

# Enter & View Report

Springfield Road Surgery

March 2024

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# Report details

Details of Visit	
Service Address	Springfield Road, Leicester, Leicestershire, LE2 3BB
Service Provider	Willowbrook Medical Centre
Date and Time	Thursday 14 March 2024, 11am
Authorised Representatives undertaking the visit	Moraig Yates, Kim Marshal-Nichols 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 Springfield Road Surgery.
- To observe the facilities and operation of the service.
- To observe patient access.
- To focus on recommendations from the previous visit which was conducted on 26 September 2018.

## 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.

## Review of previous recommendations

1. Consider providing a variety of seating appropriate to the needs of patients, a high proportion of whom are older persons.

Several seats had arm rests. However, the practice manager pointed out that the building is owned by Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT), therefore, the waiting area, including seating, is LPTs responsibility.

2. Review signage to both the consulting room area and the self-help weight and blood pressure service.

The signage in the practice was good.

3. Ensure the emergency pull cord system within the toilets is in reach of all users.

This is now in place.

4. Ensure that information on notice boards is complete and up to date.

We didn't see any information that was out of date. We were told that it's been made clear whose boards they are.

5. Review phone booking service for patients and promote online booking service.

Online booking is promoted.

6. Consider painting the door of each consulting room appropriate to its name.

No changes can be made to the decor, signage etc. without permission from LPT, who own the building; LPT would charge for any work. There were some old GP name plaques on doors and walls but we were told that removing them would cause damage to the doors and walls, which Willows Health would have to pay for. However, small coloured coded plaques have been fitted to all doors and if appropriate, corridors with room names.

# Summary of the findings

## Summary

- Patients have reported difficulties in reaching the GP practice by telephone.
- 63% of patients said it was 'very difficult' to get through to the practice by telephone to make an appointment.
- 77% of patients are 'satisfied' with the clinician they have seen at the time of their appointment, while 23% of patients are not.
- 48% of people were 'completely satisfied' with the prescription service.
- 44% of people have said they are 'sometimes' given an option of seeing a doctor or a nurse.
- 59% of people said they never see the doctor or nurse of their choice.
- 63% of people have said they are not able to see a doctor or clinician on the same day for urgent appointments.
- Patients have reported difficulties in booking appointments.

## Results of Visit

### The Practice

Springfield Road Practice currently has 3500 patients. Springfield Road Surgery is a satellite Practice and is part of Willows Health, which comprises multiple practices.

The practice is a single-story building. There is adequate parking spaces. The exterior signage is good and easily readable, but there are no visible opening times. The practice has an adequate number of rooms. The cleaning routines/ checklist comes under Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT).

### Reception and waiting areas

The main reception, as one walks in, is for LPT patients; Springfield Road reception is further back, which can cause confusion.

The waiting area is spacious, the seating was comfortable. There is adequate space. Notification of the clinician's readiness observed was when the clinician collected the patient from the waiting area.

There is a Friends and Family Test suggestion forms and box. Hand sanitisers are available.

There are no reading materials. The decor is good. There was no music and the background noise was low. There is not a children's play area.

While at the visit we had observed there were no queues at the reception area.

For patients seeking space and privacy, a room can be provided.

If a patient requires a confidential area a room can be provided for them.

## **Appointments**

The practice has 8 telephone lines, no Freephone and a local number. The telephone system is Cloud-based. Appointments can be booked face-to-face, via telephone and online.

Appointments with the nurse can be booked 12-16 weeks in advance (clinics, baby, contraception, etc.) With the GP, appointments can be booked 2 weeks in advance. Urgent appointments can be booked on the day but are limited. Patients are advised of alternative clinicians if deemed appropriate.

Patients are signposted by receptionists and are also informed that they can see other clinicians rather than a GP if appropriate. Additionally, patients are given the option of going to the Willowbrook surgery or any other practice in the group. Patients can also use 'Pharmacist First'.

