are required to sign in digitally at the reception. During our visit some patients new to the surgery commented that there had been no staff at reception to guide them as they arrived.



Patients and visitors sign in – digital equipment

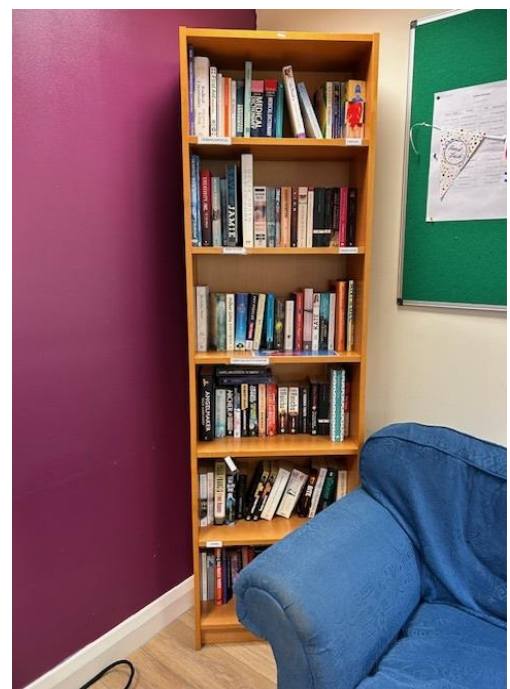




Suggestion box

The feedback mechanism at the White Horse Medical Practice, featuring paper forms and a submission box, is an effective way to engage patients and gather insights for continuous improvement.

There is a pleasant and well decorated staff room available with required facilities, such as TV, and wellbeing board.



Staff room



The White Horse Medical Practice was well-equipped and maintained, with all necessary facilities in good order. There were a meeting/conference room with all facilities available.



Wheelchairs



Repeat prescription drop off point

The accessibility features at the White Horse Medical Practice, including wheelchairs available at the entrance and a prescription drop-off box, significantly enhance patient convenience and comfort.





**Information on display**

There were many leaflets and information on display. We did not see any translated materials or information about access to interpreting services.

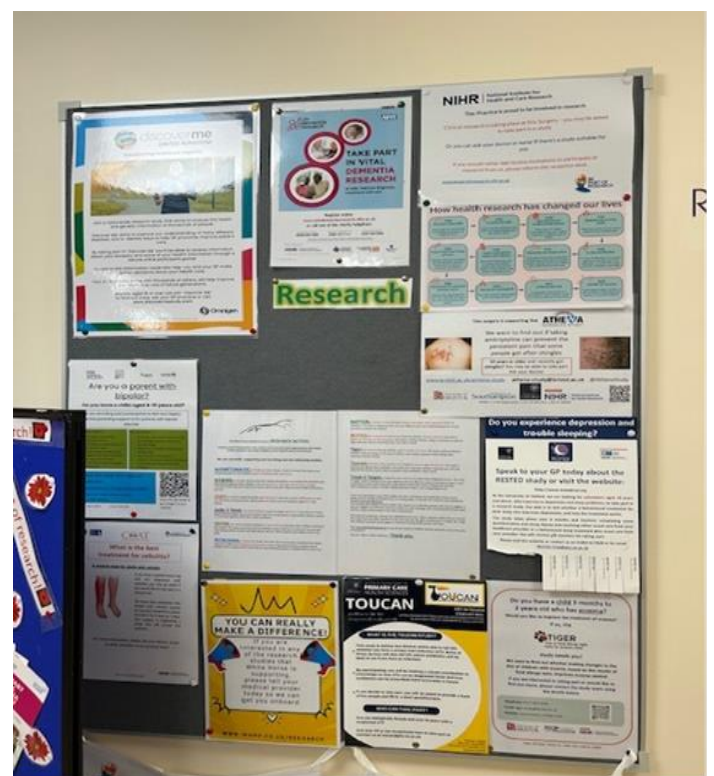
The practice features a notice board dedicated to the Patient Participation Group (PPG). However, it appears that there is limited detailed information regarding the PPGs functions and activities.



PPG board



Community board



Research board on display

The practice has a research facility that collaborates with multiple universities and companies to conduct various studies, particularly in the fields of mental health and dementia. Notable partners include Leicester University, Bristol University, Oxford University and AstraZeneca. This collaborative approach has positioned the practice as a leader in medical research, especially in patient recruitment for clinical trials.

