



Details of visit

Service address:	Sandy Health Centre, Northcroft, Sandy, Beds, SG19 1JQ
Service Provider:	Dr Kapur & Partners
Date and Time:	15th July 2015, 10:00 – 12:30
Authorised Representatives:	Dave Simpson, Linda Harrison, Nicola King
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.



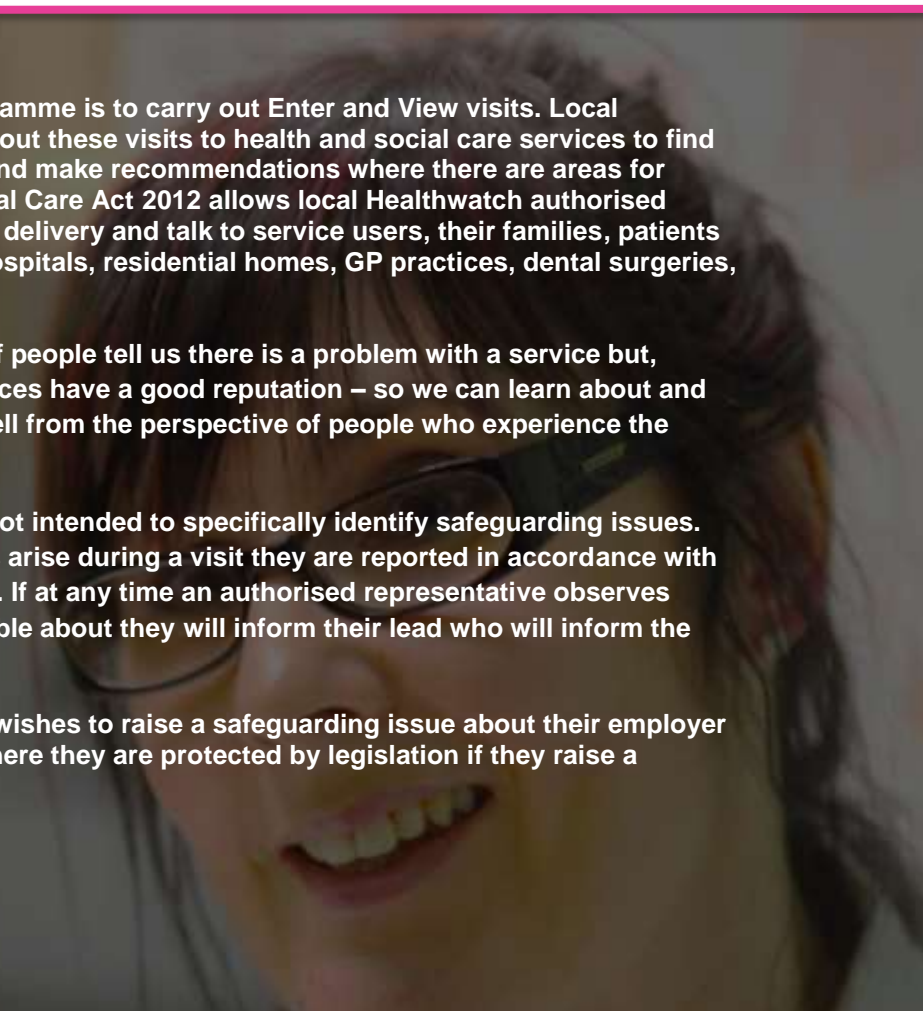
What is Enter and View?

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 to Sandy Health Centre, Bedfordshire.

A letter and posters announcing Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire's (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.

On the day of the visit, the Practice Manager had arranged 'booked slots' for HWCB representatives to talk to several GPs and members of their administration and clinical staff. This was in addition to speaking to patients in the waiting area. 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

Dr Kapur & Partners Practice operates in The Health Centre in Sandy which is rented from 'PropCo' (NHS Property Services Limited) and the property is shared with the South Essex Partnership Trust (SEPT), who are responsible for the maintenance of the whole building.

