

Enter & View Report

Asquith Surgery

October 2023

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Report details

Details of Visit	
Service Address	693 Welford Road, Leicester, LE2 6FQ
Service Provider	Spirit Primary Care Limited
Date and Time	Wednesday 4 October 2023, 10am
Authorised Representatives undertaking the visit	Janina Smith and Howard Marshall

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 Asquith Surgery.
- To observe the facilities and operation of the service.
- To observe patient access.
- To review our recommendations from our previous visit on 29 January 2019.

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 **86** responses.

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

Review of previous recommendations

1. Improve communications with pharmacies, to ensure fewer problems with medicines.

We had asked the question about the communication with pharmacies and we were assured that the problems with medicines had been removed and running smoothly.

2. Consider staffing with more GPs to improve continuity of care. Provide information regarding GP availability and policies so that patients can better manage for themselves the time they phone for an appointment and who they see.

We were advised that there is information on the practice website about the clinician's availability and other treatment options.

3. Improve the triaging process to maximise patient confidentiality and speed up the appointment process.

Triaging is undertaken by the reception staff who work to a script to enable the allocation of an appropriate clinician.

4. Continue to monitor telephone waiting times and the best allocation staff to reduce waits.

Three staff members are available to answer the telephones. The system allows the caller to know their position in the queue and also produces a number of metrics to provide valuable statistics on call times etc. Unfortunately, this did not appear to be utilised and the team were unable to obtain response times to calls.

5. Improve seating in the waiting room to suit less able-bodied patients.

We observed there was no bariatric chairs in reception or higher chairs with arms for less able-bodied patients.

Summary of the findings

Summary

- The practice uses a 'cloud based' telephone system.
- The practice has on the day appointments, as well as appointments that can be booked online.
- Patients can make appointments up to 2 weeks in advance.
- Access to the practice for wheelchair-bound patients was difficult.
- The Complaints Procedure was not signposted on reception or the waiting area.
- Most patients said they use the telephone method to book an appointment. 45 patients said it is 'easy' to get through to the practice via the telephone and 41 patients said it is 'not easy' to get through.
- Most patients said they were happy with the clinician they would see at the time of their appointment.
- Most patients have rated the reception service as 'good' and 'very good'.
- 27 patients have rated the quality of medical care and treatment at this surgery as 'good'.
- Patients have commented on the practice having too many locum doctors and no regular doctors.
- Most patients said they were 'very satisfied' with the practice.

Results of Visit

The Practice

Asquith Surgery has 4600 patients.

Asquith Surgery is provided by Spirit Healthcare. Spirit Primary Care have a new department to support three Leicester GP Practices. The new team, known as the Centralised Administration Team, will look after all the behind-the-scenes work such as processing letters and contacting patients in relation to messages from the GPs.

Reception and waiting areas

The waiting room was busy but not overcrowded. The reception foyer and waiting room were very cramped, although best use of the space had been made.

There were notices on the reception informing patients how many appointments were not attended for the previous week.

The TV was not working in reception although we were told that a new one was on order and waiting for IT to make the necessary arrangements to install it. We observed the patient 'call board' was not working.

Appointments

The practice uses a 'cloud based' telephone system which works over the Internet and offers a 'ring back' option to patients.

Three staff are available to answer the telephone. The system allows the caller to know their position in the queue and also produces a number of metrics to provide valuable statistics on call times etc. Unfortunately, this did not appear to be utilised and the team were unable to obtain response times to calls.

Appointments can also be booked online - this currently stands at 58% and includes the facility to book flu jabs or smear tests.

Appointments can be made up to 2 weeks in advance. Same day appointments are made available for urgent, mental health, acute and for patients whose blood results need urgent attention.

Each clinician has an urgent task slot that can be used for either patient emergencies or to discuss urgent results.

Clinicians can also book their own appointments for patients who need a follow-up appointment.

Home visits depend on individual patients but generally, for acute patients, DHU Healthcare (Derbyshire Health United) runs the home visit service in Leicester and Leicestershire. GPs conduct follow up appointments for end-of-life and cancer patients.

Medical records of patients with special needs are flagged to enable extra time and the appropriate clinician to be allocated.

Accessibility

Access for wheelchair-bound patients was difficult. Mobility scooters were not accommodated within the reception/ waiting area although there was an access intercom at the front of the building which enabled patients to call for assistance. This was not immediately obvious.

Information available to patients

The practice confirmed that they have a Complaints Procedure however this was not signposted on reception or the waiting area.

The team were advised that this was available on the practice website, however, upon viewing, it was not contained within the Practice Policies. The only indication of complaints support was under the "News" section.

There is basic information on the website in respect of test results. The team were advised that a system called Accurx is also used by the practice to enable patients to manage their care as well as communicate with healthcare professionals, however, this information was not included on the practice website. If test results are normal, the patient is not contacted.

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

The Practice PPG Group meets every 6 weeks.

Patient feedback

A survey was sent to the GP patients using the text messaging service, and we received 86 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 and provided a selection of patient comments.

