

Thursby Surgery

GP Services Enter and View Report

Monday 12th December 2022

09:30am – 11:30am



DISCLAIMER

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

Contact Details:

Thursby Surgery
2 Browhead Road
Burnley
BB10 3B

Practice Liaison:

Rebecca Lord – Practice Manager

Date and time of our visit:

Monday 12th December 2022
09:30am – 11:30am

Healthwatch Lancashire Authorised Representatives:

Steven Walmsley – Senior Engagement Officer
Emmy Walmsley – Senior Engagement Officer

Introduction

Our role at Healthwatch Lancashire is to gather people's views and experiences, especially those that are seldom heard, to give them the opportunity to express how they feel about a service. This was an announced Enter and View visit undertaken by authorised representatives from Healthwatch Lancashire (HWL) who have the authority to enter health and social care premises, announced or unannounced. The aim is to obtain the views and experiences of patients, relatives and staff and observe and assess the quality of services.

The team compile a report reflecting observations and feedback. Healthwatch Lancashire is an independent organisation, therefore we do not make judgements or express personal opinions. The report identifies aspects of good practice as well as possible areas of improvement. This is sent to the manager for their opportunity to respond. Where appropriate, Healthwatch Lancashire may arrange a revisit to check the progress of improvements. The report is then published on the Healthwatch Lancashire website at www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk and sent to the Care Quality Commission, Healthwatch England and any other relevant organisations

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Lancashire would like to thank the management team, staff and relatives for making us feel welcome and taking part in the visit.

Methodology

Healthwatch Lancashire obtain the views and experiences of patients, relatives and staff. Conversations with each are adapted to capture individual experiences to help assess the quality of services. People using the services were asked about their general feelings about the GP Surgery including their experience of making an appointment, communications and the surgery environment. Conversations with staff included their thoughts about provision, appointment management, communication, staffing levels and support, including training. Relatives were asked to speak about their thoughts including how they felt about the experience their family member has had. The team also recorded their own observations on the environment and staff-service user interactions.

To retain confidentiality and anonymity of respondents, names, pronouns and any identifiable details have been removed from quotes; 'they/their' has been used throughout the report to refer to members of staff and patients.

Prior to the visit, a discussion was held with members of the Practice Management to discuss the context of the visit and gather information on the Surgery. This includes appointment making options, the patient demographic and staffing at the practice.

Pre-visit

Information in this section is gathered from discussion and contact with the management at the practice prior to and at the start of the visit.

Healthwatch phoned to arrange the visit on the 7th of November and found that there was an initial 40 minute wait to speak to a member of staff.

Thursby Surgery is located in an area of Burnley where there is a high proportion of social deprivation. Healthwatch were informed that the surgery has 8553 patients registered with a wide variety of barriers to health which has resulted in there being a significant demand on services. There is a diverse population demographic with different ethnic minorities being catered for by the surgery. At the time of the visit, the practice manager mentioned that the surgery were observing Covid secure procedures due to a rise in confirmed cases in the area.

It was mentioned that if there are no appointments available all staff are trained in care-navigation and will signpost to primary care services if appropriate.

As part of the discussion Healthwatch learned that on the day of the visit there was a range of staff available to provide services to patients. The surgery had:

1 Receptionist working on the front desk to handle patient enquiries, 3 administrators to field phone calls, 2 GP Partners, 1 long term locum doctor, 2 GPs, 1 Advanced Nurse Practitioner, 3 nurses, 2 trainee nurses, 1 practice paramedic, 1 pharmacy technician and 2 GP assistants.

Summary

Healthwatch representatives made an announced visit on Friday 2nd of December between 9:30am and 11am.

We spoke to 9 patients and 6 staff members about their views on the service that the surgery provides.

During the visit we were shown around the main entrance area and the areas where patients waited for appointments. We viewed a clinical room and made aware of how the Covid-19 precautions affected movement around the building.

