



Details of visit

Service address:	Bassett Road Surgery, The Surgery, 29 Bassett Road, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, LU7 1AR
Service Provider:	Dr Henderson & Partners
Date and Time:	26th August 2015 10:00 – 12:00
Authorised Representatives:	Dave Simpson, Linda Harrison, Den Fensome
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 Bassett Road Surgery in Leighton Buzzard.

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 delivered copies of a questionnaire for patients to complete, 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. As an example of good practice HWCB includes this procedure in all our visits.

On the day of the visit, the Practice Manager 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

The Bassett Road Surgery is a modern, custom-built surgery close to Leighton Buzzard Town Centre, which serves Leighton Buzzard and many surrounding villages. Originally built in 1985, the premises are owned by the Practice. The upper floor, which is accessible by a lift, houses the administrative and support offices, staff kitchen, rest room and shower and a conference/training room. The surgery comprises ten consulting rooms, including a sterile bright room for minor surgery and a quiet room for counselling services. New windows are currently being installed in the consulting rooms, fitted with frosted glass to afford more privacy.

Bassett Road Surgery is a Registered Training Practice where GP Registrars can spend up to a year completing their specialist training as a GP. The Practice works with Milton Keynes GP Training Scheme and Buckinghamshire GP Training Scheme and also hosts medical students from Buckingham University and Imperial College London who are experiencing General Practice as part of their basic training.

The overall impression gained by HWCB representatives was of an innovative, well-run, caring practice which puts its' patients care and welfare first.

On arrival Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire's representatives were asked to 'sign in' and also to sign a Confidentiality Form, and were made very welcome by the Practice Manager and all of her staff, who assisted the team as much as possible.

Staff

The Practice has the following members of staff:

- Nine GPs, three male and six female, plus three GP registrars;
- Six of the GPs are partners, three are salaried GPs;
- One Practice Matron;
- One Complex Care Matron;
- Four Practice Nurses;
- Two Healthcare Assistants;
- One Phlebotomist;
- Four Reception Staff

Specialist Services provided

- Phlebotomy;
- Respiratory;
- Anticoagulation;
- Diabetes;
- Minor Surgery;
- Ophthalmology;
- Dermatology;
- Baby/Childhood Immunisation;
- Smoking Cessation;
- NHS Healthchecks;
- Homeless Healthcare Services;
- Citizens Advice Bureau;
- CAN (Addictions);
- Sexual Health;
- End of Life Care;
- Primary Care Mental Health.

Surgery Hours

Monday	8:00 am to 6:30 pm
Tuesday	8:00 am to 6:30 pm
Wednesday	7:00 am to 8:00 pm
Thursday	8:00 am to 6:30 pm
Friday	8:00 am to 6:30 pm
Saturday	9:00 am to 11:30 am 1st Saturday of each month, by appointment only.
Sunday	Closed



Results of visit

Environment

On entry to the practice, HWCB representatives found the area to be clean, light and airy, with ample space in front of the reception desk to afford a good degree of confidentiality for patients. The waiting area itself is situated through a large opening opposite the reception area, with plenty of seating and child friendly activities. The whole area is also wheelchair accessible from both entrances.

- Other observations included:
- Ample clean and tidy toilets;
- Friendly, helpful receptionists;
- Fire exits well signed;
- Hearing Loop;
- Friends and Family Test questionnaires and response box;
- Good range of Patient Information literature displayed;
- Complaints Information displayed;
- Information on the Patient Participation Group displayed;
- SystemOne electronic booking in terminal;
- Call system for appointments and waiting times displayed on screen;
- Names of GPs and staff displayed;
- Breastfeeding facilities available;
- HWCB posters on display.

Car Parking

The surgery has a fairly large car parking area with several dedicated disabled parking bays however, at busy times the car park rapidly fills up and visitors to the surgery were observed parking on the pavement.

Patient Information

The waiting area has a very good selection of information for patients displayed, including community information about the 'Just Ask' and Leighton Buzzard Community Action Day events. Information is also displayed on the TV screens.

The practice designed and supplies a glossy A4 sheet of Travel Directions to Bassett Road Surgery listing car parking and bus routes in the local and outlying areas etc.

Registration at the Practice

HWCB representatives were advised that patients can register at the surgery with proof of address and ID; which needs to be presented in person. New patients can either download the required two forms from the website prior to attending to register or arrive at the surgery to register in person.

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

The Practice has both a physical and an online PPG. The PPG meets 3-monthly, but has a working group which meets monthly. The age range of the PPG is from 50 to 93. The Practice currently has 18 active members on the PPG.

HWCB representatives were given clear evidence of the work undertaken by the PPG. This included a copy of the 2014 Patient Survey Results form and subsequent analysis. The PPG members also act as 'Meet and Greeters' in teams of three, who attend the waiting room to assist new patients and gather feedback.

