

Bacup Pharmacy

Bacup Primary Health Care Centre

Thursday 31st October 2024

10:00am – 12:00pm



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

Address

Bacup Primary Health Centre

Irwell Mill

Rochdale Road

Bacup

OL13 9NR

Date and Time of our Visit:

Thursday 31st October 2024

10:00am – 12:00pm

Healthwatch Lancashire Authorised Representatives:

Steve Walmsley (Engagement Team Leader)

Debra Worthington (Healthwatch Lancashire Volunteer)

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 an 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 surgery 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 (CQC), 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.

Why pharmacies?

Healthwatch Lancashire are carrying out visits to pharmacies in response to concerns about general accessibility in pharmacies from members of the public and also to understand how service changes are perceived in light of the recent pharmacy first initiative.

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.

What did we do?

Healthwatch Lancashire Enter and View Representatives made an announced visit to Bacup Pharmacy on Thursday the 31st October and received feedback from:



Introductory meeting with manager

At the beginning of the enter and view visit, Healthwatch Lancashire met with the Pharmacy Management team to discuss the background of the pharmacy and to view the facilities.

One to one discussions with patients

Healthwatch Lancashire spoke with patients using the pharmacy about their experiences, their reasons for visiting the pharmacy and how they felt about the service.

Discussions with members of staff

Healthwatch Lancashire Representatives spoke with members of staff about their experiences of delivering services. Questions centred around support for people using the service and any improvements staff felt could be made.

Observations

Observations were made throughout the visit. This included interactions between staff and people using the service, accessibility measures in and around the building and the condition and cleanliness of the facilities.

Summary



Healthwatch Lancashire representatives made an announced visit to Bacup Pharmacy on the 31st October 2024 in order to find out more about the services provided at the pharmacy and to speak with patients about their experiences.

There was a high level of satisfaction expressed by patients who attended the pharmacy throughout the visit. Most patients visited the pharmacy to pick up their prescriptions after they had attended an appointment at a GP surgery. Some patients were visiting the pharmacy for a follow up visit as they were unable to get their prescription on a previous visit due to stock issues, which they mentioned the staff at the pharmacy had worked to resolve. Two patients were observed going back to the GP practice and then returning to the pharmacy for their amended prescription.

Most patients spoken with were happy with the advice that staff gave them, and they felt that staff were approachable, particularly with some of the patients who had attended for medication enquiries. Patients were aware of the Pharmacy First initiative and some had used it without knowing the formal title for the service. Staff had taken a proactive approach to raising awareness of the service by sharing leaflets with all patients in order to make them more aware of the services they could access at the pharmacy.

Staff felt that they had a positive working relationship with each other and the patients. Some concerns were raised about capacity to deliver all services they were expected to, in light of the upcoming seasonal vaccinations which meant that some staff would be diverted from some of the core aspects of their work. Staff felt confident that the steps they had taken prior to the start of winter were helpful in order to prepare for any winter pressures.

Pharmacy Overview

Location



The practice is located in the Bacup Primary Health Centre which offers a range of local health services such as GP and community health services. The facility is close to the centre of Bacup on Rochdale Road. Frequent local bus services can be accessed from a bus stop close to the centre. There is a drop off point directly outside the front of the centre which allows patients using taxis to gain direct access to the centre.

A car park is located across from the centre, on Rochdale Road, with five disabled bays. Access to the centre from the car park is made easier by a zebra crossing. The signage on the car park indicated that the parking area was for the health centre.

Services available

The pharmacy offers prescription services for people who use Irwell Medical Practice (See appendix) and other GP practices in the town, alongside sales of general medication for members of the public. A consultation room is available for people to be seen by a qualified pharmacist for common ailments. The pharmacy offers advice and guidance under the pharmacy first initiative and a range of vaccines including:

- Flu
- Covid-19

Enter and View observations

External Environment

The main entrance to the building catered for wheelchair users by being level with the kerb and having automatic doors.

Signage outside the building is clear and easily visible, helping patients find where they needed to go.

Internal Environment

The pharmacy is located on the ground floor of the Bacup Medical centre and is clearly signposted in the entrance foyer of the building. The shop area was set out with space for patients using wheelchairs and pushchairs to move around freely during quiet periods. Medications and products were clearly identifiable and health information was visible throughout with the Pharmacy First initiative being given emphasis around the dispensing counter.

The front desk has a lowered section to allow people using wheelchairs to speak with staff members during their visit.