Healthwatch representatives were informed that the surgery was observing Covid secure procedures, which included doors being held open, a one-way system, socially distanced seating in the corridor and a queueing system outside the entrance to the surgery.

Staff were observed collecting patients from their allocated seat in the hallway. Members of staff introduced themselves and were seen to treat patients with respect and compassion.

We were informed that all available appointments had been allocated.

Enter and View observations

Location and external environment

The surgery is located off a junction to a main road. There is access to bus services less than half a mile away on Queen Victoria Road and Eastern Avenue. The car park caters for disabled access with spaces near the front entrance with step-free access.

Internal environment and reception

Located in the waiting room, noticeboards were displayed with information about social prescribing, dementia friendly information and care navigation options to dentists, eye services and talking therapies.

It was observed that there was a clock in the waiting room but it did not display the date and time. A ceiling mounted display system was in the waiting room to call patients to appointments, but it was noted that it was not in use. Healthwatch were informed that this was because patients were waiting in the corridor and would be collected by a member of staff.

Patient interactions

Patients were observed queueing outside the surgery whilst the receptionist took temperatures and reminded patients to wear masks. Staff were polite and explained procedures very clearly to patients. Patients were directed to a seat outside the numbered clinic rooms to wait for their appointments.

We were informed that the surgery receives approximately 1,200 phone call enquiries a day. There are over 200 appointments available for patients to be allocated, which had all been booked in at the time of the visit. There is an online patient triage system available that allows patients to report non-urgent medical issues. Appointments can be booked online using patient access.

Patient Involvement

The surgery advertises that it runs a Patient Participation Group (PPG) There is a large display in the waiting room which contained details about meetings and information about the previous meeting minutes attached.

Feedback from patients

Healthwatch spoke to 9 patients who attended the surgery.

How did you make your appointment?

Eight of the nine patients made their appointment on the phone. One patient had attended as part of a review appointment which was pre-arranged by the surgery.

Four patients reported that they did not experience any barriers to the appointment making process. One commented " I was in a queue for 10 minutes and someone spoke to me so I was happy." Two other patients commented that they took more than one attempt to get through to the surgery but that they understood that surgeries were often busy.

Four patients expressed negative opinions on the telephone appointment system. One patient informed us that it had taken them "40 tries" to get through to Reception. Other patients commented on how the process was "very time consuming" and that they "could never get through."

What would you change about the process?

Four patients commented that they wished to see an improvement in the wait times that they experienced when they phoned the surgery.

Would you be open to other methods of appointment making?

One patient was not aware of the call-back system and said that they would use that option.

One patient said that they would only use the phone system as they lacked access to the internet at their home.

Two patients commented that they liked the call-back option with one stating "I like the option for a call back because they always get back in touch with me."

Do you feel that you receive care and treatment that meets your needs?

All nine patients expressed positive views regarding the care and treatment that they received at the surgery. One patient said that "Staff always listen to me and are polite."

One patient commented that "The service is really good."

another patient stated that "They are fabulous here."

Do you think the premises are well maintained, accessible and clean?

All patients commented that the facilities at the surgery were good. One patient questioned the need to queue at the front entrance as they felt it was unnecessary. "I wasn't happy they made me wait in the snow like that."

Do you know who to speak to if you are not happy with the service or wish to make a complaint?

One patient reported that they were "not aware of how to make a complaint." Five patients said that they would ring or visit the surgery if they needed to.

One patient stated, "there is no need, I am happy with what I get."

Any other comments and feedback

One patient paid a compliment to members of the reception staff team saying "The Receptionist is smashing and friendly."

Staff views

We spoke to 6 members of staff including administrative staff, Practice management, Receptionists and members of the clinical team.

Do you have enough staff when on duty?

One member of staff said that they felt they had enough staff to cover clinical needs. Five members of the staff team expressed concern about the demands that the surgery is facing from patients. Concerns included the number of phone calls that the surgery receives on a daily basis stating that they can answer “40-50 phone calls at busy times.” One member of staff said that there were 48 calls waiting at 8:02am which they felt was a very high demand.

