



William Hopwood Surgery

Enter and View Report

26<sup>th</sup> March 2025

# healthwatch

## Blackburn with Darwen

### DISCLAIMER

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

Contact Details:

William Hopwood Surgery  
William Hopwood Street, Blackburn, BB1 1LX

Staff met during our visit:

Vandana Menon, Practice Manager and  
members of the team and Patient  
Participation Group

Date and time of our visit:

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen  
Representatives

Sarah Johns, Lead Staff

Jenny Hayes, Staff

Bia Hashmi, Volunteer



## Introduction

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

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

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

## Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen would like to thank Vandana Menon, Practice Manager together with patients and staff for making us feel welcome and taking part in the visit.

## General Information

The practice has 2 GP partners and has approximately 5,300 patients.

The current CQC rating of the practice is Good and was last inspected on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2016.

## Methodology

The Enter and View representatives made an announced visit on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

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

- Accessibility
- Approachability
- Responsiveness

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

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

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

## Summary:

William Hopwood Surgery is located in Audley on William Hopwood Street. Patients we spoke with found access to the practice easy generally. A number of buses travel near the practice but it is a 6 minute walk from the closest bus stop.

The practice is bright, clean and hygienic and there is up to date patient information displayed well throughout the practice.

The website is informative and we noted that it has accessibility functions built into it including a choice of languages however we did not see any function to be able to change font size and colour to make the website more accessible for different patient needs.

The Patient Participation Group play an active role in supporting other patients in accessing digital services however it is noted that there is further education of patients required about this, care navigation and accessing the most appropriate service to meet their needs. The practice take part in a number of initiatives to increase uptake of screening and vaccinations and offer long term health clinics.

There is a good working relationship between the practice and the BwD Integrated Neighbourhood Team to support patients' wider health and wellbeing needs.

Patients we spoke with were generally able to get an appointment within a reasonable time and did not express issues about long waits on the telephone. Patients also generally found that they had enough time with the doctor and that staff were courteous and friendly.

“Did Not Attends” are an issue for the practice but staff now ring patients to increase attendance and are taking a different approach for diabetes reviews to encourage patients to attend the practice.



## Enter and View observations

### ACCESSIBILITY OBSERVED

#### Pre-visit and location

Representatives firstly looked at the practice website. This a newly refreshed website which has the options to translate the website into different languages but does not have an accessibility tools dropdown therefore may not be fully accessible for all patients.

The website hosts details about the services available within the practice and links to useful external services.

There is good information on the website about the practice staff and their roles. There is clear guidance on how patients are able to raise complaints within the Practice Policies section.

The Facebook page shares useful information but only has 55 followers.

We did a test call to the practice at 9am on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and were number 2 in the queue. We noted that there is call back option available.

#### The external environment



The practice is located in the heart of the local community in Audley area of Blackburn and the practice is clearly visible from the road with car parking available. The entrance to the building is on one level and accessible for wheelchair users, although it is not an automatic door at the entrance.

The building presented as clean, modern, bright, spacious, and well lit, however the railings at the front of the building might benefit from repainting.

## The internal environment/reception

### Waiting Room



We were welcomed by the Practice Manager, Vandana Menon and a member of Patient Participation Group, Tony Humphries and were invited into Vandana's office to have a discussion about the practice.

The reception desk is easily accessible for patients at an easy height and there is a hearing loop available for patients with hearing impairments.

The reception staff were observed by our team to be friendly and efficient, working quickly to respond to patient needs and ensure patients were seen promptly. We also noted a member of the team supporting a lady to access the baby changing facility.

The waiting room is brightly lit and with a mixture of seating available for patients and the seating is well spread out, allowing easy wheelchair access.