Observations

The pharmacy was quite busy during our visit with a steady flow of people using the service and staff were observed serving patients with a number of different issues.

Two patients had attended the pharmacy to make enquiries about medication and vaccinations. Staff took time to respond to their enquiries and checked their details thoroughly before dispensing medication or completing the discussion about medication.

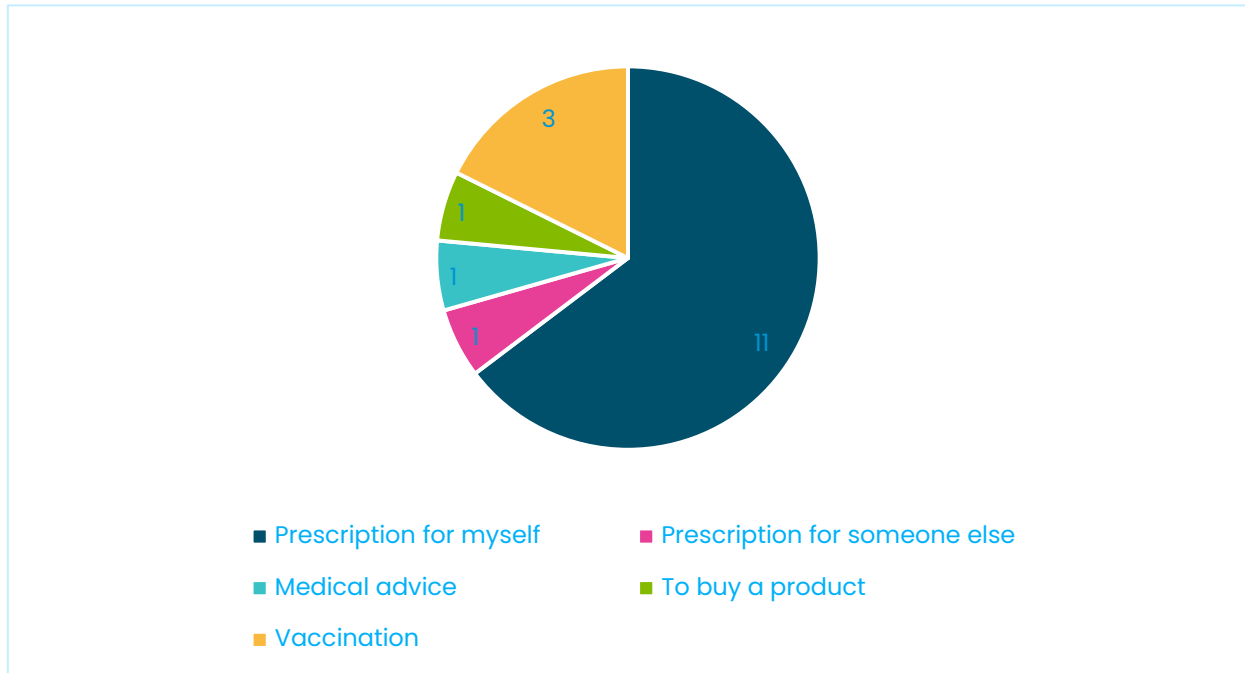
Throughout the visit staff members were observed to know patients by name, and they demonstrated good understanding of communication needs with different patients from a wide range of community backgrounds. Staff also promoted the various services offered by the pharmacy through leaflets detailing the Pharmacy First initiative (see appendix) and other initiatives such as free blood pressure checks to patients attending for vaccinations.

Three patients were observed to be waiting for their medication enquiries and left before they were seen by a member of staff. (See patient feedback). Two returned to the pharmacy when it became less busy.

Patient Feedback

Healthwatch Representatives spoke with **eighteen** people using the service.

What is the purpose of your visit?



Eleven people visited the pharmacy to pick up a prescription for themselves. They had received their script and attended the pharmacy to pick it up. Smaller numbers came for medical advice, to pick up a prescription for someone else, for a vaccination, or to buy a product.

Were you able to get what you needed?

Some patients had returned to the pharmacy to pick up medication that was owed to them from a previous visit. They were able to collect their required medication on their return visit. Two patients went upstairs to chase their prescription up with the GP practice.

“I had to go back up to the drs to find out whether they had sent it through and they said they had.”

The pharmacy experienced some medicine stock issues during our visit. Patients were informed about why the stock issues occurred and when their medication would arrive. Patients appeared satisfied with the open and transparent information they were given. Almost all patients spoken with complimented how the staff at the pharmacy kept them informed about the progress of their orders. One patient felt that it would be better if they were contacted to tell them that their order was ready.

