

Enter & View Report

Castle Mead Medical Centre
Hinckley

October 2022

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Report Details

Details of Visit	
Service Address	35 Hill Street Hinckley LE10 1DS
Service Provider	Castle Mead Medical Centre
Date and Time	3 October 2022, 8.30am
Authorised Representatives undertaking the visit	Howard Marshall and Kim Marshal-Nichols

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire would like to thank the service provider, patients, and staff for their contribution to the Enter & 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 service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

This report is written by volunteer Enter and View Authorised Representatives who carried out the visit on behalf of Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire.

Purpose of the visit

- To gather patient views of the service provided at Castle Mead Medical Centre.
- To observe the facilities and operation of the service.
- To observe patient access.

Methodology

This was an announced Enter and View visit.

We contacted the Practice Management Team in advance and had access to communal areas during our visit.

The visit was observational, involving the Authorised Representatives observing the surroundings to gain an understanding of how patients engaged with reception staff and the facilities.

To reach patients, we spoke to the management team prior to the visit about using the GP text messaging service. The text message was sent to the patients, and we received **267** responses.

At the end of the visit, we gave our initial findings to the Management team.

Summary of the findings

Summary

- People commented positively on the practice opening hours, location of the practice and staff at the practice.
- **69%** of people rated practice very good or good.
- **79%** of people were completely or very satisfied with the quality of medical care and treatment
- **78%** of people said that their experience of getting repeat prescriptions was good.
- **38%** of people said that they were not given the option of seeing a doctor or nurse. **59%** of people said that they did not always see their practitioner of choice.
- **82%** of people said that they had had a telephone or online consultation.
- **64%** said that they had been able to access urgent appointments on the same day and **36%** said that they had not.
- **65%** of people said that they were either completely or very satisfied with the opening hours.
- **68%** of people rated the reception service as very good or good.

Results of Visit

The Practice

Castle Mead Medical Centre has 10670 patients.

Castle Mead Medical Centre, located in the town of Hinckley, Leicestershire, is a single story building. There are two practices on the same plot but they are independent to each other. Patients can use the hospital parking which is located at the rear of the building. There was plenty of parking spaces.

In July 1990, the practice opened a branch surgery for patients living in Stoke Golding, Dadlington, Higham on the Hill and Stapleton.

There are 12 consulting rooms in the practice and rooms can be used at Stoke Golding Practice.

Reception and waiting areas

The practice was very clean. There was no background music. The seating was well spaced apart. We noted that some of the chairs had arm rests to assist those who have difficulty sitting and getting up. The hearing loop was installed in the patient waiting area only.

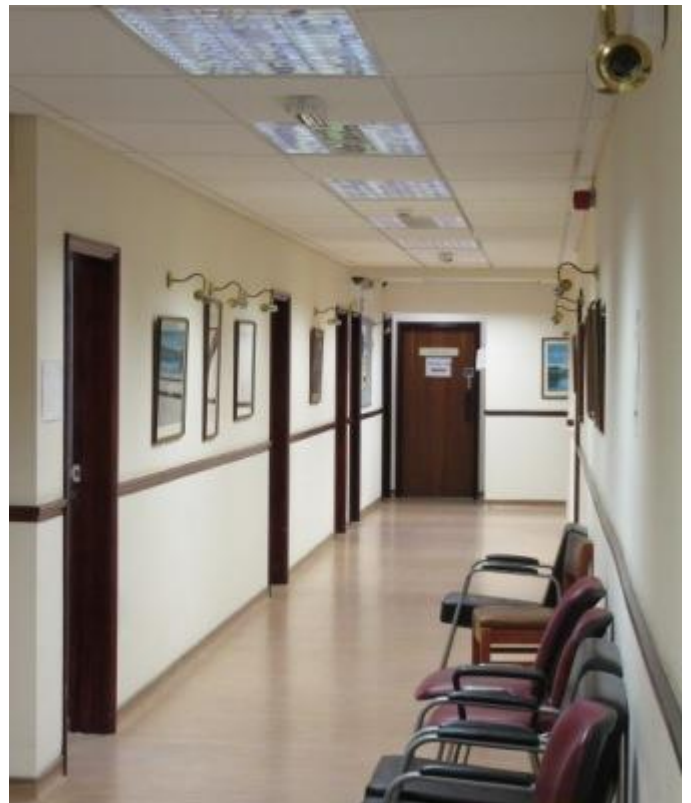
We noted that there was no baby feeding room. However, there is a room that could be used and there are privacy screens available.