Staff

The Practice has the following members of staff (at the time of the visit):

- Six GPs (five are partners); three male and two female GP partners plus a locum;
- One Practice Nurse;
- One Health Care Assistant;
- Five reception staff;
- 24 other members of staff;
- Midwives (provided by SEPT Community Services);
- District Nurses (provided by SEPT Community Services);
- Health visitors (provided by SEPT Community Services);
- Physiotherapists (provided by SEPT Community Services).

Specialist Services provided (at the time of the visit):

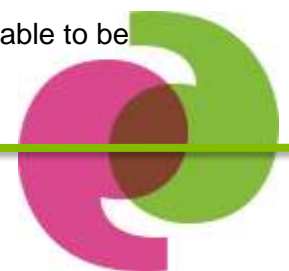
- Phlebotomy;
- Minor Illness Nurse;
- Clinics: COPD; Asthma; Diabetes; Family Planning; Cervical Smears; Baby Immunisation; Children's Health; Antenatal;
- Vaccinations: Influenza; Travel Vaccinations
- NHS Health checks;
- Stop Smoking service;
- Sexual Health services.

Surgery Hours

Monday through to Wednesday 08:00 - 18:30.

Thursday and Friday 07:00 - 18:30

No weekend appointments available as routine, however appointments are available to be booked quarterly on a Saturday morning.



Results of visit

Environment

Sandy Health Centre is a single storey building of modern design, set just outside of the main town of Sandy. The Practice shares the building with the South Essex Partnership Trust (SEPT), which delivers community services in the area. The grounds are well maintained on scrub and grass areas.

HWCB representatives did feel that the external aspect of the premises appeared to be slightly foreboding due to the high security fencing surrounding it. The internal decoration was light and airy which had recently been refurbished and redecorated.

Patients book in on arrival using a 'SystemOne' touch screen adjacent to reception. The reception desk is cordoned off to afford some degree of privacy; however it is still very close

to the waiting area. The reception desk for SEPT services was sited on the left hand side as you enter the building. The dispensing area is sited next to the reception area. Corridors are sited off the main reception area leading to the consulting rooms.

Other observations included:

- Clear signs to rooms, opening hours and toilets with a range of literature available to patients;
- PPG Information displayed;
- Complaints information clearly displayed;
- Clear guidance on how to inform reception of your arrival;
- Friendly and approachable reception staff;
- Electronic booking system at suitable height for patients;
- Call system for patients via screen in waiting area;
- Names and photographs of GP's and Practice staff were not displayed;
- Baby changing facilities were not apparent.

The waiting room has a comprehensive display of patient information. HWCB posters were clearly displayed and the 'response box' and patient questionnaires were also visible. Representatives engaged with several patients in the waiting area and also spoke to members of staff.

The members of staff, representatives spoke to, were all very happy to be working for the Practice indicating they felt supported and listened to. The Practice Manager informed representatives they had identified a need to provide a separate waiting area for patients with learning difficulties, and their carers, to minimise possible disruption in the main waiting area; the health Education Room was now used for this purpose.

Car Parking

Car parking at the site is adequate and patients can also park within the Town Centre which has a short cut through to the surgery. There are a number of disabled parking bays near to the entrance.

Patient Information

The surgery has a good and varied selection of leaflets available for patients and also displays a selection of information on the surgery's website and Facebook page. Information is also displayed on a TV screen and the scrolling board in the reception area.

Registration at the Practice

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

The Practice operates a policy whereby people can be seen prior to registration to address urgent needs. The Practice also operates a temporary resident's policy under their Acute Treatment Scheme and carefully monitors this process.

A Practice booklet is made available to patients on registration.

Patient Participation Group (PPG's)

The surgery has both a physical and virtual PPG, however the Practice Manager explained that it can be quite difficult to recruit new members, especially from the younger cohort of patients. The PPG meets quarterly; the age range of members is mainly 60 plus. Members of the PPG are involved in assisting with the annual patients' survey and other ad hoc activities. The virtual group is contacted by the surgery 2-3 times a year to respond to online surveys etc.

