

Dr Bisarya and Partner at the Sandy Lane Health Centre Skelmersdale

Tuesday 20th February 2024
10:00am-12:30pm



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, visitors and patients who met members of the Enter and View team on that date.

Contact Details

Dr Bisarya and Partner at Sandy Lane Health Centre

Sandy Lane

Skelmersdale

WN8 8LA

[Dr Bisarya & Partner at the Sandy Lane Health Centre - Skelmersdale, Lancashire, WN8 8LA |](#)

Tel: 01695 317400

Registered Manager:

Dawn Threlfall (Practice Manager)

Dr Bisarya (Practice partner and GP)

Date and Time of our Visit:

Tuesday 20th February 2024

10:00am-12:30pm

Healthwatch Lancashire Authorised Representatives:

Emmy Walmsley (Senior Engagement Officer)

Steven Walmsley (Engagement Team Leader)

Introduction

Healthwatch Lancashire is the independent public voice for health and social care in Lancashire and exists to make services work for the people who use them. We believe that the best way to do this is by providing the people of Lancashire with opportunities to share their views and experiences.

Healthwatch Lancashire has statutory powers to listen, act, challenge and gather feedback to improve Local Services and promote excellence throughout the NHS and social care services.

To help achieve this, Healthwatch have a statutory power to 'Enter and View' health and social care services that are publicly funded. The purpose of and enter and view is to listen to people who access those services and observe service delivery.

Following the Enter and View visit, a report is compiled identifying aspects of good practice within the service visited along with any recommendations for any possible areas of improvement.

As we are an independent organisation, we do not make judgements or express personal opinions, but rely on feedback received and objective observations of the environment. The report is sent to the service provider providing an opportunity to respond to any recommendations and comments before being published on the Healthwatch Lancashire website at:

www.healthwatchlancashire.co.uk

The report is available to members of the public along with the Care Quality Commission, Healthwatch England and any other relevant organisations. Where appropriate, Healthwatch Lancashire may arrange a revisit to monitor the progress of improvements and celebrate any further successes.

General Information

Dr Bisarya and Partner occupies the purpose-built Sandy Lane Health Centre along with two neighbouring GP practices in a residential area on the outskirts of Skelmersdale. (1)

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Lancashire would like to thank patients, staff and management, for making us feel welcome and for taking the time to speak to us during the visit.

(1)[Dr A Bisarya - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](http://Dr A Bisarya - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk))

What did we do?

Healthwatch Lancashire Enter and View Representatives made an announced visit to Dr Bisarya and Partner on Tuesday 20th February 2024 and received feedback from:



Pre-visit practice survey

Healthwatch Lancashire emailed a pre-visit questionnaire to the Practice Manager to learn about the patient population, services offered and how the practice manage appointments for patients. Information from this questionnaire is included in the summary below.

Introductory meeting with Practice manager

At the beginning of the Enter and View visit, Healthwatch Lancashire met with the Practice Manager and Dr Bisarya to discuss the Practice and to view the facilities. The Manager explained that appointments can be booked via the phone, via the online app and also in person at the practice.

One to one discussions with patients and their relatives

Healthwatch spoke with patients and their relatives about their experiences including appointment booking, how they felt about the service and the care and treatment delivered by the staff at the practice.

Discussions with members of staff

Healthwatch Lancashire Representatives spoke with members of staff about their experiences of delivering services to patients. Questions centred around support for patients and any improvements staff felt could be made at the Medical Practice.

Observations

Observations were made throughout the visit. This included patient and staff interactions, accessibility measures in place throughout the Practice and the condition and cleanliness of the facilities.

Surgery Location

Dr Bisarya and Partner is situated inside the Sandy Lane Health Centre in Skelmersdale. The practice shares a building with two other surgeries, Beacon Primary Care and Excel Primary Care.



The centre is close to public transport links. Some patients did comment that they took the bus to the practice but that it took some time due to the pattern of services and the location of the practice within Skelmersdale.

Surgery Population

Discussions with the Practice Management team highlighted that Dr Bisarya and Partner is located in an area of deprivation with a predominately elderly population. The surgery has around 3,000 patients registered at the practice, and this continues to grow in size.

“The age distribution of the practice’s patient demographic closely aligns with ICB and national averages, with a slightly higher proportion of males aged 50 – 54 and females aged 55 – 59.” (1)



Appointment Management

Appointments are released at 8am every day and can be offered over the phone and through the online app. Patients can also be triaged via the Acurx system where the practice team will then book an appointment where necessary. This can be via a phone call or a text message.