The practice's policy on home visits is that they have a Care Home Team: 2 consultant-led care teams, which comprise a nurse, who is also a Palliative Care Nurse and a Geriatrician. There are a lot of care homes in the area which they cover. They also do home visits. Care Home staff have access to SystemOne to manage online prescriptions for their patients.

## **Management of Medications**

There is a team of 10 Clinical Pharmacists across all sites within the Willows Health Group. Patients will receive test results via text message if the results are normal, alternatively, they will get a phone call if required.

## **Accessibility**

The surgery has accessible parking spaces. The signage is well-designed in terms of visibility and height. Access to the building is good.

The surgery has accessible toilets, is spacious and has an alarm cord. The surgery has a breastfeeding room.

The surgery is wheelchair friendly and wheelchairs are available with access to all rooms. Mobility Scooters can be brought on-site. Braille will be included; a special board is currently being made. There is a hearing loop which is available throughout the building.

They have a 'Disability Group'; (dedicated nurse and a Pharmacist Technician) for disabled patients.

## **Information available to patients**

The position and font size of the posters are appropriate, and the information is up to date. Health-related activities, such as social prescribing and carers support, are available. Appointment information and out-of-hours information were not observed.

The complaints procedure is in place. The carer's charter was not observed. Data privacy information regarding the use of health records was not observed. There is no use of a video screen for health messages.

## Staffing

The management and several of the GPs and support clinicians are shared with other Practices within the Willows Health group.

## Patient Participation Group (PPG)

The PPG meets once a month.

## Additional information

As the building is owned by LPT, the surgery cannot make any changes to the decor without permission and would have to pay LPT for the work.

## 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 option to contact us via telephone to share their feedback.

**See Appendix I 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 Springfield Road Surgery:

1	Consider all the comments recorded from patients and what the implications are for the operation of the practice.
2	Display the opening times and out-of-hours information at the entrance of the practice.
3	Enhance patient access by providing flexible GP appointment options, including same-day availability.
4	Implement a user-friendly telephone system to streamline patient access and reduce wait times.
5	Review the information available to patients in the practice regarding the carers' charter and Data privacy information regarding the use of health records.

# Service provider response

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

We would like to express our sincere appreciation for the comprehensive feedback provided in your recent report on Springfield Road Health Centre. Your insights are invaluable as we continually strive to improve our services and address the needs of our patients.

We take note of the feedback regarding patient difficulties in reaching the practice by telephone and booking appointments. These are areas we are actively working to improve.

1. **Patient Feedback** - we will take this on board and strive to inform the patients of the options they now have to access appointments.
2. **Opening times** - notices will be placed in appropriate areas.
3. **Same Day appointments** - we have always offered same day appointments as well as advanced booking for appointments both with the doctors and nursing team.
4. **User friendly telephone system** - we monitor the telephone system on a weekly basis and discuss with the partners and strive to have at least 70% of all calls answered in less than 10 minutes- we are working towards making this 80% by having information on the best times to call for non-urgent appointments, general queries and having a Queue busting system whereby the patient does not have to be on hold = the system will automatically call them back.
5. **Phone and Online Booking Services** - we recognise the challenges some patients have faced with our phone booking service. To address this, we have been actively promoting our online booking service, which allows patients to book appointments without the need to wait on the phone. Since starting the releasing of online appointments for on the day face to face doctor appointments - we have seen a reduction of 25% for incoming calls between 8am-9am in the first week for Springfield Road, and in other sites there has been a reduction of up to 50% in incoming calls. We will continue to monitor this and adjust the number of appointments online to reflect demand.
6. **Review information available to patients** - There are carers / privacy notices up but will ensure they are more visible, as for as the in house video - these screens were supplied and paid for by the ICB - they also maintained them and supplied the content - once they stopped working they stopped funding them and we are waiting for them to be removed.

