



Details of visit

Service address:	Arlesey Medical Centre, The High Street, Arlesey, Bedfordshire, SG15 6SN
Service Provider:	Sunnyhill Healthcare C.I.C
Date and Time:	4th August 2015 14:00 – 16:30
Authorised Representatives:	Diana Blackmun, Dave Simpson, Linda Grant
Contact details:	Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire Capability House, Wrest Park, Silsoe, Bedfordshire, MK45 4HR Tel: 0300 303 8554

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire would like to thank the service provider, patients and staff (clinical and non-clinical), for their contribution to the Enter and View Programme.

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 patients and staff (clinical and non-clinical), only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.



What is Enter and View?

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out Enter and View visits. Local Healthwatch representatives carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being managed and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families, patients and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies.

Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation – so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch Enter and Views are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies. If at any time an authorised representative observes anything that they feel uncomfortable about they will inform their lead who will inform the service Manager, ending the visit.

In addition, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer they will be directed to the CQC where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.



Purpose of the visit

- To engage with patients of GP Practices and understand how dignity is being respected;
- Identify examples of good working practice;
- Observe patients engaging with staff (clinical and non-clinical), and their surroundings.



Strategic drivers

- Care Quality Commission dignity and wellbeing strategy.
- GP Surgeries are a Local Healthwatch priority.

Methodology

This was an announced Enter and View Visit carried out at Arlesey Medical Centre.

A letter and posters announcing HWCB visit were previously sent to the practice. A questionnaire was also sent to the Practice Manager to complete prior to the visit. Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire also delivered copies of a questionnaire for patients to fill in, together with a 'response box', to post their completed questionnaires prior to HWCB's visit. The purpose was to minimise disruption and inconvenience to patients during the visit.

HWCB Representatives met with the Practice Manager who informed them about the Practice, how it was managed, staff, the catchment area and number of patients. The Practice operates as a business, registered as a Community Interest Company, whose GPs are salaried.

Representatives also undertook a tour of the premises to observe accessibility, including disabled access, the availability of patient information and condition of the building.





Summary of findings

Arlesey Medical Centre is situated in the High Street in the centre of Arlesey, in the same complex as the Town Council office, Nursery and Lower School, Library and Village Hall. It is a single-storey building which was opened in 1971.

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire's representatives were made very welcome by the Practice Manager and all of his staff, who assisted the team as much as possible whilst continuing their day to day activities; answering telephone calls and speaking to patients.

Results of visit

Staff

The Practice has the following members of staff:

- One male GP (salaried) and one locum GP;
- One Practice Nurse;
- One Healthcare Assistant (HCA);
- One Practice Manager;
- Four reception staff

Specialist Services provided:

- Phlebotomy;
- Ante-natal;
- Counselling;
- Personal consultations;
- Child health surveillance;
- Vaccinations;
- Smoking cessation;
- Diabetic services;
- Asthma services;
- Heart disease services;
- Cervical cytology.

Surgery Hours:

Monday to Friday	08:00 - 12:00 and 14:00 - 18:00
Saturday/Sunday	Closed



Environment

Other observations included:

- The surgery is wheelchair & pushchair accessible;
- Fire exits are well signed;
- Some of the interior paintwork, including the entrance door 'push plate' looks grubby.
- There is a hearing loop;
- Complaints information is displayed and available;

- Because of the small size of the reception/waiting area, confidentiality and privacy cannot be assured;
- A 'SystemOne' electronic booking-in terminal is available;
- The waiting room is light, warm and airy, but would be rather cramped at a busy time;
- There is a TV screen for patients entertainment;
- The waiting area is child-friendly and there are facilities for breastfeeding;
- HWCB posters were prominently displayed.
- Opening times are not clearly displayed;
- There is a good range of information available for patients, but not about the PPG (although this is available on the website);

Car Parking

There appears to be adequate car parking (including disabled spaces) available at the Practice, however this has to be shared with other occupants of the building. HWCB representatives did not witness a busy period during the visit where the lack of available spaces may have been more apparent.

Patient Information

A good and varied selection of leaflets is available for patients displayed in racks in the waiting area. The surgery website also contains a wealth of information available.

Registration at the Practice(s)

HWCB representatives were advised by the Practice Manager that patients can register at the surgery with proof of address and ID; current exceptions are travellers and the homeless.

The Practice does not have a policy for people to make an appointment prior to registration as *'the situation has never arisen.'* However, the Practice Manager informed representatives that along with temporary residents (for example, visiting from abroad, family live here, short-term residents up to 15 days or longer up to three months), *'anyone who needs to be seen will be seen.'*

A Practice leaflet is made available to patients on registration.

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

The Practice operates a PPG with 25 patients registered on the group, ten of whom are regular attendees. The average age of members ranges from the early 30s up to the 80s, with the majority in the 40-50 age brackets. The group meets three or four times a year.

The PPG is advertised within the Practice, on the website, on Facebook and in Newsletters.

Patient Consultation

HWCB representatives were advised that a survey for patients was carried out at the Practice in 2013 and the Practice has not conducted any surveys since that date. The questions were derived from issues raised during PPG meetings over the past year. The survey was conducted using paper forms available at the surgery and also electronically using 'survey monkey', links to which were posted on the Practice website and Facebook page.

The results were discussed with the PPG and an action plan designed and developed.