When calling the Surgery, patients are given the option to have a call back which means they won't lose their space in the queue.

Appointments are released every day at 8am and phone lines are covered by a team of four Receptionists, who are supported by members of the management team at times of high demand.

Staff explained that more patients booked their appointments via the phone line and there are sometimes appointments left at the end of the day. Staff members explained how they always try and allocate an appointment on the same day, and it is very rare that patients have to wait till the next day for their appointment.

There is a separate line for prescriptions which patients can access and speak to a member of the Reception team to order a repeat prescription or make medication enquiries.

Different services are offered in the Health Centre via Dr Bisarya's surgery including podiatry, ECG tests, diabetic eye screening, blood tests and AAA screening. Some services are provided by outside agencies and patients can be referred in to these.

When speaking to staff Representatives were made aware that they use the language line to translate for patients. They can also provide large print letters for visually impaired patients. During discussions it was highlighted that no patients use British Sign Language (BSL) at present and Healthwatch Lancashire are going to provide the surgery with information regarding support for BSL users in the future. (Recommendation 1)

Visit Summary

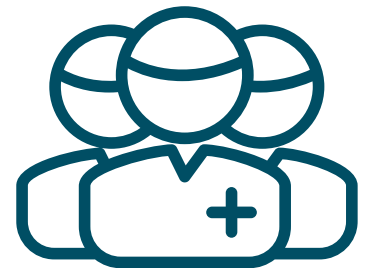
During the visit Healthwatch Lancashire Representatives spoke with fifteen patients who are registered at Dr Bisarya's and partner surgery and three other patients who were registered at other surgeries in the building.

Healthwatch Lancashire Representatives viewed facilities that are available including the waiting areas, reception, toilet facilities and offices.

At the time of the visit there were ten staff working within the surgery, the following staff were present;

- One GP
- One Advanced Nurse Practitioner
- One Health Care Assistant
- One Paramedic
- Four reception team members
- One Manager

The surgery mentioned that they use Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS) roles which help support the practice. These roles can include paramedics, health and wellbeing coaches and pharmacy technicians.



Overall, the feedback from patients was positive with several patients comments complimenting the management team and the ease of getting an appointment as there was always availability. Some areas that patients expressed concern about included around the understanding of roles within the surgery and why they are seeing a certain practitioner.

The feedback received from staff members was positive with staff commenting on how it feels like they work as a family. Staff members shared comments around the support they receive, their experience of working within the surgery and what they believe could be improved to enhance the patient experience.



Enter and View observations

External Environment

The Medical Centre is accessible via the front and rear. Parking was available outside the practice on two public car parks that can be used by patients attending the centre. At the time of the visit the car park was three quarters full and there were five disabled parking spaces available to use. Automatic doors and drop kerbs were observed at both entrances. Handrails were present to the exterior of the building at the front and rear entrances and a large ramp was in place at the rear of the surgery.

Internal Environment and Waiting Area

On entry into the Health Centre, it was clear to see three different Practice Reception areas using a shared waiting area. There was a lowered section on the reception desk for wheelchair users. Hearing loops were advertised but no observations were made to assess if they were in use at the time of the visit. The building was well maintained, and all areas were kept clear of clutter and mess. Seating was well maintained and there was no damage observed on any of the seating areas.



All the practice rooms were on the same floor, but these were mixed with the other two surgeries. A disabled toilet was available and patients needed to request a key to use this facility. Staff were observed providing assistance to patients with mobility needs, holding doors and providing directions. It was observed that the floor for reception and the waiting room was different and seemed to help patients understand where to go.

Self-check in machines were present but were currently out of action until they could all be upgraded. This is due to the different practices in the PCN and building using different systems. It was explained that the aim is to rationalise the process and make it as standardised as possible for patients by using the same system for each practice, this is an ongoing piece of work that the Primary Care Network (PCN) are conducting.