## Additional Initiatives

Beyond the points covered in your report, we would like to highlight several initiatives that underscore our commitment to providing high-quality care:

- **Diabetes Care:** We are leading diabetes care across our patient group by optimizing blood glucose and cholesterol control.
- **Chronic Kidney Disease:** We are leading the management of chronic kidney disease through multidisciplinary team (MDT) meetings, ensuring a comprehensive approach to patient care.
- **Geriatric Support:** We have increased our support for older patients by providing access to geriatric consultants, ensuring that their specific needs are met with expert care.

## Monitoring Access to Appointments:

At Springfield Road Health Centre, we monitor access to GP appointments on a weekly basis. We review the number of appointments offered, in addition to all other appointments delivered by our nursing, healthcare assistant and pharmacist teams. We strive to provide a level of access that meets the needs of



our patients. However, it is a national challenge to obtain a GP appointment easily at all times and this is related to the chronic underfunding in primary care.

#### **Challenges and Advocacy:**

In the face of chronic underfunding and resource limitations in primary care, as highlighted by the British Medical Association, we continue to provide the best possible medical care for our patients. We remain hopeful that the new government will prioritise primary care in its manifesto, enabling us to offer the level of care our patients deserve.

Thank you once again for your valuable feedback. We are committed to addressing these issues and enhancing our services for the benefit of all our patients.

## **Distribution**

### **The report is for distribution to the following:**

- Springfield Road Surgery
- 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](http://www.healthwatchll.com)

# Appendix 1: Survey Findings

## 267 Patients

Q1. When did you last visit your GP practice? (265 responses)

**(232) 88%** - In the last 2 years

**(33) 12%** - Over 2 years ago

**(2 people)** - Unanswered)

Q2. How did you book your last appointment? (232 responses)

Patients chose more than one answer:

**(191) 82%** - Telephone

**(11) 4%** - Online Booking Services

**(16) 6%** - In Person

**(20) 8%** - Other (please specify): NHS 111, surgery contacted patient, district nurse, and advance booked appointments.

**(35 people)** - Unanswered)

Q3. How easy is it to get through to your surgery on the telephone to make an appointment? (232 responses)

**(13) 6%** - Very Easy

**(26) 11%** - Easy

**(43) 18%** - Difficult

**(146) 63%** - Very Difficult

**(4) 2%** - Not sure

**(35 people)** - Unanswered)

Q4. When you last contacted the GP Practice, how long did it take you to get through on the telephone? (231 responses)

**(4) 2%** - Less than 1 minute

**(26) 11%** - 1-5 minutes

**(17) 7%** - 6-10 minutes

- (25) 11%** - 11-15 minutes
- (133) 58%** - 15- 60 minutes
- (26) 11%** - Over an hour
- (36 people)** - Unanswered)

Q5. How often are you given the option of seeing a doctor or a nurse? (232 responses)

- (24) 10%** - Always
- (38) 17%** - Mostly
- (102) 44%** - Sometimes
- (68) 29%** - Never
- (35 people)** - Unanswered)

Q6. How often do you see the doctor or nurse of your choice? (229 responses)

- (10) 4%** - Always
- (17) 8%** - Mostly
- (66) 29%** - Sometimes
- (136) 59%** - Never
- (38 people)** - Unanswered)

Q7. Are you happy with who you have seen at the time of your appointment? (231 responses)

- (178) 77%** - Yes
- (53) 23%** - No
- (36 people)** - Unanswered)

Q8. In the last 2 years have you had a telephone or online consultation with a practitioner? (232 responses)

- (168) 72%** - Yes
- (64) 28%** - No
- (35 people)** - Unanswered)

Q9. How satisfied were you with the appointment? (168 responses)

- (26) 15%** - Completely Satisfied
- (48) 29%** - Very Satisfied
- (45) 27%** - Neutral

**(27) 16%** - Slightly satisfied  
**(22) 13%** - Not at all satisfied  
**(99 people)** - Unanswered)

Q10. In the last 2 years have you had to book an urgent appointment? (231 responses)

**(131) 57%** - Yes  
**(100) 43%** - No  
**(36 people)** - Unanswered)

Q11. Were you able to see a doctor or clinician on the same day for urgent appointments? (129 responses)