It was remarked by 4 members of staff that there was a recruitment issue to fill vacancies at the surgery to meet patient demand. One reflected on this by saying “You can never have enough staff at any job.” One member of staff mentioned that demands were “highest at the beginning of the week.”

Four members of staff mentioned that patients expected a lot from the surgery and they felt that patients needed to be more educated about self-care and other options available to them.

Do you feel supported to deliver a person-centred experience?

Five members of staff were positive about the level of care that they could provide to patients when they attended the surgery. One member of staff remarked that “Everyone is dealt with and not rushed but it doesn’t help with the queues on the phoneline as we want to give patients everything they need.”

Three members of staff expressed a wish to be able to give more time to patients with severe medical problems. “Chronic patients need more time, but I don’t have enough time.”

Do you feel that you have enough training to carry out your duties well?

All six members of staff said that they felt supported in their role. “We ask staff – they help.”

What is your experience of working here?

All six members of staff expressed positive comments about their experience of working at the surgery with support from management being mentioned by three members of staff. “Everything they do here is brilliant. We are mentored really well.”

Are there any changes that can be made to improve the patient experience?

Four members of staff commented on the challenges that they faced from daily interactions with some patients. "if we were spoken to better we would be able to have better communication with patients." One staff member mentioned that they sometimes felt intimidated when "patients can become violent we have to put barriers up" Two mentioned that they wanted patients to receive better education to make them aware of alternative services and appointment making options to try and improve the situation. They qualified this by saying that "better communication is the key." It was remarked by one member of staff that this needed to be "A national communication strategy as it is not unique to our practice."

One member of staff commented that there had been issues in retaining staff due to challenges presented by members of the public.

Three members of staff mentioned that they wanted to be able to recruit more staff to meet the high demand that they faced at the surgery. " I want more trained GPs to be able to provide better continuous practice. It will give patients better quality of care."

Any other comments?

One member of staff commented that "Everyone is working above and beyond with all staff helping out."

Another praised the senior leadership team saying that they had a "good senior team that helps each other out."

Recommendations for Improvement

The following areas for improvement have been highlighted from patient, relative and staff feedback. These are not Healthwatch Lancashire recommendations but rather, areas for improvement suggested by service users and staff.

1. Continue to investigate methods to ease pressure on the telephone appointment system through current staff deployment at times of high demand.
2. Ensure that waiting rooms are dementia friendly where a clock displaying the date and time is visible.
3. Investigate methods to promote the education of patients on how to make the best use of the service, including alternate ways to book appointments through outreach work or more prominent self-care advice on website homepage.
4. Continue to promote patient involvement using the Patient Participation group or other methods including such as leaflets or social media to encourage participation.

Provider Response

Areas identified for improvement	Action from provider	Comments
<p>1. Continue to investigate methods to ease pressure on the telephone appointment system through current staff deployment at times of high demand.</p>		<p>Patients will still be waiting in a virtual queue it will not have any impact on wait times on the phone system. The Call Back function is promoted whilst waiting in the telephone queue.</p>
<p>2. Ensure that waiting rooms are dementia friendly where a clock displaying the date and time is visible.</p>	<p>Dementia clocks have been bought and are on display in the waiting room.</p>	
<p>3. Investigate methods to promote the education of patients on how to make the best use of the service, including alternate ways to book appointments</p>		<p>Disagree as methods of promoting patient education has and is a continuing project with information already on our website, Facebook etc and is a national strategy for self-care.</p>

through outreach work or more prominent self-care advice on website homepage.		
4. Continue to promote patient involvement using the Patient Participation group or other methods including such as leaflets or social media to encourage participation.		Disagree as the PPG is already in full swing and we promote this via our website and facebook as well as in the Surgery
Completed by	Rebecca Lord – Practice Manager	

Questions

Did you learn anything new about patients' views and experiences, or anything else, as a result of the Enter and View undertaken by Healthwatch Lancashire?

"We have not learnt anything that we are not already working towards improving."

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