The pharmacy services at the White Horse Medical Practice, including the on-site pharmacy and clear signage for the dispensary, provide significant convenience for patients. However, the external location of the dispensary may present challenges during bad weather, particularly for those queuing who are unwell. Overall, these features reflect the practice's commitment to patient-centered care and accessibility.



Signage to the dispensary



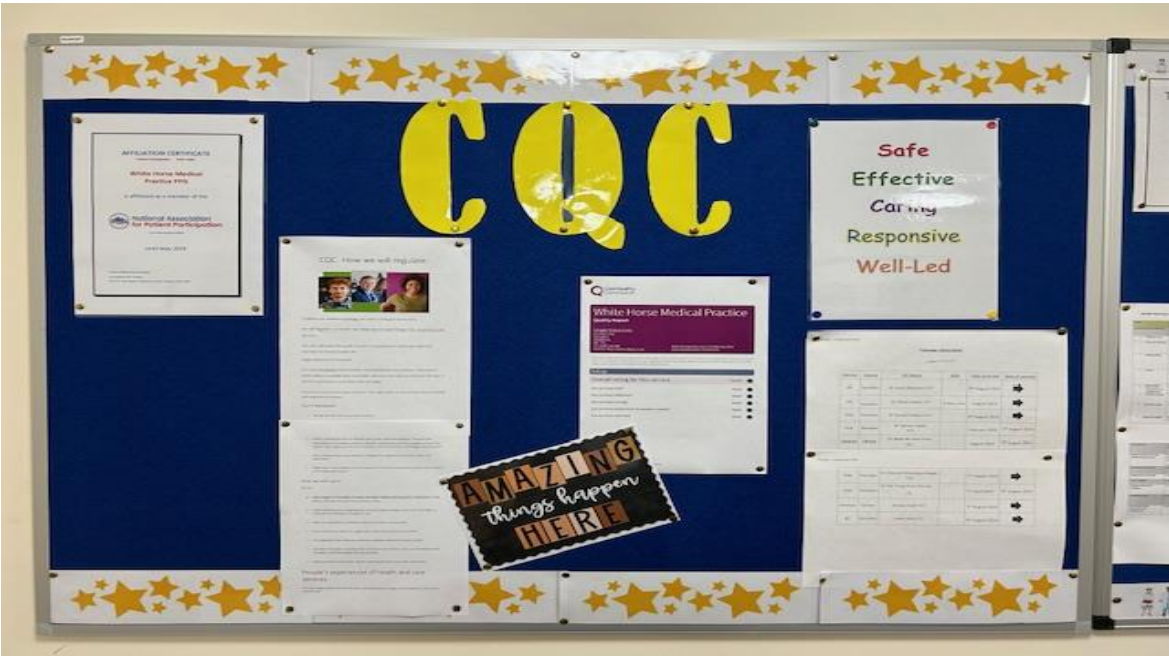
Medication collection point

The practice has established a women’s group specifically designed for widowed individuals, recognising the unique challenges they face. A men’s group is to be set up as men also experience similar needs for support and connection.





Leaflets and information on display



CQC report

At the White Horse Medical Practice, the display of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) report is an important aspect of transparency and accountability.

### **Patients' feedback**

We spoke to 20 patients during our visit, 12 women and eight men. Comments outlined below express what we heard from the patients we spoke to on the day, about their experiences.

Most patients appreciated the support, care and services provided by the staff. In general, patients expressed a high level of appreciation for the support and advice received at the White Horse Medical Practice. Some, in particular, praised the excellent support provided by the nurse and midwifery teams.

The patients praised and thanked the staff team:

*'Everyone's been really nice, I can't complain really.'*

*'Everyone's been excellent to me and helped me.'*

*'Very pleased with the service I get.'*

### **Booking appointments**

Experience of booking an appointment was mixed, and some patients were finding the Engage Consult (eConsult) system challenging and unwieldy to use.

Of the 20 patients we spoke to, 14 had found booking an appointment relatively easy. This was especially so for those who had received a letter for an appointment, came into the surgery to book face-to-face, were booking for nurse or routine care, or who were confident to manage digitally. Booking to see a GP was seen as more challenging. Digital support workshops offered by the surgery was seen as positive but needed to be more to address the needs.