The PPG reviews feedback gained from the Friends & Family survey, the Patient Survey and the Comments and Suggestions Box on a quarterly basis.

Patient Consultation

The Practice Manager advised representatives that the surgery had previously conducted surveys on their appointments system and, as a patient, asked - 'what were considered to be the problems'. Patients identified that it was often difficult to get through on the telephone. The Practice therefore raised awareness of the online booking system which has gone some way to mitigate this problem.

A telephone triage system has also been instigated whereby if all face to face appointments have been taken, the on call doctor will telephone patients who have been unable to book an appointment. This is receiving positive comments from patients.

Appointments System

The Practice Manager confirmed that patients can book appointments in person, on the telephone or on line, Monday to Friday. Early morning (7:00am) appointments are available Thursday and Fridays and quarterly on a Saturday morning. Appointments can be booked up to four weeks in advance. Telephone consultation appointments are also available.

For emergency appointments an on-call doctor is available every day and the surgery also has an emergency clinic in the afternoons. The receptionist will also ask patients if the Minor Illness Nurse (Prescribing) can assist to free up GP time for other patients.

The Practice operates a text reminder service for appointments 48 hours prior to appointment time. Home visits are mostly for housebound patients and palliative care patients; the on-call doctor will decide whether a home visit is required.

HWCB representatives were advised that appointment times are allocated for 10 minutes although patients can request longer.

Out of Hours Care

Out of hours care in Sandy is provided by M-Doc based at Biggleswade Hospital. The Practice relay information about this service to patients via the practice leaflet, on their website and in their Newsletter. The latter was initiated by the PPG; hard copies of the Newsletter are displayed on reception.

Medication & Prescriptions

Medications can be ordered online on SystmOne, in the repeat prescriptions box at reception or in person. The turnaround time is 48 hours. The Practice Manager did inform HWCB representatives that for those patients who needed to collect their medication from Lloyds Pharmacy, *'things do not always run smoothly'* and delays are possible.

Patient Questionnaire Results

The Practice currently has 9,075 patients registered. A total of 29 survey questionnaires were completed prior to the visit.

Results of the questionnaires were as follows:

1. The majority of patients (59%) recalled receiving a practice leaflet when registering at the surgery;
2. A very high percentage of patients said they found it easy to register at the Practice(s);
3. 76% of patients who completed the questionnaire confirmed they were aware the Practice(s) has a PPG and 24% answered that they did not know if the Practice had a PPG;
4. None of the patients who completed the questionnaire was a member of the PPG;

5. How patients book appointments was fairly evenly distributed between the telephone, in person, with 23% using the On Line system;
6. Three quarters of patients were aware that late appointments were available for booking;
7. Almost 80% of patients who completed the questionnaire felt they could access an appointment when they needed one however, 21% felt they could not get the appointment they needed;
8. Almost 75% of the patients who completed the questionnaire confirmed they received a text reminder about their appointment with a very small percentage indicating they did not have a mobile phone;
9. All patients spoken to and who completed the questionnaire confirmed they were given a choice of health professional when booking the appointment;
10. 86% of patients who completed the questionnaire were aware of the Practice opening times;
11. A range of responses was given to the question regarding what to do if 'out of hours' care is needed; the most popular response was to ring the surgery out of hours number, closely followed by calling the 111 number. Only a small percentage knew about the M-Doc service;
12. The majority of patients answered positively to the question whether they feel they have enough time with the GP to discuss their issues;
13. 90% of patients felt that the GP listened to their concerns and considered their opinion;
14. All patients who completed the questionnaire found the staff at the Practice helpful and understanding;
15. 97% of patients would recommend the Practice to other people; a very small percentage said they were 'unsure'
16. 62% of patients were aware the Practice has a complaints policy and knew how to complain; 38% did not know.

