

The Parks Medical Practice

Patient Survey Report

1. Introduction

In October 2014 Healthwatch Northamptonshire visited the Blisworth Surgery of the Parks Medical Practice in/near 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 seven patients at the Parks Medical Practice 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

The Parks Medical Practice is a large-sized practice (approximately 19,800 patients) with 11 doctors (seven partners, four salaried), eight practice nurses (two nurse practitioners) and two health care assistants. It comprises of four surgeries - Blisworth, Roade, Hanslope and Grange Park. The Grange Park practice is a teaching practice and there are currently no vacancies.

2.2 Services provided

The practice provides a range of services, including blood tests, vasectomy, minor surgery and aural toilette. There are also drop-in sessions.

Specialists: No specialists are employed for the practice.

Shared services: The practice does not share any services with other surgeries in the area.

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

² <http://gp-patient.co.uk>

Extended opening: The surgeries open from 6.30 to 8.30pm on alternating Tuesdays and Thursdays. One surgery is open from 8.30 to 10.30am on Saturday mornings.

Home visits: These are made daily to people's homes and care homes. The practice has a high elderly demographic resulting in a significant number of home visits.

2.3 Appointment booking system

The practice has an Advanced Access system with a 50/50 split on pre-bookable and urgent appointments. Urgent appointments are seen on the day and patients can travel to any of the four surgeries if able to travel.

2.4 Patient Participation Group (PPG)

The PPG has representatives from each surgery and they are looking into developing an online group.

2.5 Complaints system

Information about complaints can be found in a dedicated leaflet and in the Practice Charter. All complaints are handled by the Practice Manager - there were 13 written complaints in the previous year.

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:

- PEARL Linguistics (translation service)
- occasional use of translator service - Chinese and Indian at Grange Park surgery
- no requirement for British Sign Language (BSL) yet

3. Patient experience

3.1 Appointment system

All of the patients we spoke to found it easy (six) or very easy (one) to make an appointment when they wanted one.

Most positive or satisfactory experiences of getting an appointment mentioned the availability of appointments. For example:

- Four patients said that they were able to ring in the morning for a same-day booking.
- One patient described reception as "very friendly".

3.2 Choice of doctor

Of the five patients who responded, three said they were usually able to see the doctor of their choice. Two said they weren't but it didn't matter to them.

3.3 Treatment and quality of care and service

All the patients we spoke to said they were always (five) or usually (two) satisfied with the treatment and service they received. When asked to tell us more one patient spoke of the “excellent support”.

We asked people what they thought could improve the quality of care, three people raised the following issues:

- Waiting times at the surgery.
- The availability of drinking water.
- Difficulty of parking.

We also asked people what works well. One patient cited the minor operations facility.

3.4 Communication and additional needs

None of the patients we spoke to had difficulties communicating with staff or doctors.

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. One of the patients we spoke to had additional needs and these were being met.

3.5 Additional comments

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

Positive:

One person described the surgery as “exemplary”.

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

Patient lists are continually increasing, up by over 1,000 in a year and there is pressure on Roade surgery as it is an old building and has no further capacity - there is a possibility of a new building as part of housing development but funding is uncertain. Issues around poor public transport was also brought up.

4. Highlights

According to the results of both our patient survey and the National GP Patient Survey the practice’s appointment booking system seems to be working well. All patients found it easy or very easy to get an appointment when they needed it and most people said they were usually able to see the doctor of their choice. All patients were also either always or usually satisfied with the treatment they

received. No communication issues were reported between practice staff and patients and additional needs seemed to be being met.

5. Recommendations

1. Patients may benefit from the practice having some specialist GPs and/or sharing services with other practices.
2. Improvement to the car parking and availability of drinking water at Blisworth Surgery would likely improve the patient experience.
3. Despite it being discussed that there is no need as of yet for BSL, training staff, particularly receptionists, in basic BSL would enable the practice to be ready for any new patients or visitors who use BSL.
4. 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 The Parks Medical Practice 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? <i>(Please tick one)</i> <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>