*'I booked by the Internet it was fine no problem.'*

*'The phone booking is fine – I didn't have to wait long but I came to book a simple appointment because I'd had a letter saying I was due for an MOT for an ongoing condition, so it was easy to make an appointment.'*

*'I booked over the phone for inoculation it was busy but straightforward to do.'*

*'Easy to get, I pop in and book face to face as I live round the corner – just needed to book a blood test.'*

*'It was OK I got through in 15 minutes. I'm not sure who I'm seeing I'm not sure if it's a nurse or a doctor.'*

*'It was easy to make an appointment today and I've been happy with it.'*

Others were satisfied but commented *'you do hear lots of other people saying they have real problems.'*

However, patients also spoke about some of the challenges they experience in navigating the appointment system.

For some, the logistics of booking appointment on eConsult meant that some patients described having to be up to access the system early in the morning. This was not always possible for all including those with children or other caring responsibilities.

*'I use engage consult online to get an appointment. You have to get up before 8am otherwise they say there are too many requests, and you can't get in you can only book an appointment on the day generally you do get seen on the day, but you can't book slots for example in three weeks' time.'*

*'It's easy to use if you get up by 7am because if you do after 8am all the appointments are taken. You can book nurses in advance, but GP's is much harder.'*

Some patients commented that waiting on the phone for a GP call back for a whole day presented challenges, again for those with poor reception, landline phones or those with caring responsibilities, working or limited timeslots. They would appreciate a clearer indication as to timespan of callback.

*'... you have to be attached to the phone all day with no idea when you'll get a call and it's really hard if you've got poor reception you can't book in advance for a GP.'*

*'I've asked them not to ring my mobile as it has poor signal, but they rang me on my mobile. I'm always concerned I'm missing calls because of my caring for my husband calls on my landline. You never get a time given to you that they will ring so you must hang around waiting and the mobile signal is so bad.'*

*'You have to hang around all day for phone backs and you get a 'black mark' if you're not there when they phone.'*

*'You have to do eConsult, and the response doctor will ring back. Landline is especially problematic as they can't say when they'll get back to you so you have to hang around all day by the phone and you can't get away or do anything, they won't tell you when they're going to ring back and sometimes it's right at the end of the day.'*



*'You can't make non urgent appointments. Went on eConsult at 8.40am got phone back saying GP would ring... by 5.30pm they hadn't rung.'*

Whilst we heard comments about using the system from all patients, six patients in particular, described their experience of huge frustrations and dissatisfaction of the barriers to booking appointments. This was significantly impacting on their experiences of support and care from the surgery. This also indicated some of the significant pressures the system is under.

Feedback on the challenges of the system included frustrations with general booking via eConsult or being able to access the service for particular or less regular concerns.

*'Via eConsult, you have to ring in the morning it's like a brick wall often your call is something like 94th in the queue they say 'it's important.' if you hang on for 45 minutes and then you press whatever – because you're so frustrated – someone answers eventually and then they say 'all the slots have gone, can you ring tomorrow or on Monday.'*

*'Before it was easier you could make an appointment at the desk but now, they send you home if you walk in.'*

*'I ring NHS 111 if it's urgent and then they might get you an appointment. They're making people become an emergency because they aren't dealing with them here sometimes people go to A&E in Oxford or Swindon – it's getting worse to get in.'*

*'Sometimes it's best to ring NHS 111 if you can't get an appointment, and they get you an appointment at the health centre.'*

For some accessing eConsult via the same route as urgent and other patients, for ALL issues caused frustration and seemed to be inflexible and a waste of staff and patient time. Some commented that there was no way they could see to make non urgent appointments or appointments in advance.

*'There's no way that you can make non-urgent appointments you can't make appointments in advance for example two weeks' time you can only make appointments by going through the system on the day.'*

*'I had a call saying GP would like to discuss blood tests and I needed to book to talk to them, but they couldn't book, and I had to ring by 8am and they said that they were only doing urgent and face to face appointments ... the same happened the next day ... I got up at 7am to do it online and got an e-mail saying they would get back in touch and then an e-mail later to say, 'too busy, urgent, only face to face, ring back again' and told very busy and told to ring on the Monday.'*

Patients also commented on what were seen as unclear pathways to make appointments needed on behalf of family members who for various reasons, including health and mental health, cannot use eConsult or come to speak on the phone, or those who are unable to get up so early to access the appointments system at 8am.