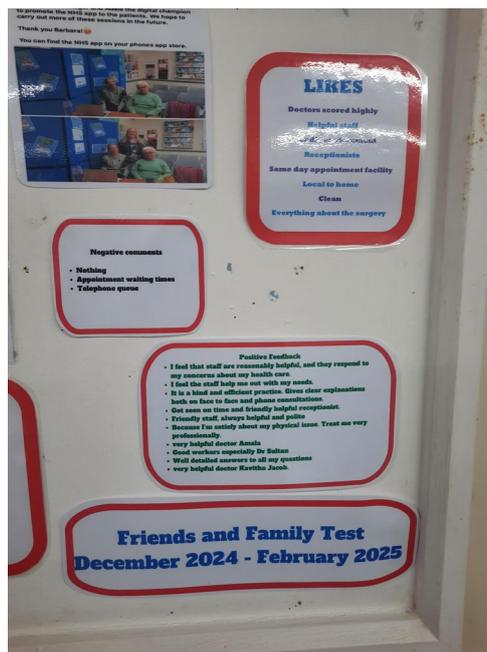


There is a lot of patient information available in the waiting room which is helpful and it is all up to date and our Healthwatch visit poster was prominently displayed.



We noted that patients are called for their appointments via a TV, however there is no audio which would be an issue for patients with visual impairment.

We also noted that recent patient feedback and information about the Patient Participant Group was displayed by the reception desk.



## Observation of corridors and public bathroom

The corridors to the consulting rooms were well signposted, brightly lit and further patient information was on display on the walls. The corridors were noted to be adequately wide for wheelchair access as were the doors to each of the consultation rooms.



There was a toilet available for patients which was bright, clean and hygienic however this is not fully dementia friendly with the toilet seat not in a contrasting colour, however we noted that the grab rails were appropriate and the walls and floor were in a distinct contrasting colour. We noted that there is a nappy change facility available.





## ACCESSIBILITY AND APPROACHABILITY DISCUSSED

During our visit, we observed that the patients had short waiting times for their appointments during our visit and there were pleasant and respectful interactions between reception staff and the patients at the reception desk.

We spoke with Vandana Menon, the Practice Manager, and Tony Humphries, member of the Patient Participation Group about accessibility and approachability of the practice for patients.



### Background to the Practice

The practice was managed for a long time by Dr and Mrs Nagpal with Dr Nagpal deciding to retire in 2022 and he completed his handover to the two new GP partners in 2024. Everyone knew the Nagpals and some patients have been here since there were babies and we have staff who have been here over 25 years.

The practice is located in Audley which is one of the most deprived areas in the borough and in England and has mainly a South Asian patient base although they are seeing new immigrants joining the practice, mainly Afghans and Ukrainians. Urdu, Punjabi and Gujarati are the main languages spoken by patients and the practice staff speak a range of languages including Portuguese and Arabic but will use Language Line when needed for translation. The practice currently has an open list for new patients.

### How easy/difficult do you think is it to get an appointment with the GP?

Tony Humphries stated that he has seen changes taking place over the years and that health provision has become more sophisticated. Vandana added that the change to digital telephony has helped reduce waiting times on the telephone and that the PPG members support other patients in the practice waiting room to access apps to book appointments etc. The PATCHES system allows patients to contact the practice about non-urgent medical issues and there is the option to change the language the information is displayed in. The website has been set up to be able to be accessed in different languages too. There is more education needed however amongst patients around digital access.

The practice has a clinical pharmacist and they encourage Pharmacy First.

### Do people generally get to see the GP on time?

“Yes we are generally good for that.”

**Do you have a social prescriber attached to the practice and do you refer to them? Do you have any other additional roles as part of the practice staff team?**

“The practice does not have a social prescriber attached to it but the team make referrals to the Integrated Neighbourhood team for patients who need additional support, including Foodbank, Care Network and the Wellbeing Service.”

**How do you identify and support more vulnerable patients?**

“The practice has 26 patients with learning disabilities who the team know well. The practice has LD Champions who work closely with these patients.

The practice is a veteran friendly practice and also supports women who have experienced domestic abuse who live in Humraaz’s refuge. A mental health practitioner from East Primary Care Network attends the practice on a Thursday every fortnight. One of the GPs has done training in mental health and they have a musculoskeletal specialist in the team and the practice hosts East Primary Care Network’s ‘ARI Hub’ for patients with respiratory issues.