Several notice boards were located around the waiting area. There were some advertising local support services and others to indicate staff roles within the practice. A notice was on the board to share DNA statistics, the Patient Participation Group notice was displayed but was not obvious to patients. The boards were described by one patient as “chaotic” (Recommendation 2 & 3)

Notices were also present advertising walk in services, complaints procedures and other local services. Signage was present throughout the building however it was sometimes inconsistent and in a poor state of repair. Waiting areas and entrances had clear signage to help patients know where to go, however this was limited in some areas as patients reported being lost after their appointments whilst trying to find the exit (Recommendation 5)

No dementia friendly signage, with a combination of an image and text, was observed on the day of the visit and only one small clock observed near the waiting room which was difficult to read. A more suitable clock displaying the day, date and time would make this feature more accessible to those living with Dementia. (Recommendation 4)



Clinical rooms were shared between the three practices in the Health Centre, different treatment rooms were located around the centre with GP appointments on one side and other services such as blood tests in a separate area.

Patient Interactions

All staff were observed to be courteous and polite with patients. Receptionists answered phones calmly and dealt with a range of enquiries. Other members of staff knew patients by name and took time to speak with patients. It was noted that management staff were present in the waiting area and would also take over the reception desk to answer patient enquiries throughout the visit to minimise queues.

Patients were greeted by the relevant member of clinical staff and taken to their appointment. On more than one occasion staff members would collect their patient for this appointment and they were seen asking them how they were, how they found getting to the practice today and guiding them to the correct room. During the visit Healthwatch Lancashire Representatives observed a patient coming out of an appointment and the staff member providing assistance to them as they were in a different room than normal.

Patients were observed booking in at the reception desk. Staff knew patients by name and were observed answering a number of different enquiries. Staff were knowledgeable about pathways and directed patients to the correct doorways from the waiting area. Not all appointments were held on the same side of the practice. Nurses and other appointments were held on one side of the building and GPs and ANP appointments were held on the opposite side of the building. Some patients were observed to be confused about finding their way about the practice.



Patients were observed in conversations with the management team during the visit and patients mentioned that this is common practice for this surgery and the management team are present in the waiting area. The management team knew the patients by name and were seen talking to them about aspects outside of the surgery. This was observed to be friendly and courteous between staff and the patients. One patient was observed bringing in a sample and the Receptionist took the time to process the sample and fill out the paperwork. They explained the next steps of the process to the patient.

It was explained to Healthwatch Lancashire Representatives that all new patients have an initial appointment with the doctor where they will have their blood pressure checked, their height and weight and a general discussion to understand their needs and medical history. This helps identify any health needs early on in the registration process and highlights any needs that need to be catered for. This highlights any changes in medication and also to make the doctors aware of any pre-existing conditions that need to be monitored.

Patient Involvement

Dr Bisarya and Partner's website is easy to navigate. Patients can request prescriptions, find out information about out of hours options and look at health information. The NHS app is advertised on the home page. All service options are available on the top ribbon and online information is set out very clearly.



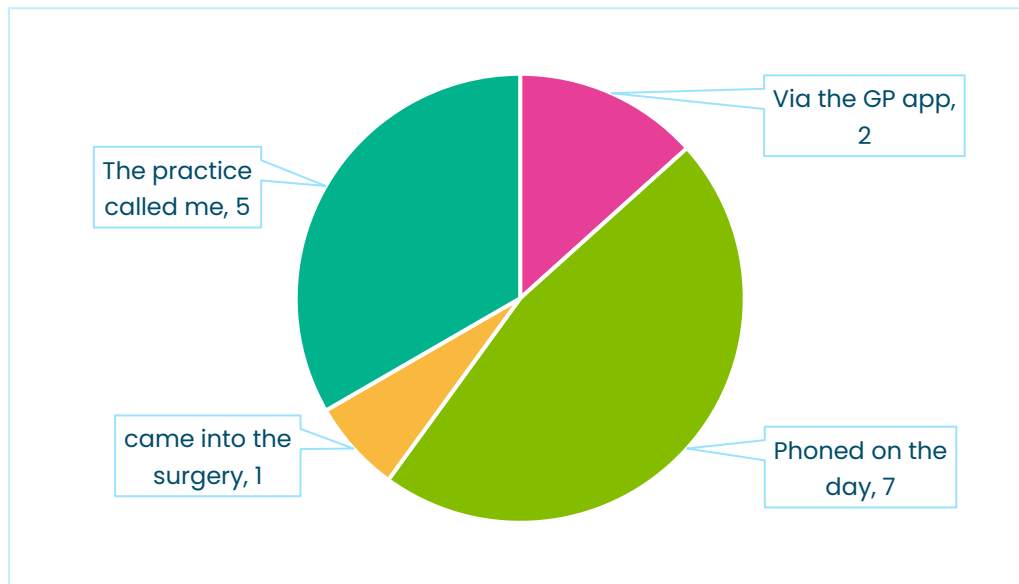
The surgery has an active Facebook page which updates patients around; groups in the area, surgery opening times, what a PCN is, foodbank information, NHS facilities and vaccinations. This was observed to be updated regularly and is informative to patients accessing this platform.