There was an electronic screen for patients to sign in. The screen for displaying health related messages was broken.

There is no longer a children's play area as it was removed during Covid-19.

A self-use blood pressure machine was available in a small room. There were no self-weighing machines but we were told there was one in each consulting room.

The corridor leading to the consulting rooms are nicely decorated with several pictures on the walls; all helping to create a relaxing atmosphere for patients and staff. The corridors are wide and there is plenty of room to move around for wheelchair users.



Staffing

We were told that there are: 2 Management staff members, 4 Administrators, 9 Receptionists, 4 Partner GPs, 2 salaried GPs, 1 Retained GP, 2 Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPs), 3 Nurses, 2 Health Care Assistants, 1 Paramedic, 1 Physiotherapist (visiting), 2 Social Prescribers, (soon to be 3), 4 Pharmacists, 1 full time Nurse Associate, 1 Care Co-ordinator and 1 Mental Health Worker.

Pharmacy

We were told that patients can order repeat prescriptions online using the 'Electronic Prescription Service' (EPS).

The practice manager said prescription requests can also be left in the red post box located just inside the entrance of the practice, located on the corner wall, which is emptied morning and evening. Alternatively, the prescription requested can be posted via Royal Mail or sent electronically.



Appointments

The practice manager told us that typically, there are 6 people waiting outside before 8am and all appointments with clinicians are now face to face.

In August 2022, a new telephone system was installed which operates over the Internet, giving unlimited telephone lines and allowing more callers to get through to the surgery; there is no physical telephone line. We were told that patients were sent a text message to inform them about the new telephone system. There is also a call back option on the telephone system when patients are in the queue.

Appointments can be booked online. On the day appointments are only limited by 'up to the at safe capacity.' Patients wanting an appointment will be assigned to a clinician. This may not be their clinician of choice.

Information available to patients

A copy of the complaints procedure is on the practice website. We did not see a copy of the complaint procedure at the practice.

The practice website gives information about emergencies, who to contact such as NHS 111, 999 and telephone numbers for Fosse House Urgent Care Centre.

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

There is a very active Patient Participation Group, with 15 members, although currently they do not have a Chair. The three members we met with said, to date they have not had any problems with the practice. They said that the staff are very friendly. Appointments are only released on Fridays for next week's appointments.

The PPG members helped set up a mobility scooter area during Covid-19. There was a Hinckley & Bosworth Medical Alliance PPG Group banner in one of the corners of the waiting area, promoting their 'Medication Waste Campaign.'

Castle Mead and Stoke Golding Practices have reinstated their face to face PPG meetings.



Patient Feedback

A survey was sent to the GP patients using the text messaging service, and we received 267 responses. We also gave patients the opportunity to contact us via telephone to share their feedback.

See Appendix 1 for the survey responses. Where we asked for comments, we have themed the responses.

Recommendations

We recommend that Castle Mead Medical Centre:

1. Consider all the comments recorded from patients and what the implications are for the operation of the practice.
2. Ensure that patients are given the option of seeing the health professional of their choice.
3. Review appointment availability and waiting times for patients.
4. Consider patient feedback on obtaining an appointment in advance or a non-urgent appointment and review how people can access those appointments in a timely manner.
5. Consider re-instating the children's play area and establishing a dedicated baby feeding room.
6. Consider patient feedback on the practice opening hours to provide evenings and weekend appointments.

Service provider response

The report was agreed with the Service Provider as factually accurate. They have provided the following responses to the report:

We were inspected by Healthwatch in early October 2022 and as it's our aim to be an 'Outstanding' GP practice in the future, we were happy to take up the opportunity and give inspectors full access to the surgery. This included inviting members of our PPG to speak to them on the day.