Interaction between Patients and Staff

HWCB representatives observed the interaction of staff, both clinical and administrative with patients who were courteous, professional and friendly. HWCB representatives observed staff engaging with patients in the waiting area; the receptionists appeared relaxed and accommodating when talking to the patients, showing courtesy and respect.

General comments received from patients included:

'Very polite receptionists'
'Reception staff very helpful and pleasant'
'I have always been able to get a Dr's appointment when we've needed it'
'It has sometimes been difficult to get a nurse appointment out of school hours.'
'Staff are always friendly and helpful.'
'Your staff are all great, they all try to help. I know it's not easy now.'
'I find this surgery really helpful, and the staff are always polite and helpful.'
'Always well-treated and I feel well cared for.'

Clinical and non-clinical staff

HWCB representatives found all members of staff with whom they engaged to be friendly and helpful both 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 enjoyed working at the Practice and being part of a cohesive team. They felt that the service provided at the health centre was good and the majority of staff also felt supported in their work. However, some members of staff, clinical and administrative, felt that there was insufficient clinical staff available and there was insufficient cover for administration staff during periods of sickness and/or holidays.

All staff confirmed they regularly attend various training courses for their roles, including in-house (PLZ) training and GP training.

When asked if there were any changes they would like to make to enhance the patient experience at the Practice, various comments were made including: *'We need heating in the waiting area as it is very cold in the winter'*, *'More phones being answered in the morning'*, and *'More privacy in the waiting room'*. One member of clinical staff stated that *'Patients need to be informed and educated about the way General Practice is in the 21st century, particularly about the costs incurred by the Practice'*.

Concerns/Complaints Procedure

The Practice Manager informed representatives that the Practice has a complaints procedure. 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. The Practice acknowledges a complaint within 3 working days and aims to fully investigate within 10 working days. The Practice Manager stated that they had received 18 complaints in the past year, and confirmed that they take steps to ensure they learn from their complaints and services are improved as a result. A summary of complaints received throughout the year is discussed quarterly by the doctors and the Practice Manager.

Clinical staff appeared less well informed about the Practice(s) complaints process/policy and most stated that they would try to resolve the matter informally at first. Others were unclear about the procedure and would simply tell the patient to put their complaint in writing, speak to the receptionist/Practice Manager or direct them to the Practice website.

Additional Findings

Since HWCB's visit and following the HWCB Mystery Shopper report into Investigating the Complaints Process in General Practice, the Practice has ensured that complaints information is available in the waiting areas. HWCB congratulates the Practice on their speedy response to HWCB report.

The Practice Manager informed HWCB representatives that it was increasingly difficult to recruit clinical staff, both GPs and Nurses, to the Practice, and therefore they were very reliant on using locums and agency staff, many of whom did not stay very long. This puts an intolerable financial burden on the Practice.

Recommendations

Although the comprehensive complaints policy/procedure is available on the website, it is currently not signposted directly from the home page, but is 'buried' in the Practice Charter page. HWCB recommends that a direct link to the complaints policy be inserted on the Home Page of the Practice website.

HWCB further recommends that the Patient Reference Group (PRG) page on the website is updated as the Summary Update page reflects the year 2012.

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

The reason for the security fencing is that the practice has been troubled by youths climbing on to the roof of the building and causing damage that is why they were put up. We do sometimes have groups of young adults gathering in the car park but this did improve once I asked the local police to get involved.

The car parking is not really adequate for the number of patients we have especially when local residents continue to park here, this has been reported to NHS property services.

We only allow a patient to book 10 minute appointments with the GP unless a GP has requested more time.

The clinical staff are aware that we have been advertising for nurses for two years and regularly use locums when we can get them.

The admin staff are always covered, some of them may feel they do more overtime than others but that is staff choice.

The Clinical staff attend our complaints review meetings and the complaints procedure has been discussed at various meetings and following your report I discussed it at the nurse meeting and they all knew what the process was.

Mrs Rosena Morris
Practice Manager