The manager explained that there is an active patient Participation Group up and running but this is not greatly attended. (Recommendation 2)

Patient feedback

Healthwatch Representatives spoke with fifteen patients at the visit.

How did you make your appointment today?



“If you ring dead on 8am then you can get an appointment absolutely fine.”

When speaking with patients at the practice it became apparent that patients had used different means in order to book an appointment. Most patients had called themselves to make an appointment and five patients had been called by the practice to receive results or to have a follow up appointment.

“I was called in by the reception team for an appointment today.”

Patients spoken with were asked how they found using the different methods and ten patients were happy with the way they had booked their appointment, but five patients found this difficult, mostly due to waiting times on the phone system.

“I had to make an appointment a few days ago as they used the call back system but that was thirty minutes later and by then all the appointments had gone.”

One patient commented on the use of the online app and how effective this was for them.

“If you get on the app at 8am in the morning you might be lucky but then if you don't get one you have to sit in a queue on the phone so at the moment, I don't feel this is effective.”



What works well at this surgery?

All fifteen patients were complimentary about the service they received and the care provided by staff at the practice. Management was mentioned frequently during conversations, highlighting that management are often present around the surgery and take time to talk with patients, which was also seen in observations.

“Dr Bisarya is incredible he always makes time to speak to you, he is very vibrant and happy to speak with patients.”

Patients spoke with representatives about how friendly the practice staff are and how nothing is too much for them.

“Everything is good, the staff are very friendly, and they know us very well.”

“They always look after me, nothing is ever too much trouble.”

One patient commented that they had been with the practice a long time and would not move practices because of the care they received.

“From what I’m aware this is the best practice in town.”

Is there anything that can be changed to meet your needs?

During conversations with patients, it was noted that ten out of fifteen patients commented that they felt nothing could be improved as they were more than happy with the practice as it is.

“It’s hard to think of something as I am very satisfied with my care and treatment.”

Five patients made recommendations about how they feel improvements could be made to the practice and the environment.

“I know a lot of people that get lost outside as there are no clear signs telling people what services are available in the health centre.” (Recommendation 6)

They explained how it was not always clear where they needed to go inside the practice, unless there was a member of staff available to guide them.

Comments were made about the telephone appointment making system, with some patients commenting that it was not always an easy process, particularly at busy periods.

“Making an appointment could be easier, it’s hard to book on the app but if you miss one there you’ve missed the front of the queue on the phone.” (Recommendation 7)

Two patients commented about the use of other practitioners within the practice and how they don’t know why they are not seeing a doctor.

“It would be nice to know why I’ve been put with a certain practitioner if it’s not a doctor.”
(Recommendation 8)

Do you receive information from the surgery that is easy to understand?

All fifteen patients spoken with on the day of the visit commented how they don't require any information in different formats and are happy with the way they are currently being contacted.

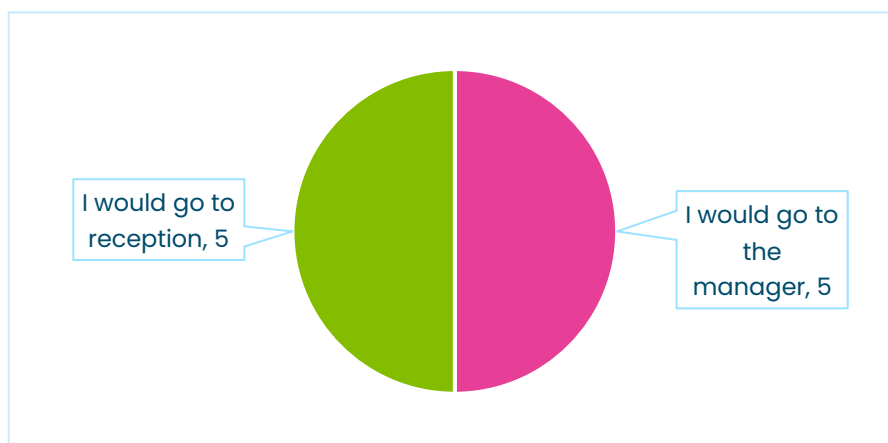
“If there is something they need to tell me they just ring me or I get a text reminder which I really like.”