As a practice we felt we were open, honest, and transparent when answering their questions and at the end it was clear that the inspectors had no significant issues with us as a surgery, in terms of our systems, services or staffing. Having reviewed the Healthwatch report and the feedback received from the 267 patients who responded to the survey, it's not clear when the last time some of the patients last accessed the surgery for services however several of the items raised had already been actioned. We have fed this back to Healthwatch and highlighted some of the quite substantial changes made prior to their visit to our appointment system, how patients access those appointments (including moving back to full Face to Face access), as well as the installation of a new state of the art phone system.

In summary Castle Mead Medical Centre and Pine Close Surgery are very happy to take on board the views of our patients and Healthwatch and acknowledge there are areas where we can make improvements. We will strive to continuously develop services and access for our patient in line with our current contractual guidelines and welcome appropriate feedback from all avenues that will help us achieve our aim of becoming an 'Outstanding' GP practice.

Distribution

The report is for distribution to the following:

- Castle Mead Medical Practice
- LLR Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Leicestershire County Council (LCC)
- NHS England (Leicestershire and Lincolnshire) Local Area Team
- Healthwatch England and the local Healthwatch Network
- Published on www.healthwatchll.com

Appendix 1: Survey Findings

267 Patients

Q1. How would you rate this GP Practice?

36% Very Good

33% Good

12% Ok

12% Poor

7% Very Poor

Q2. What do you like most?

Main Themes: The staff, access to appointments, location. Very friendly reception staff and nurses.

Comments:

- 'How amazing the staff are at all levels and how they put patients first.'
- 'Clinicians are amazing, kind and patient and you never feel like you're being ignored or not listened to... and the reception staff are always supportive and kind despite the pressure they must currently be under.'
- 'Every member of staff is dedicated to optimising my wellbeing.'
- 'Appointments are generally the same day.'
- 'Being able to access a health professional quickly who can triage my concerns rather than having to see a GP.'
- 'Have always been able to see someone on the day.'
- 'I can always get an appointment when I ask for one.'
- 'It's not far from home.'
- 'Ease of travel to local surgery and pharmacy.'
- 'It is easy to get to and usually easy to park.'

Q3. What do you dislike the most?

Main Themes: Access to appointments with people speaking about not being able to get an appointment. Waiting times for appointments.

Comments:

'Can't get through to make appointments on the day.'

'Trying to get an appointment over the phone at 8.30am the same day. It is impossible.'

Others spoke of difficulties being able to book an appointment in advance or a non-urgent appointment.

- 'Not being able to get a non-urgent appointment.'
- 'Trying to get an appointment can mean calling every day. Sometimes it's not an emergency but you can't get an appointment for a couple of weeks' time.'
- 'Trying to get any help or book any appointments with reception, even when, for example, you have been asked by the doctor to rebook in 4 weeks' time, you're told to call back the following week as they haven't got the rota and then when you do there are no appointments left.'
- 'Sometimes having to wait for a few weeks for a non-urgent appointment.'
- 'I asked for an appointment due to a lot of pain in my foot so barely able to walk and they gave me an appointment in 2 weeks. Shocking.'

Q4. Is it easy to get through to your practice on the telephone to make an appointment?

37% Positive

29% Mixed

34% Negative

Main Themes: Difficulty in booking non-urgent appointments and this meant that the only access was through an urgent appointment. Long waiting times for non-urgent appointments. Routine or non-urgent appointment.

Comments:

- 'Being told no-one is available for three weeks means I now only call in an emergency. Health worries are put off and make you feel like no one cares anymore.'
- 'You have to join the 8am phone call lottery and pretend anything is "urgent" or wait weeks. If you don't pretend it's urgent when you phone then by the time you get an appointment it will be!'
- 'If an emergency you can get in but otherwise you wait for 2 or 3 weeks.'
- 'Weeks for non-urgent.'
- 'Have waited over a month for help with a painful condition.'
- 'Sometimes hard to get a follow up appointment with the same doctor in a three week window.'
- 'Brilliant to get a same day emergency appointment, however difficult to book routine.'