Recommendations

We recommend that Asquith Surgery:

1	Consider all the comments recorded from patients.
2	Has the complaints procedure displayed in the practice for patients to access and make it more easily accessible on the website.
3	Consider providing seating in the waiting room to suit less able-bodied patients.
4	Looks into getting the patient call board to work.
5	Continue to consider staffing with more GPs to improve continuity of care.
6	Review the telephone call-back system for patients accessing the practice by telephone.
7	Help patients to understand the reason why they may not get the clinician of their choice when booking appointments.

Service provider response

The report has been shared with the service provider – no response given.

Distribution

The report is for distribution to the following:

- Asquith Surgery
- LLR Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Leicester City Council (LC)
- NHS England (Leicestershire and Lincolnshire) Local Area Team
- Healthwatch England and the local Healthwatch Network
- Published on www.healthwatchll.com

Appendix 1: Survey Findings

86 Patients

Q1. How satisfied are you with your GP Practice?

11 – Completely Satisfied

25 – Very Satisfied

14 – Neutral

14 – Slightly Satisfied

22 – Not at all Satisfied

Q2. What methods do you use to book an appointment? (tick all that apply)

77 – Telephone

35 – Online booking services

13 – In Person

2 – Other – “Email” / “Never been seen”

Q3. Is it easy to get through to your surgery on the telephone to make an appointment?

45 – Yes

41 – No

Main themes: Waiting time to get through, queuing system, booking appointments, call back system and types of appointment.

- “Queueing system in place.”
- “Usually there is some waiting time even when you’re 1st in the queue which I found odd.”
- “Can be a long wait to get through at busy times but that’s standard with every practice.”
- “In the morning for emergency appointment sometimes no appointments left but staff try to help by asking the GP and reply to me. For a normal appointment you have to wait more than a week.”
- “It was much better before but it’s quite difficult to get through to them now.”
- “Last time I rang I was 4th in the queue then I was cut off & when I rang back they had a high volume of calls and by the time I got through there weren’t any appointments.”
- “Not really, you’re in a queue. They do call back which is good but twice I have waited for a call back and it’s not happened. When I inform them, they say, we can’t do anything about that? And I have to ring back. Appointments are hard to come by.”

- "It's ok to get through but sometimes cannot get appointment immediately."
- "Often long wait and then no available appointments."
- "Very hard to make an appointment face-to-face. Usually get a telephone call which is insufficient when trying to get help."
- "It is virtually impossible to get a face-to-face appointment with a general practitioner. Reception constantly books telephone appointments. Despite the fact you actually need to see a practitioner. They insist on us sending pictures of our ailments to show to the GP rather than physically being there, and pointing out the issues."

Q4. How long does it take you (on average) to get through to the practice on the telephone?

- 55 - 1 to 15 minutes
- 22 - 15 to 30 minutes
- 4 - 1 hour
- 5 - Over 1 hour

Q5. When making your appointment, are you given the option of seeing the doctor or the nurse?

- 44 - Yes
- 42 - No

Q6. Do you always see the doctor or nurse of your choice?

- 12 - Yes
- 73 - No
- 1 - Unanswered

Q7. Have you had a telephone or online consultation with your doctor?

- 70 - Yes
- 16 - No

Q8. If yes, how satisfied were you with the appointment?

- 7 - Not at all satisfied
- 19 - Slightly satisfied
- 17 - Neutral
- 24 - Very Satisfied
- 9 - Completely Satisfied
- 10 - Unanswered

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

46 - Yes
39 - No
1 - Unanswered

Q10. Are you happy with who you have seen at the time of your appointment?

66 - Yes
19 - No
1 - Unanswered

- "It is very rare you see a doctor as it has become very difficult to see a doctor. Otherwise doctors are okay."
- "At my last appointment I saw a locum GP who was excellent."
- "Seeing a doctor is not always possible."
- "I haven't needed an urgent appointment. I don't feel I know the doctors or nursing staff but feels like you just see whoever is available, not a specific doctor or nurse allocated to you."
- "The surgery has a good amount of staff, there's also the option to see a female doctor. They have had locum GPs who have been very good as well."
- "More often than not it is a nurse."
- "I have clicked yes as this is the majority of the time. However, on two occasions I have had appointments with doctors who have left me feeling even more confused and found I'm telling them what to do."
- "Not seen a doctor face-to-face for 3 years."
- "I have never been given the choice of doctor but have been satisfied with the doctor I saw."
- "The doctors are always helpful - the problem is getting to see them."
- "Friendly and caring."

Q11. How satisfied are you with the practice opening hours?

6 - Not at all satisfied
9 - Slightly satisfied
35 - Neutral
22 - Very Satisfied
14 - Completely Satisfied

Q12. How would you rate the reception service?

22 - Very good
23 - Good
20 - OK
14 - Poor
7 - Very poor

Main themes: Positive and negative reception service

- "Always polite, friendly and helpful."

