

Langham Place Surgery

Patient Survey Report

1. Introduction

In November 2014 Healthwatch Northamptonshire visited Langham Place Surgery in Northampton as part of a county-wide survey of GP practices. The survey aimed to find out about access to services, the patient experience, good practice and what pressures there are within the practice. A summary report of the findings from the county-wide survey, including good practice and recommendations, is available on our website¹.

We spoke to ten patients at Langham Place Surgery about their views, experiences and satisfaction. By speaking to patients face to face we could add depth to the findings of the National GP Patient Survey². We also spoke to the practice manager to find out about services currently being provided, how they are accessed, what they felt worked well and what pressures there were. The questions used are in Appendix 1 and 2.

All information and figures quoted below were correct at the time of the site visit. This report does not reflect any changes or improvements to procedures since that date.

2. Practice information

2.1 Practice size and staffing

Langham Place Surgery is a medium-sized practice (approximately 9,500 patients) with eight doctors (partners: two female, three male; salaried: one female, one male; and one male registrar), four practice nurses and two health care assistants. District nurses, health visitors. A midwife and a mental health worker are attached to the surgery.

2.2 Services provided

The practice provides a range of services, including diabetes, minor operations, wellbeing, mental health and a flu clinic.

Specialists: The practice employs no specialist staff.

Shared services: No services were noticed to be shared.

¹ www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/about/docs

² <http://gp-patient.co.uk>

Extended opening: The surgery is open on Saturdays from 8 to 11am by appointment only.

Home visits: One doctor makes home visits each day.

2.3 Appointment booking system

Appointments can be booked online, by phone or in person on the day. Urgent cases will always get an appointment and regular reviews can be booked in advance.

2.4 Patient Participation Group (PPG)

The PPG meets quarterly with the practice manager, plus one GP and two nursing staff attending.

2.5 Complaints system

Information is available in the waiting room. Complaints are handled initially by the reception manager and are then moved up the chain as per the procedure.

2.6 Equality and Diversity

We asked the practice about their equality and diversity policy and how the practice met additional needs of patients. The following were mentioned:

- Hearing Loop available.
- Disabled access at the rear of the practice.
- Interpreter available.
- Learning Disabilities are taken into account.

3. Patient experience

3.1 Appointment system

Only three of the patients we spoke to found it easy (two) or very easy (one) to get an appointment when they needed one. Four people described the system as 'OK' and three 'difficult'.

- Five patients said it took a long time to get through on the phone.
- Two patients said that when they did get through they usually got an appointment.
- Two patients had no problems with the phone system.
- One patient said that the appointment offered wasn't always convenient.
- One patient would like to book appointments in advance.

3.2 Choice of doctor

Most patients (six) said they were usually able to see the doctor of their choice and four people said that they were not but this did not matter to them.

- Four patients thought it important to see someone that knew them and that they knew well.
- One patient said that they didn't have a specific doctor.

3.3 Treatment and quality of care and service

Most of the patients we spoke to said that they were usually (two) or always (six) satisfied with the treatment and service they received. One person said that they were sometimes satisfied. When asked to tell us more:

- One patient said the service had been good for them over many years and also for family members.
- One patient said that they weren't always happy discussing matters over the phone with the receptionist.
- One patient felt that they weren't being taken seriously and that their worries were being dismissed.

We asked people what they thought could improve the quality of care. Four people commented that they would like improvements made to reception and the appointments system.

We also asked people what works well. Eight people gave the following answers:

- Six patients reiterated that they were happy or satisfied with the service.
- One patient described the doctors and nurses as 'OK'.
- One patient was pleased with standards of confidentiality.

3.4 Communication and additional needs

Most of the patients (eight) said that they had no difficulties communicating with doctors and staff. One person said that they had had problems with reception staff and another said they had occasionally experienced problems with reception staff.

We also asked if any of the patients had any additional needs that required support (such as hearing or visual impairment, learning or physical disabilities, English as a second language) and whether their needs were met. Two of the patients we spoke to had additional needs which were not being met but did not explain further.

3.5 Additional comments

We asked patients if they had any other comments to make about the practice. There was one additional positive comments and no additional negative comments.

Positive:

One person said that their whole family attends the practice.

We also asked the Practice Manager if they were any more issues, pressures or examples of good practice that they wanted to tell us about:

Issues/pressures

There are increasing patient numbers and demands and the practice needs to be training enough registrars to meet future needs. Patients with specific additional needs need to meet with appropriate doctors and there is a greater demand on administration with more deadlines to meet.

What works well?

Clinical meetings are attended by doctors and nurses.

4. Highlights

According to the results of both our survey and the National GP Patient Survey the practice's appointment booking system is not running as smoothly as others. Patients found it either okay or difficult to get an appointment when they needed one. Many patients were able to see the doctor of the choice however, and were either usually or always satisfied with the treatment and service provided.