Q5. What method do you use to book an appointment? (tick all that apply)

93% Telephone

18% Online booking service

24% In person

People were asked to comment on whether they were given a choice of practitioner.

Q6. When making your appointment, are you given the option of seeing the doctor or the nurse?

48% No

52% Yes

There were comments about how the receptionist makes the decision about who people see.

- 'It's the receptionist who decides that!'
- 'It seems the receptionists are deciding who gets to see who. I have to tell them my symptoms, however personal, and then get a phone call with a nurse who then said I needed a doctor. Ridiculous.'

Not all of those that commented on the receptionist making the decision were unhappy with the way that it worked.

- 'The receptionists are very well trained so we all trust them.'
- 'They always put me through to someone who will help.'

Q7. Do you always see the doctor or nurse of your choice?

59% No

14% Yes

28% Sometimes

People said that they were often directed to a practice nurse rather than a doctor.

- 'Initially you are almost always put to see the practice nurse unless it's something they can't deal with.'
- 'I am not often able to see an actual GP. I am usually given an appointment for the Nurse Practitioner who asks me what the issue is and has to go spend 10 minutes asking the GP what they should do for me. When it would be quicker and easier to just see a GP initially.'
- 'Initially you are almost always put to see the practice nurse unless it's something they can't deal with.'

Q8. Have you had a telephone or online consultation with your doctor?

82% Yes

18% No

Main Theme: Positives for online or phone consultation but would prefer face to face. Preference for an appointment being over the telephone. Felt that there was potential for misdiagnosis.

- 'Found it very good but like to see a doctor if possible.'
- 'It's a good way to triage but I would rather see a GP.'
- 'Doctor is very professional but not very keen on the idea would rather have face to face.'
- 'It seems less personal on the phone and they always seem in such a hurry.'
- 'It's difficult to explain over the phone, would prefer to see in person.'

However, for some people there was a preference for an appointment being over the telephone.

- 'I thought it was a good idea. Saved travel time and congestion and gave the doctors the ability to decide if my issue required further investigation.'
- 'Fitted in nicely with my work commitments and was appropriate for the type of problem I had. It did not need an in person appointment.'
- 'Housebound so happy for telephone appointment.'
- 'Sometimes it's easier for me to talk on the phone.'

Some commented on how the appointment was thorough.

- 'Not the best as they can't see you but it tends to be more thorough as a consequence.'
- 'Doctor was extremely thorough and resulted in a face-to-face consultation.'

However, it was also felt that there was potential for misdiagnosis.

- 'The danger is poor diagnosis because it relies on patient feedback.'
- 'Not the same as in person as they cannot see symptoms/side effects that patients may not be describing correctly.'
- 'How can you be examined over the phone?'

Q9. For urgent appointments, can you normally see the doctor or nurse on the same day?

64% Yes

36% No

Main theme: access urgent appointments when needed, the type of appointment, same day appointment was dependent upon the reception staff.

- 'Over the last few years, I was the primary carer for my mother. We never had any problems with urgent appointments.'
- 'Doesn't happen often but I got seen when it did.'
- 'They always see my baby.'
- 'Mostly get to see or speak to the nurse practitioner.'
- 'Rarely a doctor.'
- 'Feels like an uphill struggle to convince the receptionist you really do need one.'
- 'Utterly impossible to see anyone on the same day since the receptionists do not give out emergency appointments to people they think do not need an emergency appointment.'

Q10. How satisfied are you with the practice opening hours?

- 29% Completely satisfied
- 36% Very satisfied
- 17% Moderately satisfied
- 13% Slightly satisfied
- 5% Not at all satisfied

- 'Closing at 2pm on 4 days of the week doesn't help.'
- 'Doctors should open evenings and weekends to accommodate the needs of those using them.'
- 'Earlier opening hours may be useful as well as some weekends.'
- 'Afternoon or evening appointments at Stoke Golding surgery would be a benefit.'

Q11. How would you rate the reception service?