Ten patients commented how they like the text message service where they receive a message before their appointment to remind them of time and date. Some of these patients had received messages reminding them of vaccines, health checks and reviews which they found helpful.



“I really like the text message reminders. They are very helpful. I also like it when I receive a message reminding me about my reviews.”

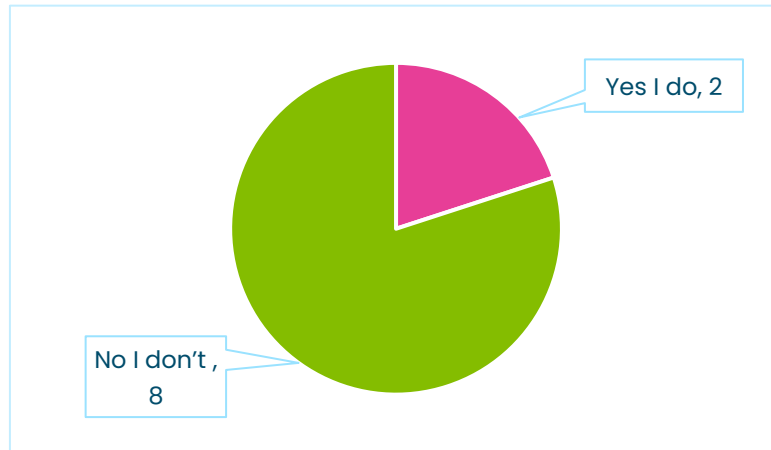
Do you know how to make a complaint if needed?



Ten patients answered this question and were confident that they would either ask the manager or go straight to reception. Four patients commented that the management team are on the floor in the waiting area a lot so they would speak to them there and then.

“I would just go straight to the manager; they are out on the floor enough so very approachable.”

Do you know what a Patient participation group is?



Out of fifteen patients, ten were happy to answer this question. Eight patients commented that they didn't know what a Patient participation Group was and did not know how to join the group.

Three patients mentioned that they were aware of what a Patient Participation Group was but didn't have time to attend the sessions.

"I know what one is, but I don't have time to join."

Two patients wanted to leave extra feedback about the Practice which is below.

"I'd like them to know that they are fantastic."

"I like that the manager and partners take the time to come into the waiting room to speak with patients, it adds that extra touch."

Staff feedback

Healthwatch received feedback from Eight staff members at the time of the visit.

Do you have enough staff when on duty?

All staff members commented that there were enough staff, they mentioned it can be difficult at times when there is staff sickness and holidays but the team pull together and support each other.

“There is always adequate staff to carry out the day to day processes. When there is sickness or holidays, the whole team pull together and cover the workload.”

Some members of staff commented how the roles within the practice really help with capacity and help with patients.

“Yes, since the ARRS roles are in the practice it has massively helped workload and patient satisfaction.”

One member of staff mentioned that there are bank staff available to cover sickness and holidays, these staff are known to the practice and help support the staff.

“Yes, there is always bank staff ready to use in case of holidays and sickness.”

Do you feel supported to carry out a person-centred experience?

One member of staff spoke with Representatives about how fast they can support a patient from initial appointment to tests and then to follow up appointment.

“Yes, I feel we have enough resources to see a patient, send them for a blood test and see them in the same week with their results.”

Staff members commented on how they felt supported to carry out their job roles effectively due to the support they receive from the management team.

“Yes, the practice manager and all other staff including Dr Bisarya are all willing to help and provide support.”

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

All eight members of staff spoken with commented on how the training they receive in the practice is regular and up to date.

“There are training modules completed regularly and training is ongoing as different aspects and areas arise.”

Two members of staff spoke about how the team support each other and learn from mentoring. They felt that this was more worth while as they learnt from each other and picked up things quickly.



“Yes, we learn from each other, we learn by doing which is better.”

What measures are in place for people with additional communication needs?

All staff members commented on a measures that are in place for accessibility including Accessible toilet, wheelchair access, language line, hearing loop, large print materials and ramp access to the front and back of the Health Centre.

“We have wheelchair access and ensure that face to face appointments for any patient who are hard of hearing or who are carers.”