5. Recommendations

1. Sharing services with other surgeries or practices might make it easier for patients to see specialists and reduce pressure on the practice.
2. Additional extended opening hours might benefit some patients, for example during the week to offer working patients an appointment at a more convenient time.
3. We carried out deaf access mystery shopping at 5 of the 25 practices we visited across the county and have found the access and provisions for deaf and hard of hearing patients could be improved. Whilst we did not specifically assess this practice for deaf awareness and access we recommend that the practice carries out a self-assessment of their deaf access and shares the findings with Healthwatch Northamptonshire and Deafconnect with a view to improving deaf access and awareness.

6. Thanks and acknowledgements

Healthwatch Northamptonshire would like to thank the Practice Manager of Langham Place Surgery for taking the time to talk to us and facilitate our visit, all the patients who were willing to take part in our survey and the Healthwatch Northamptonshire volunteers who visited the practice.

Appendix 1 - Patient survey questions

Q1: How easy is it to get an appointment when you need it? (Please tick one) <div> <div>Very easy</div> <div>Easy</div> <div>OK</div> <div>Difficult</div> <div>Very difficult</div> </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> </div>				
Q2: Please tell us more about your experiences of getting an appointment, <i>including how it is easy or difficult, how long you have to wait to get an appointment, and whether the system works well for you:</i>				
Q3: Do you usually get to see the doctor/nurse/health professional of your choice? <div> <div>Yes</div> <div>No, but I'd like to</div> <div>No, but it doesn't matter to me</div> </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> </div>				
Please tell us more about how this is important to you or not:				
Q4: Are there any problems when communicating with staff or doctors? <div> <div>Yes</div> <div>No</div> </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> </div>				
Please tell us more:				
Q5: Are you satisfied with the treatment and service you receive here? <div> <div>Yes, always</div> <div>Yes, usually</div> <div>No</div> </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> </div>				
Please tell us more:				
Q6: What do you think could improve the patient experience at your GP practice and what do you think works particularly well? <div> <div>Improvements:</div> <div>Works well:</div> </div>				
Q7: Do you have any additional needs that require support? Such as hearing or visual impairment, learning or physical disabilities, English as a second language, etc. <div> <div>Yes</div> <div>No</div> </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> </div>				
If so, are they met? <div> <div>Yes</div> <div>No</div> <div>Don't Know</div> </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> </div>				
Please tell us more:				
Q8: Is there anything else you would like to tell us?				

Appendix 2 - Practice Manager survey questions

<p>Q1: What is the staff makeup of the surgery (+ see briefing)? Do you have any nurse practitioners / prescribers and do you provide a mental health service? <i>E.g. Have there been any changes to the surgery staff since the briefing? What are they? E.g. Which staff provide mental health care and advice?</i></p>
<p>Q2: Have you any GP or staff vacancies? How long have these posts been vacant?</p>
<p>Q3: How does your appointment booking system work? (only need to ask about what is different to the briefing) <i>E.g. the role of the receptionist, whether there is online booking, how far in advance patients can book appointments, how much choice patients have over time and GP, whether they use an 0845 number, how many phone lines they have, telephone triage? What do you do with temporary or unregistered patients?</i> Have any significant patient criticisms of the appointment system been reported by the PPG and how have these been addressed?</p>
<p>Q4: Does the practice conduct home visits? <div style="text-align: center;"> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> </div> How are these organised?</p>
<p>Q5: What additional facilities does the practice have? (only need to ask about what is different to the briefing) (E.g. specialist clinics, counsellors, blood tests, specialist doctors, dressing changing facilities, drop in sessions) Do you share facilities with any other GP practices in your locality? Or does your practice or GP cluster have any specialisms/clinics or specialist doctors? If so, what and is this working? Would you like to see any more? Is there anything else working well in your locality? Are there any plans for further sharing of resources?</p>
<p>Q6: Does your practice have any extended opening hours or do you plan to (if not mentioned in briefing)? Has this been requested by your PPG?</p>
<p>Q7: Is the 111 Service prominently advertised by the Practice and does the service provide adequately for your patients and for their out of hours requirements? (Also see PPG and Patient Surveys and Reports)</p>
<p>Q8: Do you have an active patient engagement group? How is advertised and how can people join? Is it funded by the practice and how often do they meet? (Other than what is mentioned in the briefing)</p>
<p>Q9: Where is your complaints system publically displayed? <i>E.g. Is it in the patient information leaflet, noticeboard, reception desk?</i> How are complaints dealt with?</p>
<p>Q10. How else do you communicate with patients? <i>E.g. noticeboards, leaflets, website, guidelines about best times to call</i></p>
<p>Q11: What is your equality and diversity policy? How is it implemented? E.g. How provide access for those with physical, visual, hearing, and/or learning disabilities and autism and non-English speakers. BSL/interpreters? Is there staff training or understanding of obligations?</p>
<p>Q12: What other staff training does your practice have? <i>What decision aids/training are receptionists given?</i></p>
<p>Q13. Are there more patients attending your practice than there used to be? Have you any thoughts on why that is or why there is pressure on GP practices?</p>
<p>Q14: Is there anything else you would like to tell us about? E.g. things that are working well, challenges the practice faces, additional support needs they have, thoughts about A&E attendance, etc.</p>