- 36% Very good
- 32% Good
- 16% OK
- 9% Poor
- 7% Very poor

There were many positive comments about the reception staff.

- 'Very accommodating and supportive.'
- 'All receptionists are helpful and good listeners.'
- 'Find the reception staff very helpful.'

However, some people expressed the view that reception staff were gatekeeping

appointments.

- 'Receptionists ask too many personal questions and refuse to give an appointment unless you tell them your problem. No confidentiality.'
- 'Unhelpful, ask far too many personal questions.'
- 'Opening hours seems to be 8am to 8.05am by phone to get through to the gatekeepers.'
- 'Not enough people answering the phones.'
- 'The receptionists appear to be overworked.'
- 'Receptionists need training on how to be polite and helpful to patients. It is worrying enough without having to dread speaking to one who is deliberately difficult.'
- 'Very unhelpful and not at all understanding of patients' needs.'

Q12. How do you rate the repeat prescription service?

78% Positive

20% Mixed

2% Negative

Comments on repeat prescriptions were generally positive with good feedback given on the process of ordering prescriptions online or via the NHS app.

- 'This works well. The online system doesn't require direct contact with the practice.'
- 'Sometimes it can be a little longwinded.'
- 'It would be easier if you could order your repeat prescriptions by phone.'
- 'Too many mistakes. Too risky ever to pause getting medications I might not need this month. So, I get medication every month whether I need it or not.'
- 'There have been times when some of my repeat medication has been removed from my repeat without notifying me.'
- 'Catastrophic - seems new software not being operated properly as I order online - doctor authorised and is sent directly to chemist - try to collect, chemist first visit can't locate all 11 items - I then am asked to phone GP and tell them that chemist do not have prescription on system - they confirm have sent it'.

Q13. How do you rate the quality of medical care and treatment at this surgery?

43% Completely satisfied

36% Very satisfied

13% Moderately satisfied

4% Slightly satisfied

4% Not at all satisfied

People were asked to tell us about the single thing they would change to improve the service. These have been themed into sections.

Access to appointments

- 'Being able to get an appointment when needed.'
- 'Ability to get an appointment more easily.'
- 'Being able to access the service and see a doctor when needed.'
- 'Being able to book an appointment without being told to call back another time.... very stressful.'

Waiting times

- 'Being able to see a doctor without having to wait weeks.'
- 'Give us doctor's appointments either the same day, or at least the same week, not two weeks away.'
- 'I would like appointments not three weeks later but when I need to see a doctor.'

Advance booking

- 'Appointment diary needs to be open further into the future.'
- 'Being able to book an appointment, either face to face or phone call, in advance. I work full time and it's not always an urgent appointment, but I do need to speak to a healthcare professional.'
- 'More available non-urgent appointments available, for instance, to discuss medicine changes.'

Online consultations

- 'Reinstate the online appointment services.'
- 'Online consultations.'
- 'Bringing back online appointments and being able to contact doctor more easily.'

Online booking

- 'Online booking system where I can book without the need for some receptionist to triage.'
- 'Booking non-GP appointments online.'

- 'Being able to book appointments online.'

Doctor of choice

- 'Get to see the doctor you want without having to wait two or three weeks.'
- 'Being able to ask for a female doctor without being told 'I can't guarantee that.'
- 'Improved ability for a patient to be able to book an appointment with their regular GP and not with a GP who doesn't know anything about their circumstances or symptoms. This would enable to get the best care possible as the GP knows the patient and of their medical history face to face and not just notes on a computer screen.'

Opening Hours

- 'Opening hours to suit working people with evening appointments.'
- 'Evening and/ or weekend opening hours being made available.'
- 'Once a week late night opening or a weekend surgery once a month.'

Face to face appointments

- 'Seeing a doctor face to face rather than a telephone consult.'
- 'Less telephone appointments and more face to face'
- 'Seeing a doctor in person.'

Increased availability of doctors

- 'More doctors to be available.'
- 'Have more available doctors. They only seem to work part time and you have to wait weeks for an appointment.'
- 'More doctors with patient time available.'



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