The PPG works with a charity (Inter Care) which recycles unused medication, which would otherwise be incinerated or sent to landfill, to be sent to clinics in Africa. Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire supports the Practice and the members of the PPG on this worthy initiative.

Patient Consultation

Feedback from patients is gathered in several ways; the Patient Survey, Friends and Family Test responses; the PPG's Meet & Greet initiative (members of the PPG talk to patients in the waiting room) and email correspondence via the 'Virtual PPG'.

The Patient Survey results are published on the Practice website and a printed copy is available in the waiting room. The results are discussed and analysed by the PPG. The Practice response to the PPG's recommendations is also documented and was shown to HWCB representatives.

Appointments System

Patients are able to book appointments in one of three ways; online through SystmOne, by telephone or face to face at reception. There are three types of appointment offered:

- Pre-Bookable Appointment – patients can book to see a specific GP, although this may incur a longer wait.
- Same-Day Appointment – these are not limited to Emergency Appointments, they allow patient's access to a GP or Practice Matron at short notice however, there would not be a choice of Practitioner for the patient.
- Telephone Appointment – patients may book a telephone consultation with a GP, although they cannot be given a specific time when the call will be made.

Out of Hours Care

Out of Hours Care is provided by Care UK from 18:30 hours daily and at weekends when the surgery is closed. Care UK's telephone number is shown on the Practice Website, in the Practice leaflet, and the surgery's telephone line is diverted to Care UK's line during Surgery closure times.

Medication & Prescriptions

The Practice Manager advised HWCB representatives that Repeat Prescriptions may be requested in person, by fax or post, online via SystmOne or by placing the slip in the Prescriptions Letterbox at the surgery. Prescriptions are normally ready in two working days. The Surgery, under current NHS rules, may only dispense directly to patients who live at least 1.6 km away from a Pharmacy or who would have difficulty accessing one.

Medication reviews are carried out with the patient at least annually but are monitored more frequently depending on the medications prescribed for each patient.

Patient Questionnaire Results

The Practice currently has 13,742 patients registered. A total of 20 survey questionnaires were completed during the preceding two weeks.

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

1. 45% of the patients who completed the survey said they had received a Practice handbook when registering, 40% said no and 15% couldn't remember.
2. To the question 'Did you find it easy to register at the Practice?', 80% said yes, 15% said no and 5% did not answer,
3. 70% of respondents knew the Surgery has a PPG, 20% did not and 10% did not answer.
4. Four respondents are members of the PPG, 16 were not.
5. Telephone booking represents 57% of the replies to 'How do you book appointments?' 25% in person and 18% use SystemOne online.
6. It was a 50/50 split from replies to the question 'Are appointments available in unsociable hours?'
7. 'Can you get an appointment when you want one?' 55% answered Yes, 15% said No and 30% left other comments (see below).
8. 64% said they received a text reminder for their appointment 36% said that they didn't, including six patients who added that they don't have a mobile phone.
9. 70% replied that they were given the choice of Health Professional when booking appointments, 20% said NO and 10% did not answer.
10. On the question of choice, 54% opted for GP, 21% Minor Illness Nurse, 4% Healthcare Assistant and 23% did not answer.
11. 67% were aware of the Surgery Opening Hours, 33% were not.
12. Regarding what to do for Out of Hours Care, 30% would ring the surgery number, 20% would call the paramedics, 10% would call 111, one person would wait until the surgery re-opened and seven did not answer.
13. 70% felt that they had enough time with the Clinician to discuss their issues, 25% said No and 5% were unsure.
14. 90% of respondents felt that the Clinician listened to them and considered their opinions, 10% did not.
15. 85% considered the Staff & Practice Manager to be helpful and understanding, 10% did not and 5% were unsure.
16. 85% indicated they would recommend the surgery to others, 15% would not.
17. In answer to the question 'Would you know how to make a complaint about the surgery?' 55% answered Yes and 45% said No.

Responses to Q7 – 'Could you get an appointment when you wanted one?':

- Usually.
- Much better this year, first class.
- Sometimes.
- Generally, when needed.
- Not always.
- Yes if not urgent, if not a long wait.
- It is difficult to establish continuity with a doctor.
- Usually OK, on the odd occasion when I needed to come quickly I had to wait.

Interaction between Patients and Staff

HWCB representatives observed interactions between patients and staff, both administrative and clinical, and saw that all staff interactions with patients were carried out in a courteous, professional and friendly manner'

Clinical and non-clinical staff

The practice has a very low turnover of staff, which affords a degree of continuity for the patients, and as a Training Practice is well placed to recruit 'familiar faces' of GPs who finish their training at the Practice. Locums are seldom used.

