



Details of visit

Service address: 27b Kings Road, Sandy, Beds, SG19 1EJ
Service Provider: Kings Road Surgery, Sandy
Date and Time: 7th December 2015
Authorised Representatives: Dave Simpson, Steve Nash
Contact details: Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire
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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.



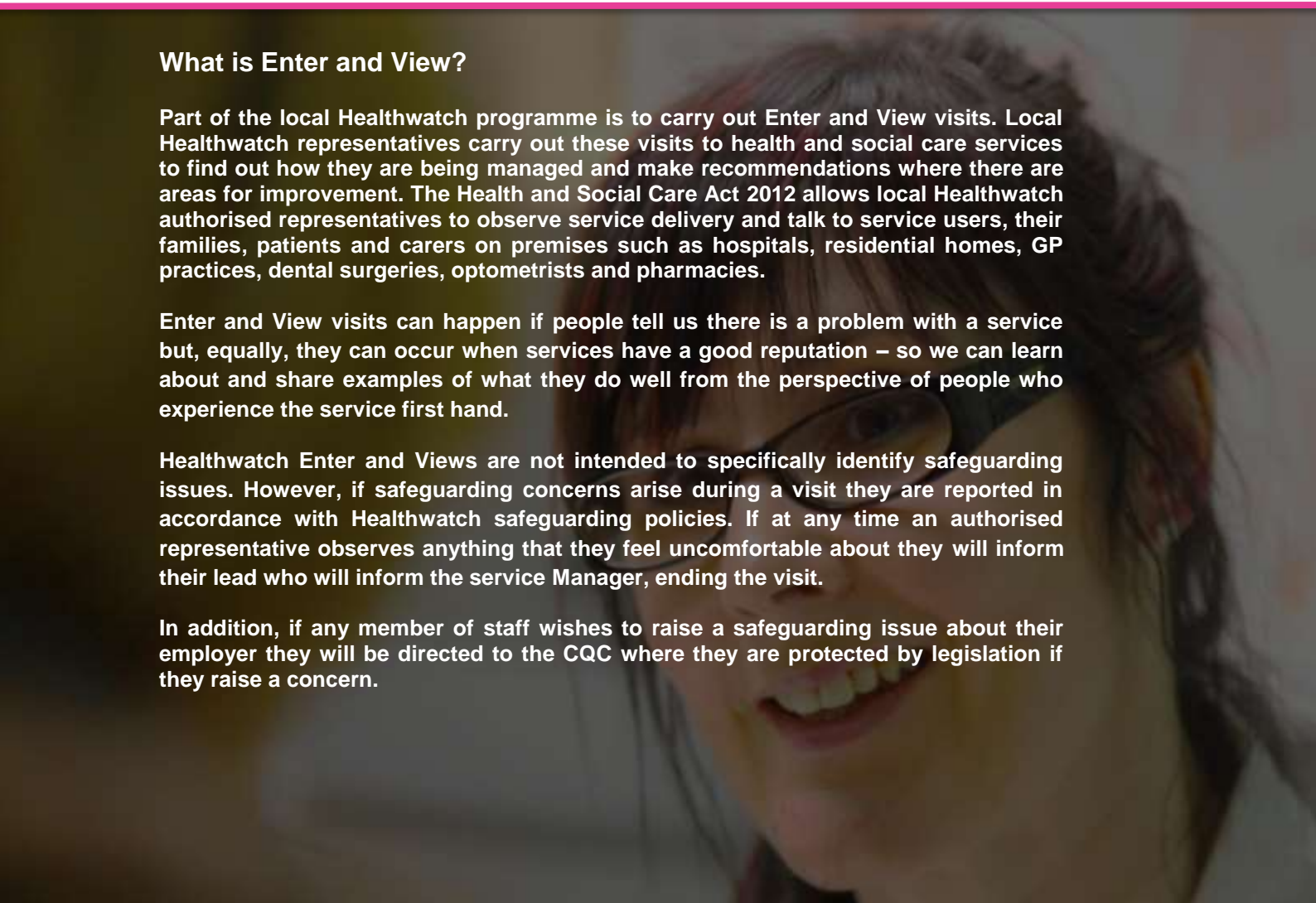
What is Enter and View?

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 Kings Road Surgery in Sandy, 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 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. As an example of good practice HWCB has included this procedure in all future 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 Practice operates from a single storey building at the end of a cul-de-sac in a residential area of Sandy. The surgery is not signposted from the road and only becomes visible once the visitor turns into the cul-de-sac. There is a Portakabin in the car park which is used by the GP's as offices.

