



Details of visit

Service address:	Brook End Surgery, Potton, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2QS
Service Provider:	Greensands Medical Practice
Date and Time:	6th August 2015 10:00-12:30
Authorised Representatives:	Diana Blackmun, Dave Simpson, Linda Harrison
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 Brook End Surgery in Potton, Bedfordshire.

A letter and posters announcing Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire's visit were previously sent to the Practice Manager. A questionnaire was also sent to the Practice Manager to complete prior to the visit.

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire (HWCB) 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.

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

Greensands Medical Practice is an accredited University Teaching Practice for Cambridge University. The surgery is located in a custom-built single storey building owned by the partners. It is set back from the main road, situated at the end of a narrow lane which has a limited amount of parking for disabled drivers.

The external door leads into a lobby area containing the reception desk and dispensary window, with a door leading into the waiting area, which affords a degree of privacy at the reception window.

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire's representatives were made very welcome by the Practice Manager and all of her staff, who assisted the team as much as possible. The overall impression gained is of a well-run, innovative practice which cares for the health and wellbeing of its patients.

Results of visit

Staff

The Practice has the following members of staff:

- Seven GP Partners, four male and three female GPs;
- Four Practice Nurses including Minor Illness nurses (2) and a Nurse Prescriber;
- Two Healthcare Assistants (HCAs);
- Nine reception staff;
- Eight other staff.

Specialist Services and clinics:

- Phlebotomy
- Anti-coagulation
- Minor Injuries;
- Minor Surgery (including excisions, aspirations and joint injections);
- SPHERE Sexual health clinic;
- Coil and implant fittings;
- Vasectomy operations;
- Minor illness;
- Cryotherapy;
- Near patient testing;
- Stop smoking;
- Asthma checks;
- COPD checks;
- Diabetes (including Diabetic Retinopathy Screening);
- NHS Health checks;
- ENT GPwSI;
- Dermatology GPwSI;
- Ante-natal clinic;
- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening.

Surgery Hours

Monday	08:30 - 12:30	14:00 - 18:30
Tuesday	08:30 - 12:30	14:00 - 18:30
Wednesday	08:30 - 12:30	14:00 - 18:30
Thursday	08:30 - 12:30	
Friday	08:30 - 12:30	14:00 - 18:30
Saturday/Sunday	Closed	

Environment

The waiting area appears slightly cramped. A wealth of patient information leaflets is available in the waiting area. There is also an innovative information board which depicts all the conditions which can be dealt with by the Minor Illness and/or Practice Nurses. At particular times during HWCB visit, the waiting area became quite crowded and rather 'stuffy'.

Access to the consulting rooms is from the rear door to the waiting room and down a corridor behind the reception area. Patients are called to their appointment over a Tannoy system. HWCB representatives heard one of the GPs apologising over this system for running approximately 40 minutes late.

Other observations included:

- Wheelchair/pushchair accessible;
- Toilets clean and in good condition;
- Fire exits well signed;
- Friends and Families tests results displayed;
- SystemOne booking-in terminal at suitable height for patients with clear instructions;
- Names and photographs of GP's are not displayed, however they are shown on the Practice's website along with brief bio's;
- Breastfeeding and baby changing facilities available on request;
- Water and tissues available on request from the receptionist;
- There is no Hearing Loop;
- HWCB posters and leaflets are clearly displayed

Car Parking

There is limited car parking for disabled users adjacent to the building; however there is a public car park within a two minute walk of the surgery.

Patient Information

The waiting room has a good selection of patient information, leaflets etc. The Practice website appears easy to navigate and has detailed information regarding the services available at the Practice, its staff, clinics and also links to other forms, articles and websites.

An information leaflet is also available detailing the role of the UK Health Services in a selection of foreign languages as a download on the website. The Practice also publishes a bi-monthly newsletter.

Registration at the Practice

HWCB representatives were advised by the Practice Manager that patients can register at the surgery in person. Registration forms are available from reception or can be downloaded from the website. Under 16s need proof of address and identity, and parental authority to register.

The Practice has a policy in place for people who wish to make an appointment prior to registration; however, they must attend half an hour prior to the appointment with all relevant documentation. The Practice also operates a temporary resident's policy; patients can be seen for up to 3 months. The temporary residents form is available to download from the website and patients are asked to bring this with them prior to seeing a clinician.

A Practice leaflet is made available to patients on registration.

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

The Practice has an active PPG with a core of eleven members. The group has assisted with the running of flu clinics and also devised questions for a survey of patients on the quality of service within the Practice. The results were used to inform an action plan and are displayed both on the notice boards and on the Practice website.

Patient Consultation

The Practice gains feedback from patients from these main sources:

- PPG meetings and surveys.
- Patient comments/suggestions directly to the practice in the Suggestions Box.
- Results of the Friends and Family Test.
- NHS Choices website.

Some comments from PPG members included; *'An amazing service at both Potton and Gamlingay surgeries'; 'I don't mind which doctor I see, unless it's 'a male problem' then I ask for a male doctor!'; 'I have 100% confidence in the doctors.'*

Appointments System

The Practice Manager confirmed that patients can book appointments in person, on the telephone or on line, Monday to Friday. The Practice no longer operates an early morning, late evening service, as it was rarely used.

Emergency appointments are available via a 'ring on the day' system, and where possible patients can be seen by the Minor Illness Nurse. Urgent appointments are available at the end of every day and these will be attended to by the duty doctor.