Appointments System

The Practice Manager confirmed that patients can book appointments in person, on the telephone or on line, Monday to Friday.

Early morning appointments can be made available two mornings a week however there is currently no call for evening appointments.

Out of Hours Care

Out of hours care in Arlesey is provided by M-Doc at Biggleswade Hospital. Patients are directed to this service and/or the 111 telephone service by the Practice's answerphone message, the Practice Website and the Practice Leaflet.

Medication & Prescriptions

Patients can request repeat prescriptions online or by handing in the repeat prescription slip at the reception desk. Prescriptions are available within 48 hours. A local pharmacy offers a collect and deliver service.

Patient Questionnaire Results

The Practice currently has 3990 patients registered. A total of 27 survey questionnaires were completed during the two weeks prior to the visit.

Results of the questionnaires completed at the Practice were as follows:

1. 26% of respondents recalled receiving a Practice leaflet when registering, 22% said they did not and 52% couldn't remember.
2. 96% of patients surveyed found it easy to register at the Practice.
3. Only 33% of the patients knew there was a Patient Participation Group (PPG) at the surgery.
4. Two of the respondents were members of the PPG.
5. When asked how they booked appointments, 54% used the telephone, 30% in person and only 16% used the online service.
6. 41% of patients knew that there were appointments available in unsociable hours, 15% thought there was not and 46% didn't know or did not answer the question.
7. 74% of respondents said they could get an appointment when they wanted one, 4% said they could not and 22% qualified their answers (comments shown below).
8. 67% received a text reminder of their appointment, 18% said no and 15% do not have a mobile phone.
9. 63% of patients said they were given a choice of Health Professional when booking an appointment, 30% said they were not and 7% did not answer.
10. The results of 'What choice of Health Professional are you offered?' were evenly split between GP and Minor Illness Nurse.
11. Over three quarters of patients said they were aware of the surgery's opening hours.
12. Almost half of the respondents did not answer the question regarding out of hours care. Of the remainder, there was a similar number who opted for calling the surgery for the out of hours number and calling 111 with only two opting for going to A&E.
13. 82% of patients felt that they had enough time with the GP, Nurse or HCA.
14. 85% felt that the Health Professional listened to them and considered their opinion.
15. 96% felt that the members of staff at the surgery were helpful and understanding.
16. 96% would recommend the surgery to other people.
17. Just over half of the respondents knew how to make a complaint about the surgery, one third did not and three people did not answer the question.

Interaction between Patients and Staff

HWCB Representatives observed members of staff both clinical and administrative speaking to patients and all interactions were conducted in a professional but friendly manner.

Clinical and non-clinical staff

All members of staff seen and spoken to during the visit were friendly and helpful to the representatives and to the patients they were observed interacting with. This included both clinical and non-clinical staff. Staff spoken to during the visit explained that they liked working at the Practice and felt the service provided at the Practice was good.

All staff confirmed they regularly attend various training courses for their role.

Concerns/Complaints Procedure

The Practice Manager informed representatives that the Practice has a complaints procedure, and Representatives were given a copy. The complaints policy also appears on the Practice website.

A Patient Complaint Form will be given to a patient who has a concern about the service received. The patient would need to either complete the form or write directly to the Practice Manager.

HWCB is pleased to report that whilst the Practice only scored one out of five points in HWCB's 'Investigating the Complaints Process – General Practice' survey carried out at the beginning of 2015, the Practice has responded positively and now 'ticks all five boxes'.

Additional Findings

Comments from survey Q7:

- *Not always*
- *Sometimes, call at 8:00 am or you may not*
- *Depends on time of year*
- *Normally have to wait a day or so*
- *Brilliant service on reception.*

General comments received from patients included:

'To be open later – after 6:30 pm.'

Our Practice is well run, the reception staff are efficient and understanding and my husband and I are very satisfied with the service.'

'Really lovely friendly surgery. Have recommended it to others. Very easy to get appointments.'

'Lovely helpful receptionists, always happy to help. The Nicest doctors' I have been to.'

'Fantastic with children and fitting them in. I would rate this surgery 10/10 (apart from the locum doctors).'

'This practice has gone downhill since Dr Attas has left.'

'I always find the staff very friendly and helpful at my practice, which I haven't found at my previous practices. Also very accommodating when needing an appointment.'

'I think Arlesey has probably the best health provision in the country.'

'We have been with this surgery since it opened and have always been extremely happy and satisfied with the service.'

Recommendations

HWCB recommends that all interior paintwork be redecorated or 'spring-cleaned' to present a welcoming environment for patients.

HWCB further recommends that a survey of patients be undertaken to assess the need for evening appointments.

HWCB would also recommend that the Practice consider a more proactive promotion of the PPG to raise awareness of its existence and to attract new members to the group.

Finally, Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire recommends that this report is shared with the patients and staff (clinical and non-clinical) of the Practice and to advise that if they should wish to contribute any additional comments about the report, to contact Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire direct.



Service Provider response

Thank you for sending the above report.

We believe that the report represents a fair and accurate assessment of the Practice and acknowledge the recommendations made by the visiting team. The report and findings will be discussed with our PPG at the next scheduled meeting. We will also publish the report on our website and Facebook page and seek feedback.

Finally, we welcomed the visit by Healthwatch and fully support the Enter and View initiative.

**Richard Stead
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