The premises are owned by a former partner of the surgery who wishes to sell, and so the present partner is seeking alternative premises in Sandy. The Practice anticipates a move to new premises in the Autumn of 2016.

Results of visit

Staff

The Practice has the following members of staff:

- Four GPs – one partner and three salaried;
- One male and three female GPs
- One Practice Manager;
- Three Practice nurses;
- One Advanced Nurse Practitioner;
- One Healthcare Assistant (HCA);
- Nine reception staff;
- Three other staff members.

Specialist Services provided

- Phlebotomy
- NHS Healthchecks
- Sexual Health
- Chronic Disease Management
- Minor Surgery
- Weight and Diet Advice
- Smoking Cessation.

Surgery Hours

Monday	7:00 am to 6:30 pm
Tuesday	8:00 am to 6:30 pm
Wednesday	8:00 am to 8:00 pm
Thursday	8:00 am to 6:30 pm
Friday	7:00 am to 6:30 pm
Saturday	Closed
Sunday	Closed



Environment

Externally, the lighting in the car park and the entrance is sparse, which could pose a challenge to poor-sighted patients accessing the surgery, especially during the winter months. A metal ramp leads to the Portakabin and from the main surgery's emergency exit.

Wheelchair access is available however HWCB representatives considered this to be 'tight' at best.

Internally, the lighting was rather dull, with one light fitting not working at all, the general décor was clean and the floor space was clear of clutter.

Other observations included:

- Toilet facilities clearly signed including for the disabled;
- Fire exit clearly marked;
- A hearing loop was not available however patients may use Text Telephone;
- Opening hours clearly displayed;
- Complaints information displayed;
- Room available for confidential discussions;
- Hand sanitisers available;
- Check-in system clearly visible at reception (SystemOne);
- Names & photographs of GPs and Practice staff clearly displayed;
- Surgery is breastfeeding friendly;
- Due to lack of space, the waiting area is not particularly child-friendly;
- HWCB posters on display.

Car Parking

The car park at the surgery has room for approximately ten vehicles, although there are no marked bays and no dedicated disabled parking. This obviously can cause congestion in the car park at busy times.

Patient Information

A variety of patient information leaflets are displayed in the waiting area of the surgery. The Practice website and the Practice Newsletter (produced by the PPG and published twice yearly), also contain a great deal of interesting, relevant information for the patients.

Registration at the Practice

The Practice Manager informed HWCB representatives that new patients are required to register in person. This is achieved by attending the surgery and filling in the necessary form (GMS1) and a Medical History form.

New patients are also invited to make an appointment with the HCA for a health check.

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

The Practice has an active PPG which was formed in 2012. The PPG meets every 5-6 weeks and has a core membership of 8 with 4-5 regular attendees; the age range of members is 50-70. The group is advertised on the noticeboard in the waiting area, in the Newsletter, Practice Leaflet and on the website.

The PPG is very active within the Practice. They produce a Newsletter twice a year and are involved in designing surveys carried out by the Practice and organising a health promotion evening looking at diabetes, for which funding was obtained to acquire specialist speakers on the subject. This was very well supported by patients of the surgery and the PPG is looking to continue this kind of event.

Patient Consultation

HWCB representatives were informed that the Practice gathers feedback and information from patients via the 'Friends and Family' test, patient surveys and feedback from the PPG.

Results of the surveys, outcomes and actions from the information is published on noticeboards and the Practice website

Appointments System

Patients can book appointments in person at the surgery, by telephone, and for GP appointments online. Appointments with a named GP can be booked if sufficient notice is given.

Patients can also book a telephone consultation by calling the surgery after 10:30 am. A doctor will make 'triage' calls to patients who have asked for consultations or home visits. HWCB representatives observed this system in operation during the visit.

Out of Hours Care

Out of hours care is provided by MDoc, a co-operative of local GPs. The Practice Manager informed representatives that this is a good service.

Patients are given information on how to contact MDoc via the answerphone message on the surgery's main number, in the Practice leaflet and on the surgery website.

Medication & Prescriptions

The surgery operates the NHS Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) enabling the surgery to send the prescription directly to the pharmacy of the patient's choice, removing the need for the patient to collect the paper prescription at the surgery.

Repeat prescriptions are usually ready in two working days, and can be ordered by fax, online or by returning the slip to the surgery. Medication reviews are carried out annually.