Home visits are available for housebound and palliative patients. Doctors will triage patients by telephone prior to any visit, however the Practice Manager informed HWCB representatives that the residents of the village were like 'an extended family' and were often able to assist patients to get to the surgery.

Out of Hours Care

The out of hour's service for the Practice is provided by M-Doc based in Biggleswade. HWCB representatives were advised that the service is very good. Patients are informed of the service via the Practice leaflet, the website and the answerphone message.

Medication & Prescriptions

Patients can ask for repeat prescriptions in person, online through SystemOne or by fax. The turnaround time is 48hours.

Medication reviews are carried out at intervals of 3, 6 and/or 12 months depending on the prescribed drug.

Patient Questionnaire Results

The Practice currently has 11,634 patients registered. A total of 23 survey questionnaires were completed during the two weeks prior to the visit.

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

1. 57% of patients who completed the questionnaire said they received a Practice Handbook when registering, 13% said no and 30% couldn't remember.

2. 100% of respondents found it easy to register at the Practice.
3. 70% of those who filled in the questionnaire knew there was a Patient Participation Group (PPG), 30% did not.
4. Only one of the respondents was a member of the PPG.
5. Telephone booking accounted for 56% of the replies, 31% would book in person and 13% booked online.
6. Only 9% (2 patients) were aware that there were appointments available in unsocial hours. 48% said there were not and 43% did not know.
7. 18 respondents said they could get appointments when they wanted one, one person said no and four people qualified their answers (see below).
8. 78% said they received a reminder text for their appointment, 13% don't have a mobile phone.
9. 78% said they were given a choice of health professional when booking an appointment.
10. The choice of health professional offered was fairly evenly split between GP and Minor Illness Nurse, with 13% being offered 'other health professional' or did not answer.
11. 87% of patients are aware of the surgery's opening hours.
12. Over 50% of respondents did not answer the question regarding out of hours care, mostly saying they had not needed it. Of the remainder most would ring the surgery for the out of hour's number.
13. 96% said they felt they had enough time during their consultation to discuss their issues.
14. 100% of respondents said that they felt the GP, Nurse or HCA listened to them and considered their opinions.
15. 100% said they found the Practice Manager and reception staff helpful and understanding.
16. 100% of respondents would recommend the surgery to others.
17. 57% said they knew how to make a complaint and 43% did not.

Interaction between Patients and Staff

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

Clinical and non-clinical staff

The practice has a very low turnover of staff, which affords a degree of continuity of clinician for the patients. The Practice Manager confirmed that the Practice has only had to recruit twice in the past few years due to retirement of two GPs. Locums are seldom used.

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 Medical Centre was good.

All staff confirmed they regularly attend various training courses for their role, including in-house training and GP training.

When asked if there were any changes staff would like to make at the Practice, comments ranged from; *'I'm quite vocal, if we don't like something we get it changed!'* *'No, patients in general seem quite satisfied'* and *'Most patients are happy, but cannot always get an appointment with their GP of choice'*, to *'There is an issue with waiting times for routine appointments; we are a victim of continuity as we encourage patients to see the same GP'*.

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 scored three out of five on HWCB's Mystery Shopper report 'Investigating the Complaints Process – General Practice', and representatives are pleased to report that remedial action was taken and that the Practice now scores five out of five.

Additional Findings

Additional comments from survey Question No.7 (Can you get an appointment when you need one)?

- Can get one on the day if it's urgent.
- Routine appointments booked ahead, but a Dr will speak to you on the day and an appointment is given if necessary.
- I work shifts, so I chat with the receptionists.
- Rarely, but I have on a couple of occasions.

General comments received from patients included:

'A very good surgery; need more like this in the NHS'

'Great surgery, supportive staff, all very caring. We are lucky to have such a good surgery in our village.'

'We are very lucky with all surgery staff – all helpful and efficient.'

'I feel the surgery offers exceptional care. The receptionists are very helpful and the doctors are caring.'

'I have been a patient since 1980s; given routine and urgent care when I needed it. When booking appointments I usually ask for whom I need to see. The only time my doctor was not available I was able to see a nurse. Whenever I have needed care I have been able to speak to or see a doctor in the appropriate timescale for my needs.'

Recommendations

HWCB representatives perceived that not all staff, clinical and administrative, is fully aware of the complaints policy and procedure at the Practice, as many would instantly 'refer to the Practice Manager'. HWCB recommends that all staff at the practice is given a refresher on both the complaints policy itself and the procedure.

HWCB understands that the Practice no longer operates an early morning, late evening service, as it was rarely used, however HWCB would recommend that a survey of patients is undertaken to assess the need for evening/ early morning appointments so that patients are aware this service is available and if rarely used, why they do not feel there is a need for it.

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 very much for the detailed report which we feel is an accurate assessment of our Practice visit. It was a pleasure to meet you, Dave and Linda.

We acknowledge the recommendations made by the team. I have added the complaints procedure to the next staff meeting agenda to provide a refresher for all staff. We will consider incorporating a question regarding extended hours into our next patient survey, however, the last patient survey in 2014 demonstrated that 41% of patients were very satisfied with the surgery opening hours, 47% fairly satisfied, 9% fairly dissatisfied and 3% said very dissatisfied. We will discuss the report with our PPG when we meet later this week.

I have shared the report with the staff (clinical and non-clinical) and we will publicise on our website for patients to view.

On behalf of the Practice, I would like to thank you for visiting the Practice.

Nicola Gauge, Practice Manager
Greensands Medical Practice
Brook End Surgery,
Potton
Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2QS

Telephone 01767 260260