*'They won't let me make an appointment for (family member), so how can I help them to make an appointment? – they just won't engage with the eConsult, but there's no other way around it, so I just don't know what to do.'*

*'(Family member) has a health condition and just can't physically get up in the morning at that time to make an appointment.'*

For those who expressed these concerns, the system was proving inflexible and comments indicated it was perceived as not patient centred – *'running like a business, lost touch with human needs'* and that the practice is *'run solely and completely for the service and not for the patient.'*

*'Online you can't always answer the questions as some are irrelevant and very difficult, but you can't move on unless you give an answer so it's not easy.'*

Three patients noted that they were not clear which waiting room to wait in, and that signage was not clear – being not clearly visible at the top of the doors:

*'I'm confused as there are two waiting rooms I'm not sure which one I should be in worried I'm waiting in the wrong place they just gave me the name of a woman on the screen it doesn't say if it's a nurse or a doctor I'm seeing so I'm confused between the two waiting rooms so I'm not sure where to wait and I'm worried they might not find me.'*

*'The only thing I would say is I don't know if I'm sitting in the right waiting area there's one upstairs which I call the main waiting area there's one in the other area and then there's one downstairs I'm not sure where I should be and I'm not sure that they will come and find me they could have waiting room numbers it would make it much clearer and you would know where to go.'*

*'There was no one at reception so I had to ring the bell – it's the first time I've been I didn't really know what to do they just told me to put the details in the screen.'*

## Getting medicines and prescriptions

A number of patients commented on the arrangements to wait in a queue outside to collect medicines – seen as especially challenging for older, or unwell patients waiting outside. There is no seating outside for resting, or for those with limited mobility when in a queue.

*'It doesn't feel welcoming. I object to having to wait outside to pick up my prescription all through the winter it seems like everyone else is moved on with COVID but not this practice and most people aren't well when they're waiting so how come we can't wait inside or at reception for the pharmacy indoors why do we have to wait outside?'*

*'Why are we still having to queue outside for the drugs at the pharmacy window out in the rain and wind? It's like being in a bus shelter.'*

Other feedback on prescriptions included perceived inflexibility of the system for renewal of occasional e.g. topical medicines.

*'Getting medications that I use only a few times a year, but I need to manage a condition is difficult there's a blanket 'not giving repeat medications until the GP has seen you' but sometimes they don't ring back at all. you have to ring eConsult now for pharmacist as well so you can't get in that way either I can't ring every morning at 8am? They've blocked it so I have to go through the managed consult system and only can get in by saying it's a 'new episode' each time ... but I don't need to see a doctor every time I need this I just need it to keep me going occasionally it's a waste of everybody's time. They don't have a system in that computer for repeat medications that you need just as a one-off occasional use.'*

*'The appointments you just can't ask about anything else that is going on for example I had a lump but that wasn't put on the eConsult form and you can't talk about more than one thing you see temporary doctors all the time it's like taking a hammer to crack a nut feeling fobbed off by all these people you have to get through just to see a GP.'*

## Repeat prescriptions

Some patients described challenges with repeat prescriptions, for example, with prescriptions being cancelled due to lack of link up between GP and pharmacy in the practice leading to repeatedly cancelled prescriptions. The patient felt that communication could be improved to alleviate stress.

*'I've been trying all I can to help them but with my repeat prescriptions I constantly have a doctor cancelled note as they haven't seen the blood test was booked ... So, it's terribly stressful they haven't followed the notes'*

*through and connected, so it's wasting everyone's time and really stressful for me because I don't know if I'm going to get the drugs on time. It's happened numerous times and they don't only cancel that one, but they cancel all of the drugs including other ones.'*

### **Other issues**

One patient commented on the inconvenience of perceived lack of coordination across systems for example between calls to collect medicines and to attend an appointment. For those who live further away, this can mean double the travel:

*'Can be here for a blood test - I live a while away 18 miles away round trip so I try and coordinate things so I can collect things at the same time, but it never is possible. I can be here for a blood test and then when I get home, I'll get a call 'can you come and collect this?' I've tried to get it aligned but it doesn't work.'*

*'Do have regular prescriptions there's been times when I haven't had medication, and I don't know why.'*

*'Cannot make appointment with the doctor, and not getting all medications.'*

### **Giving feedback**

Most patients understood how they could make a comment about the practice or complain, but some expressed uncertainty that complaints would be dealt with transparently, or felt there was an unclear process as to response process from the practice.