“It’s not their fault they didn’t have it in stock but they’ve got it on order and I can get it tomorrow.”

What works well at this pharmacy?

All patients spoken with complemented the service, noting the friendly and informative staff and generally reliable service. One patient explained that they felt the service at the pharmacy had improved since it was taken over by a new provider (Recommendation 1).

“It has been a million times better here since the new owners took over.”

Another patient commented that they did not use this pharmacy regularly, due to where they lived, but that they would consider moving to it based on their experience throughout the duration of the visit.

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

Whilst patients were complimentary about the service they received from staff at the pharmacy, it was felt that it would be easier for them to be able to visit at weekends if the pharmacy was open on a Saturday (recommendation 2).

“It would be helpful if we could come on a Saturday, especially with work.”

One patient commented that they felt there was no communication between the pharmacy and the GP practice. They had a query raised about their medication and needed to speak with the pharmacy team at the GP instead of the pharmacy to resolve the issue which added time to their visit. (recommendation 3).

“There is no interface between the pharmacy and the GP upstairs. This isn’t the first time I have had to go back upstairs about my medication.”



One patient mentioned that they had been helped by the pharmacist, who was able to get what they needed on a return visit. This was good, but they felt that stock issues were the main problem people were experiencing at the pharmacy and that they recognised it was a national issue, not unique to the pharmacy itself.

“He [the pharmacist] got it sorted in the end but it was a lot of work for him to get my medication ordered for me.”

Staff feedback



Healthwatch received feedback from **two** staff members during the visit.

How do you manage your workload?

Both members of staff explained how they managed the workload at the pharmacy and worked with some of the issues that they were experiencing.

“We are always busy here but we have a lot of systems in place to manage the issues that patients are experiencing, particularly with stock.”

They mentioned how the staff were able to manage with demand for medication by having links with other pharmacies and the suppliers in order to obtain stock for patients. The pharmacy offers a ring when ready service to inform patients when their order is ready or when something they are owed has come into stock for them.

They explained that difficulties arose when GPs ordered an item which was not suitable or in stock, which meant that patients needed to go back to the practice they had come from to put in another prescription request (Recommendation 2)

What measures are in place for people with disabilities?



One member of staff explained how the staff at the pharmacy were able to provide services to people with disabilities. Using interpreters or by offering assistance to patients when it was appropriate.

“We are always happy to help people, we know our patients well and know what they need in terms of extra support.”

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

One member of staff commented that they felt there were things that caused issues for patients which were beyond the direct control of the staff at the pharmacy.

“Stock issues are always a problem and it needs to be addressed. We do what we can but we know it’s frustrating for patients.”

They explained how they had put systems in place in order to mitigate the issues which were having a positive impact for patients as they were able to source items of stock in a timely manner. However, they noted that it was a “stop gap”, and that the stock problems were a national issues which they could do little to resolve.



Recommendations

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

1. Celebrate and share successes and positive practice highlighted in this report on website, social media and in team meetings.
2. Consult with patients about opening times to explore additional capacity opportunities.
3. Liaise with local GP providers to improve communication about stock levels and prescriptions.

Provider response

Recommendation	Action from provider	Timeframe	Comments
Celebrate and share successes and positive practice highlighted in this report on the website, social media and in team meetings.			
Consult with patients about opening times to explore additional capacity opportunities.			
Liaise with local GP providers to improve communication about stock levels and prescriptions.			

Questions

Is the report factually accurate?

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

Any other comments?

Appendix

Irwell Medical Practice Enter and View Report:

<https://healthwatchlancashire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Irwell-Medical-Practice-Enter-and-View-Report.pdf>

Pharmacy First Leaflet

The leaflet is a blue rectangular poster. At the top left, it says 'You can now access treatment* for the below common conditions without the need to see your GP.' Below this are seven circular icons representing different conditions: Earache, Impetigo, Shingles, Insect Bites, Sinusitis, Sore Throat, and Urinary Tract Infections in Women. To the right of these icons, the text reads 'No doctor's appointment? No problem!' followed by 'Speak to our pharmacy team for more information or book an appointment using the QR code below.' A QR code is centered below this text, with the website 'rowlandsparmacy.co.uk' printed underneath it. At the bottom left, there is a small disclaimer: '*Subject to eligibility criteria and consultation with a pharmacist.' At the bottom right, the 'ROWLANDS PHARMACY' logo is displayed, which consists of the name above a white cross symbol on a blue background.



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Lancashire

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