Patient Questionnaire Results

A total of 19 patient questionnaires were completed prior to the visit. Results of the questionnaires completed at the Practice were as follows:

1. **When registering at the Practice did you receive a practice leaflet/handbook?** – Seven responded 'Yes', three said 'No' and nine could not remember.
2. **Did you find it easy to register at the Practice?** – 14 patients answered 'Yes' and five could not remember.
3. **Do you know if the surgery has a Patient Participation Group (PPG)?** – 15 replied 'Yes' and four did not know.

4. **Are you a member of the PPG?** – Two said they were members and 17 were not.
5. **How do you book appointments at the surgery?** (tick all that apply) – Three respondents used the telephone, in person and online booking, two used the telephone or booked in person, one used the telephone or online, ten only used the telephone, two only booked in person and one only booked online.
6. **Are there appointments available in unsociable hours?** (e.g. before 8am or after 6:30 pm) – Eleven said 'Yes', three said 'No' and five did not know.
7. **Can you get an appointment when you need one?** – Thirteen said 'Yes' or mostly, five said 'No' and one commented '*Often have to wait a week or more*'.
8. **Do you receive a reminder text message about your appointment on your mobile?** – 13 said 'Yes' five said 'No' and one said they did not have a mobile phone.
9. **When booking an appointment are you given a choice of Health Professional?** – Eleven said 'Yes' and eight said 'No'.
10. **What choice of Health Professional are you offered?** – One respondent was offered MI Nurse, GP and HCA, three were offered MI Nurse or GP, two were offered GP or HCA, ten were only offered GP and three did not answer the question.
11. **Do you know what the surgery opening times are?** – 14 said 'Yes' and five said 'No'.
12. **What do you do if you need out of hours care?** – Seven would ring the surgery for the out of hour's number, two would call 111, one would go to A&E and nine did not answer the question.
13. **Do you feel you have enough time with the GP, Nurse or Healthcare Assistant to discuss your issues?** – 15 said 'Yes', two said 'No' and two were unsure.
14. **Do you feel the GP, Nurse or Healthcare Assistant listens to you and considers your opinion?** – 16 said 'Yes', two said 'No' and one was unsure.
15. **Are staff (Reception /Practice Manager) at your surgery helpful and understanding?** – 18 said 'Yes', and one was unsure.
16. **Would you recommend your surgery to other people?** – 18 said 'Yes' and one was unsure.
17. **Do you know how to make a complaint about the surgery?** – Ten said 'Yes', nine said 'No'.

Interaction between Patients and Staff

HWCB representatives observed interactions between patients and staff, both administrative and clinical. All interactions were carried out in a courteous, professional and friendly manner.

Clinical and non-clinical staff

Almost all staff members spoken to said that while they all thoroughly enjoyed working at the practice, they felt that they were understaffed, both clinically and administratively. When asked the question '*Do you feel there is adequate provision of staff?*' comments ranged from straight '*No's*', '*especially admin.*' and '*No, short staffed - not replacing staff – more pressure.*' to '*no, especially for holidays and/or sickness.*' However, all staff felt that they were delivering a very good service for their patients.



Concerns/Complaints Procedure

The Practice scored one out of five on HWCB's Mystery Shopper report 'Investigating the Complaints Process – General Practice' carried out in 2015, and representatives are pleased to report that remedial action was taken and that the Practice now scores five out of five.

Additional Findings

The Practice has been operating under some duress due in part to the split in Partners and the need to find new premises. This has led to a period of uncertainty for all staff who, despite these challenges, continues to strive to deliver a good service for their patients.

The situation described above has also meant that there has been less investment into the 'infrastructure' at the surgery which underlines the need to move into new premises as soon as possible.

General comments received from patients included:

'I have always found the surgery to be very helpful and supportive; I have never had any issues in over 30 years'

'Car parking?'

'I have a lot of treatment, and it is all done brilliantly.'

'Waiting time to see a GP is far too long.'

'Very helpful staff can always get help when needed.'

'Good surgery, small and therefore personal.'

'Collection/dispensation of prescriptions can be a little unreliable. I always phone first to see if it's ready as I live a few miles away, but staff are always helpful if I suddenly realise I've run out of something.'

Recommendations

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire are aware of the current challenges facing the practice in regard to the physical state of the premises. It is therefore difficult to make any recommendations at this stage with regard to premises however HWCB sincerely hopes that the practice initiates a speedy resolution.

Given comments received from staff at the Practice, HWCB would recommend that the Practice reviews current staffing levels and explores ways to increase staff in order to ease pressure on existing staff and to maintain suitable staffing levels.

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