*'I gave feedback, but it wasn't clear what process was being followed, I didn't really get an acknowledgement, I wanted some feedback on what would happen and how things would change - I didn't want to make a formal complaint.'*

*'I'm also not clear what happens to complaints they don't seem to respond and say what's happened as a result.'*

*'... waited over six months for the complaint but nothing happened.'*

Three patients commented that they were uncertain or 'afraid' to give comments, as felt it might impact their care.

Finally, other more general comments from patients included pressure on car parking, and impact of limited parking space for those with mobility issues, and patient navigation of wider health and care systems, patient data and concerns with increased pressure due to housing expansion.

## **Staff feedback**

On the day of our visit, 11 staff members from various roles within the White Horse Medical Practice provided feedback and comments.

The approachability and helpfulness of staff at the White Horse Medical Practice are fundamental in creating a welcoming and supportive healthcare environment.

The positive attitude demonstrated by staff members at the White Horse Medical Practice not only enriches their work experience but also plays a vital role in enhancing the wellbeing of patients.

The openness of current management was mentioned by staff in valuing suggestions and feedback from team members is a vital aspect of a healthy workplace culture.

The feedback from staff members indicating that they felt heard and were able to make suggestions about the White Horse Medical Practice. They expressed confidence that the management taking their concerns seriously.

### **What is the best thing staff said about the job?**

Staff indicated that they are satisfied with their jobs.

We heard that:

*'Working in a well organised, efficient, clean and modern practice, with a capable forward - thinking, happy and cohesive team.'*

*'Good team of people, ability to work flexibly.'*

*'All of it, planning with patients, seeing them get more mobile, happier, improved self-esteem, and the group I work with are my favourite part.'*

### **What are the challenges staff raised?**

We inquired about any frustrations or challenges that staff might experience in their work and the service they provide.

Comments included:

*'Wellbeing, particularly that of staff, due to the pressure on NHS and the concern that places on staff when they can't reach a good outcome.'*

*'Lack of staff. Time for training (protected learning time), space to grow as a team and to see patients – building being fit for purpose.'*

*'The gap between patients' expectation and appreciation and what we are actually able to/are funded to provide.'*

*'Funding, lack of services for mental health.'*

*'Long hospital waiting times.'*

*'Patients not attending or being late and expecting to be seen.'*

*'Lack of staff, management communication (HR), lack of uniformed pay bands.'*

*'Repeated changes to NHS contract, which always seem to lead to poorer service.'*

**We asked staff if they would raise concerns? They said:**

*'Yes, the manager very approachable and easy to communicate with.'*

*'Yes, there is a form within the practice, this has improved in the last year, and the larger structure can sometimes be difficult to navigate but again, this is improving.'*

*'Yes, we are encouraged to, and they are taken things seriously.'*

**How would staff think the White Horse Medical Practice and service they provide could be improved?**

We heard comments about resourcing, and interactions between primary and secondary care:

*'More space, having access to a large building, allowing for more staffing, more services.'*

Staff commented on impact of secondary/primary care interface:

*'Secondary care should take responsibility for prescriptions and monitoring of specialist medication and delegate to primary care where there is a funded agreement for primary care to take this on.'*

*'Patients referred to secondary care for a certain condition should become responsibility of that service (for the specified condition) from point of referral, not from last appointment which could be two – three years from referral.'*

*'Stop discharging patients before they are better, or without getting to the bottom of the issue, or without adequate care packages in the commitments.'*

*'Standardised forms of communication from the hospital to the practice – across and between hospitals.'*

*'Offer more appointments, increase the number of staff.'*

**What suggestions did staff make?**

Staff suggestions included:

- They do require more space as this is a challenge at times and is the largest barrier to them providing further services.
- Recruit more staff to relieve pressures.



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