- “The staff are very helpful and give good advice as to which practitioner would be most appropriate for your particular issues.”
- “The receptionists are always courteous and helpful.”
- “Exceptional reception staff, they are professional and always try to help the best they can.”
- “Very friendly and kind receptionists.”
- “It depends who it is. Straight away some of them tell you, there is no appointment available and go see A&E or day centre if that important call III.”
- “Not friendly atmosphere.”
- “Sometimes it is impossible to get past the reception stage to get an appointment to see a GP. Most of the time they only allow you to have a telephone appointment and then tell you to book it online, even though they’re just sitting there doing nothing. Every time I have to visit the reception the job I need is carried out despite me visiting several times in one month and making several phone calls.”
- “I’ve had my appointments moved and only found out when I got to the GP. Their text notifications don’t always work. It’s a poor service.”

Q13. How would you rate the prescription service?

18 - Very good

33 - Good

20 - OK

4 - Poor

8 - Very poor

3 - Unanswered

- “Had a few missed instructions but mostly works smoothly.”
- “I order online and the next day it is delivered, I don’t even have to go to pick my medication up.”
- “I send by email most of the time and most times it’s ready at the pharmacy the same day or 24hrs later.”
- “Prescription requests always dealt with efficiently.”
- “One of my prescriptions wasn’t sent properly because someone had changed my file without my knowledge, and taken one of my inhalers off the repeat.”
- “I am an ill person with repeated prescriptions on a monthly basis yet the clinician does not prescribe me a batch of prescriptions and I am constantly running out of medication. This is in addition to the fact that I ordered the medication online and the prescription is never ready and I’m constantly chasing it, there is always some excuse as to why it hasn’t been done and the blame is always put on myself despite having carried out every request of the surgery or the doctor.”
- “Always delayed or get it wrong.”
- “We have had several issues with repeat prescriptions being removed from our lists and on-the-day prescriptions not being sent to the pharmacy.”

Q14. How do you rate the quality of medical care and treatment at this surgery?

18 – Very Good

27 – Good

21 – Ok

16 – Poor

3 – Very Poor

1 – Unanswered

- “Feel as though they have been dismissive of ongoing symptoms that required further investigation had to push to be referred and to get my symptoms heard.”
- “When seeing a doctor I feel the service is balanced and of a good quality. However, seeing the same doctor has been and continues to be an issue.”
- “For a small surgery they have limited services they can offer. They offer smear tests, blood tests and jabs. I am happy with the service received.”
- “I put 'ok' but I would say standards have dropped and the care is all over the place. I don't know which doctors are there, I understand they have a lot of locums who say different things.”
- “Not seen a doctor in persons since before COVID-19.”
- “I have had blood tests, ear syringing etc. All done professional and with care.”
- “I believe the quality and medical care of this surgery has dropped standards. It's been taken over by the new practice owners. I remember the days when the surgery was fantastic and you could see a GP and you would get what you wanted but ever since there has been a change in ownership. The surgery has gone downhill despite the fact that I've been there as a patient for 32 years.”
- “Not enough time for proper discussion and treatment.”
- “It is concerning that the practice is staffed by locum GPs since the departure of the permanent doctors. To date I have not needed to see the doctors that are currently there.”

People were asked for any other comments including what they like and dislike the most about the GP practice.

Main themes: lack of doctors, use of different locums, reception staff and appointments.

- “Too many locums. Never see same GP.”
- “I would like to see the same doctor who is treating me especially when they tell you to come back in 2 weeks and you have to see another doctor and explain all again which is a waste of the 10 minutes allocated to you. This surgery has gone downhill since two resident doctors left.”
- “Number of doctor to patient ratio makes it difficult to get appointments.”
- “Doctors are good, service is not good. Should provide weekend service as cannot see doctor due to work. Have to take day off. Some receptionists are rude and do not care at all.”
- “No regular GP. Always new GP there. Not a good service.”
- “Seems a very good professional friendly surgery.”

- “Lack of information about available services and what doctors practice there. Each time there are changes they always make things more difficult for me even if it is easier for themselves.”
- “I have been unwell for a few months I have had to see the doctor multiple times. The service received has been very good, professional and compassionate. I have liaised with staff over email a number of times for sick notes, they have been efficient. This helps especially when I’m at work to drop the surgery an email. They have been really easy to communicate with. I am also a carer for both my parents who are registered at the same surgery. They have both received exceptional care from all staff at the surgery. The reception staff are very professional and try their best to accommodate requests. This makes it easier to receive timely treatment.”
- “The surgery has always had a parking space for when I have taken my father in. Doctors have seen him on the ground floor. The premises have always been clean and never too busy. Overall I am very happy with the service and staff at Asquith Surgery.”
- “The surgery care has deteriorated overtime. Doctors come and go. I had an awful nurse for my health check. Standard of care is not what it used to be.”
- “I wish it was just easy to get a same day appointment.”
- “Don’t know who my doctor is anymore only see locums. Do I even have a permanent doctor anymore.”
- “We consider ourselves blessed to have a practice with a dedicated, hardworking and caring team. Thank you we do appreciate you all.”
- “Like: Great care and support when I’m able to arrange an appointment.
Dislike: Little to no chance of ever getting an appointment.”



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