The practice is breastfeeding friendly and the team use a ‘reasonable adjustments’ approach for vulnerable and elderly patients not just patients with learning disabilities. The practice has a hearing loop for people with hearing impairments.”



## **RESPONSIVENESS DISCUSSED**

We noted a significant amount of patient information available about local health campaigns, including women’s health and mental health in the practice waiting room. The practice also offers clinics for long term condition management.



“Uptake of screening has been low at the practice. The practice has participated in the “25 it’s time” initiative to increase uptake of cervical screening and the staff ring patients about their appointments. Breast screening has increased after working with East Lancashire Hospitals Trust on an awareness raising campaign. The practice is also supported by The Lancashire Bowel Cancer Screening Programme Health Promotion Team to increase uptake of bowel screening. Vandana stated that drug dependency and domestic violence are issues for the practice and mental health support is also a big ask for the team. They work well with the DWP who offer drop-in sessions for patients.”

**How do you manage DNA GP appointments?**

“The practice does have a high number of “Did Not Attends” which are mix of both GP and nurse appointments. The practice has never removed anyone for persistent DNAs and the team tend to ring patients to discuss this. As part of a move to reduce non-attends, we are introducing a 14 day prescription for diabetes patients which will encourage them to come into the practice and have their reviews.”

**Why do you think that some people seem to access A and E rather than primary care?**

“Patients accessing A and E instead of booking an appointment is not a significant issue at the practice. They are flexible in ways of being able to book an appointment and provide extended access. Most routine appointments are seen within a week of booking, maximum 2 weeks. The practice rings people the day before their appointment and sends a text on the day and there is a call back system available on the telephone. However, further education is needed with patients around care navigation, who can appropriately support them with their medical needs and that they do not necessarily need to see a GP for everything.”





## Feedback from Patients

We spoke with eleven patients during our time at the practice.

### ACCESSIBILITY

#### Are the opening hours sufficient for your needs?

All eleven patients reported that the opening hours were sufficient for their needs.

#### Is it easy to park or travel to?

Generally, patients we spoke with felt that it was easy to travel to and park at the practice. Patients came on foot, car and by taxi however, one person stated,

“Yes it’s easy to get to although there are only 2 disabled bays”

#### How did you get your appointment today?

Most patients rang to book their appointment and found the experience was ok, with comments such as:-

“I booked my appointment on the phone and it was fine”

“I called on the phone and it was ok to get through”

One patient booked their appointment on the NHS app and stated,

“I booked my appointment on the app which was straightforward and I got an appointment in the same week.”



## APPROACHABILITY

- **Are staff courteous and polite?**

All patients stated that the staff were courteous and polite, with some expanding on their responses:-

“Yes, I've never had a problem here”

“Yes always”

“They're good here.”

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

All patients stated yes with some expanding on their answer stating:-

“Yes, I've been here 82 years and never wanted to change”

“I would highly recommend”

“Yes I've been with the practice for a very long time.”

“Yes, I recommended here to my niece.”



## RESPONSIVENESS

### Do you get enough time with the doctor?

Two patients we spoke with felt that they did not get enough time with the doctor, with one stating “No but it’s not their fault, it’s protocol”. One patient stated, “Yes I’ve never been shoved out!”

### Do you have any understanding/experience of social prescribing?

Two patients we spoke with knew about social prescribing because they were members of the PPG, with one stating “I know what’s available”.

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

Four respondents stated that they had gone to Emergency Department instead of accessing a GP appointment. One stated that “it was an emergency for my heart.” However, the other three appear to have chosen to go to Emergency Department rather than accessing out of hours primary care provision.

“Yes but only because the GP surgery was closed as it was out of hours.”

“My child suffers with asthma, he started having problems after school yesterday and I rang the surgery but they couldn’t see me and told me call at 8am today. I went to A&E but they told me to ring the doctor so I had to keep him at home and sit watching him all night. I rang first thing today to get an appointment.”