All staff take regular breaks and lunch is generally taken together, designed to offer the opportunity for discussion of current issues, challenges and themes. It also helps in solidifying the bond between all members of staff, who reported to HWCB representatives that the Practice is *'like an extended family'*; and *'has a very happy atmosphere'*. The majority of staff spoken to expressed the opinion, *'I love working here!'* This supports the low turnover of staff previously reported. Staff also includes many who had started as 'temps' and progressed their careers at Bassett Road.

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 surgery 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 they would like to make at the Practice, comments ranged from; *'We are always in the process of change to improve the Patient Experience'*; and *'perhaps a water dispenser in the waiting area and music in the waiting room'*; to *'have another mel!'*; and *'home visits in the morning'*; plus *'A clinical review session with the Practice Matron and an HCA one day a week'*. Another comment received was *'Educate the patients!'* which HWCB recognises is of paramount importance in light of recent changes to the way General Practice has to manage and operate in the 21st century.

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' earlier this year, and representatives are pleased to report that remedial action was taken and that the Practice now scores five out of five.

Additional Findings

HWCB representatives were informed by the Practice Manager of other services operated by and from the practice including; the provision of services for the homeless, an outreach service in collaboration with the Leighton Linlade Homeless Charity; the duty doctor and Practice Matron carrying out weekly 'ward rounds' at a local nursing home. The Practice also hosts the midwifery team from the L&D Hospital which provides a 'named nurse' for new mothers for two years.

HWCB representatives were informed by the Practice Manager that the Practice is experiencing cash flow challenges due to the fact that the re-imburement procedure has been changed from monthly to quarterly. This situation has also been flagged-up by Practice Managers at other practices visited by Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire during this programme of Enter & View visits

General comments received from patients included the following:

'I am very content with the treatment I get from this surgery'.

'Much improved surgery'.

'Generally very good. Find surgery helpful. Am aware as a PPG member that different patients have a variety of experiences re- the surgery and its pharmacy. I am lucky as I have good treatment'.

'To make appointment on the day you need it, cannot get appointment on day. Telephone always busy'.

'Long time waiting for appointment'.

'Difficult to register as I came from abroad after 22 years and was unfamiliar with the NHS'.

'I find monthly application for medicine a little problematic if date falls when I am away or busy. I want a doctor who knows me and that seems impossible – sometimes I feel that medical records are not looked at and taken into consideration'.

'Returning to GB after living abroad and needing daily blood pressure medication, I found it hard to be registered, to get urgent care when my medication ran out and impossible to get adequate medication even then, after showing my French prescription'.

'Have only had one appointment in the two years I have been registered'.

Recommendations

HWCB recognise that whilst all members of staff at the practice may be aware there is a Complaints Policy, it was felt that there were a few members of staff who did not have a good knowledge of its procedure and timeframe. HWCB therefore recommends that all staff are given further training on the Practice Complaints Policy and its Procedures, for the benefit of patients.

HWCB also recommends that consideration be given to developing a programme of education of patients in relation to the different roles of clinical staff, patient rights, expectations and responsibilities.

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 report on our surgery following your Enter & View visit. This was extremely helpful and, as requested, we've set out below our comments on the report together with our plans as we take things forward.

There was a slight error on the staffing numbers relating to reception staff, as we have 9 rather than 4 staff. We felt this was worth noting as anyone who doesn't know the practice might feel this was rather light on staffing for a practice of nearly 14,000 patients.

With specific regard to the report's recommendations, we thank the team for the feedback gathered from patients - this was largely positive and particular reference has been made to access improvements over the last year. We also very much appreciated the feedback from the HWCB team on positive interactions observed between staff/patients noting that they were courteous and professional; we have worked hard on this this year following feedback in our patient survey that customer service improvements might be indicated.

We were concerned that less than half of patients recalled being given a patient information booklet when registering and will take steps to address this with our reception colleagues. We also note that there are some gaps in some staff knowledge as to the detail of the complaints procedure. Historically we have taken the approach of ensuring that all staff know who to contact if a patient wishes to give feedback or make a complaint and how this may be done, i.e. verbally, in writing, using a dedicated in-house form. However, we can see that a better understanding of the timeframes for responding would be beneficial and we will address this via additional training.

The report also identified that there seemed some confusion about opening hours; these are currently displayed on our front door, on the practice website and in our practice information booklet, but perhaps in hours and OOH services/hours need promoting more on the TV screen in the waiting room.

We can confirm that we have shared the report with our patients (via our website), all staff and our PPG membership – but will need to give the matter of patient education some more detailed thought. However, there may well be scope to better convey to patients for differences in staff roles in order to better help patients decide who they need to see.

Many thanks again for your helpful input.

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