One member of staff spoke about how patients who have a learning disability are seen by the same doctor to ensure continuity of care and support.

“For patients who have a learning disability they are seen by the same doctor for their appointments and reviews.”

What is your experience of working here?

Staff were very complimentary about the Practice and the management team.

“This is a family run practice and has been around since the 1970’s, it feels more like a family and not a business.”

“I love this practice, so family friendly with a really helpful vibe.”

Members of staff commented on how the staff team pull together and support each other.



“I have always been impressed at how everyone goes the extra mile to ensure the needs of each patient are met.”

“I’ve been here a long time now and had a very good experience. We know the patients which is lovely and Dr Bisarya is so clever and the best doctor I have ever worked with, he is amazing.”

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

When speaking with staff members they found it difficult to think of aspects that could help patient experience but commented on some aspects of the environment.

“More toilets would be nice for patients, there is only one at the moment.”
(Recommendation 9)

Staff mentioned that more awareness of roles within the practice would help patients understand who they are seeing and why.

“Patient awareness of the ARRS roles and why they are seeing them instead of a doctor.”
(Recommendation 8)

Two members of staff commented on how they feel that some aspects of appointments would be helpful via text messages including blood test results.

“More digital support, patients call for blood results when I feel this could be digitally explained to them. Maybe a text telling them everything is fine, and a phone call follow up for those who need to see the doctor.” (Recommendation 10)

Any other comments

“This is a small practice that feels like a family, all staff support each other and work as a team to ensure quality of care is delivered.”

“The Practice Manager helps support with morning calls, she jumps on the phone like and helps get the queue down.”

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been formulated based on observations of the environment and feedback gathered from patients and staff.

1. Implement a policy to cater for patients with additional communication needs such as BSL and other languages.
2. Advertise the Patient Participation Group poster in a more prominent place and ensure it is clear and shows patients how to join. Also ensure this is advertised through different channels to ensure this is running effectively.
3. Consult patients about the information they would like to see in the waiting area to ensure the correct information is available.
4. Implement measures to ensure that the Health Centre is more dementia friendly through the use of images on signs and dementia friendly clocks. (See appendix for more information)
5. Review signage in corridors to ensure patients are aware of how to get around the building and find the exit.
6. Enquire about signage outside so patients are aware what services are available within the Health Centre.
7. Review phone line wait times and ensure patients are aware of different ways they can make an appointment.
8. Consult with patients around the roles within the practice so patients are aware of who they are seeing and why.
9. Enquire with the Health Centre about the possibility of having more toilets for patients.
10. Investigate ways to improve patient access to blood test results either through the use of the NHS app or a text service.

Appendix

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-involved/dementia-friendlyresources/organisations/dementia-friendly-environment-checklist>

Provider response

Recommendation	Action from provider	Timeframe	Comments
Implement a policy to cater for patients with additional communication needs such as BSL and other languages.	<p>Will develop a policy.</p> <p>Will advertise in waiting room the options practice offers</p>	6 months	
Advertise the Patient Participation Group poster in a more prominent place and ensure it is clear and shows patients how to join. Also ensure this is advertised through different channels to ensure this is running effectively.	<p>To relocate the PPG poster in reception.</p> <p>Facebook campaign</p>	2 months	
Consult patients about the information they would like to see in the waiting area to ensure the correct information is available.	The practice will collate feedback re displays in reception.	3 months	
Implement measures to ensure that the Health Centre is more dementia friendly through the use of images on signs and dementia friendly clocks. (See appendix for more information)	. Will contact property services who own the building re signage and dementia friendly clocks	3 months	

Review signage in corridors to ensure patients are aware of how to get around the building and find the exit.	Will contact property services to review the signage in the building.	3 months	
Enquire about signage outside so patients are aware what services are available within the Health Centre.	Will contact property services to review the signage in the building.	3 months	
Review phone line wait times and ensure patients are aware of different ways they can make an appointment.	The practice will review phone data	3 months	
Consult with patients around the roles within the practice so patients are aware of who they are seeing and why.	The practice is currently undertaking a campaign on Facebook and in the waiting room in relation to the additional roles.	Ongoing	
Enquire with the Health Centre about the possibility of having more toilets for patients.	The practice will inform property services re this recommendation	1 month	
Investigate ways to improve patient access to blood test results either through the use of the NHS app or a text service.	Practice will review options	Ongoing	

Any other comments



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