“Yes it was an emergency - it was out of hours.”

Increased awareness of out of hours provision would be beneficial for patients to avoid going to Emergency Department.

### Other Comments

“It’s generally a very good practice.”

“I’ve been here my whole life.”

“Having Urdu speaking staff has been very helpful because I don’t understand and speak little English.”





## Feedback from Staff Members

### ACCESSIBILITY

- **How easy/difficult do you think it is to get an appointment with the GP?**

“I think the surgery is pretty good. People tend to get an appointment on the day and there are pre-bookable appointments available.”

“People ring on the day and there are pre-bookable appointments available. Patients can also book appointments using PATCHES or the NHS app and they can email too so there’s lots of flexibility about booking appointments.”

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

“Yes”

“Yes generally they’re very good.”

### APPROACHABILITY

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

“We have LD champions at the practice - Halima and Hajra and we have a hearing loop for patients with hearing impairments. We use language line for patients whose first language isn’t English though staff speak a range of languages too. We identify carers on the patient records.”

“We identify them on patient records and we have two LD champions in the clinical team and Ruqayyah on reception.”

### RESPONSIVENESS

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

“We can refer and the clinicians can refer to the Integrated Neighbourhood social prescribing team.”

“We don’t have a social prescriber for the practice but we make referrals into the Integrated Neighbourhood team.”

- **How do you manage DNA appointments?**

“We call patients and send text messages as a reminder to keep their appointment.”

“We ring people the day before and send a text on the day of the appointment and if they miss their appointment they are sent a text on Accurix. We’re starting to ring patients too who miss appointments.”

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

“Some people go there because they don’t understand that primary care can deal with their issues. More education is needed for patients.”

“Some patients go if they need scans or if they have chest pains, so legitimate reasons really.”

## Response from provider

### Response from Provider

On behalf of everyone at William Hopwood Surgery, I would like to express our sincere thanks to the Healthwatch team for the time and effort taken conducting the inspection and preparing the report. Our staff conveyed how they found the Healthwatch team to be friendly making them feel comfortable and at ease. This visit has been very valuable, and we are truly grateful for the insightful feedback and recommendations provided. As a practice, we are always eager to hear our patients' thoughts on the service we provide and are open to suggestions that can enhance the patient experience. As a practice team, we regularly review and prioritise improvements, making the best use of available resource.

After reading through the report, we are delighted to learn that our patients are generally satisfied with the care they receive. We are also grateful for our amazing team of staff.

### **Website Accessibility:**

We welcome the suggestion mentioned in report regarding practice website accessibility. We had recently updated Practice website seeking expertise of web-designers from Practice365 who specialise in user friendly and accessible GP website. We will be seeking further advise from web designer with making accessibility tools dropdown easily visible. They have an accessibility statement located at the footer of the pages on the website: [Website Accessibility Statement - Practice365](#)

This provides patients with information on readability of the webpages, as well as information on the ease of use of accessibility software.

### **Dementia friendly Practice and other cosmetic changes:**

Since the Practice was taken over by new GP partners, significant investments have been made to upgrade the building premises as part of a 10-year plan. Suggestions, such as repainting the outside railings, updating the disabled toilet to make it more dementia-friendly and other action points, will certainly be incorporated into this plan.

**Patient calling screen:** Our clinicians normally invite patients directly from the waiting area, which helps make it more engaging and patient friendly during consultation. Additionally, the 'Patient Name Display Screen' at reception is under review, and as part of upgrading this, the Practice is in discussions with a new provider about implementing a more advanced system that includes audio announcements to assist patients with visual impairments or learning disabilities.

**Social media and face book:** The Practice will continue to raise patient awareness and ensure that this is communicated through in various methods like social media to ensure that all patients are aware and can access support if required. Various suggestions have been brought up during practice team meetings and Patient Participation Group meetings regarding the same.

Kind regards,

**Vandana Menon**  
**Practice Manager**  
**William Hopwood Surgery**

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