**(48) 37%** - Yes  
**(81) 63%** - No  
**(138 people)** - unanswered)

Q12. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the practice opening hours? (224 responses)

**(21) 9%** - Completely Satisfied  
**(34) 19%** - Very Satisfied  
**(95) 43%** - Neutral  
**(22) 10%** - Slightly satisfied  
**(43) 19%** - Not at all satisfied  
**(43 people)** - Unanswered)

Q13. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the reception service? (223 responses)

**(63) 28%** - Completely Satisfied  
**(68) 31%** - Slightly Satisfied  
**(47) 21%** - Slightly Dissatisfied  
**(45) 20%** - Completely Dissatisfied  
**(44 people)** - Unanswered)

Q14. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the prescription service? (224 responses)

**(108) 48%** - Completely Satisfied  
**(58) 26%** - Slightly Satisfied  
**(26) 12%** - Slightly Dissatisfied  
**(15) 7%** - Completely Dissatisfied  
**(17) 7%** - Not used it  
**(43 people)** - Unanswered)

Q15. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of medical care and treatment at this surgery? (223 responses)

**(87) 39%** - Completely Satisfied

**(72) 32%** - Slightly Satisfied

**(34) 15%** - Slightly Dissatisfied

**(30) 14%** - Completely Dissatisfied

**(44 people)** - unanswered)

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

Main themes: difficulty getting appointments, not seeing the same doctor/not seeing a doctor, access to practice when calling in at 8am with long wait times, helpful and caring staff.

**Likes:**

"The staff are always friendly and helpful."

"My GPs are excellent plus ordering medication is excellent."

"Brilliant for urgent appointments. Staff always helpful but wish they would leave messages when phoning so you know who has tried to contact you."

"Strengths- a comforting environment, within walking distance of my house, doctors are lovely."

"I have always found the medical and nursing staff caring and efficient."

**Dislikes:**

"I have a chronic condition so would like to see the same doctor if possible but have never seen a doctor more than once as it's difficult to explain everything in a short appointment and I'm not always satisfied the doctor understands my problem. I find making an appointment very difficult."

"Seeing GPs is a complete lottery. Never the same one - no continuity of care."

"Unable to get appointments. Ring constantly to be told to ring every day at 8am. This is impossible to do. Spread over a couple of weeks ringing 2-3 times a week while trying to get to work on hold for ages only to be told no appointments. Happy to wait to book an appointment well in advance but not able to do so. Reception staff unhelpful & borderline rude."

"Getting through to the GP is an absolute nightmare. We are asked to call at 8am every morning to

get an appointment. Even if we call at 8am sharp very often we'll wait for more than 40 minutes to hear that there are no appointments left."

"No longer have access to seeing the same doctor. Miss feeling doctor knows anything about me."

"Always difficult to get through to surgery. Waiting long time on phone. See someone different every time. Wait in the waiting room up to 50 minutes. No consistency and communication, not always great as seeing a different health professional every time. Have to be assertive in asking for follow up, reception staff are fine and doing a difficult job. Not enough GPs."

"It is always hard to get an appointment because it is so competitive. The reception staff are always helpful but it is almost always a GP I need to see. There is no automatic follow up."

"Impossible to get an appointment by phoning and there are never any bookings available to make online for telephone conversations. I have had to ring 111 for advice."

"Very difficult to get through on the phone even to cancel/change an appointment. Quicker/easier to go down to the surgery in person which is an inconvenience. Why can't it be done online?"

"In the past month I've tried 13 mornings at 8am to get an appointment and have been cut off after about 30 minutes. I went to the walk in centre and was seen by a GP in 15 minutes."

"The doctors are all excellent, the issue is the appointment process and availability of same day appointments. You cannot book an appointment for a few days' time if you feel it isn't urgent."

"Having finally got a telephone consultation. The doctor forgot to send my prescription to the pharmacy, when I rang the surgery from the pharmacy at 1pm I was told the surgery was closed for staff training and to try again tomorrow. At this point I'd not kept any food down for 7 days. In the end I had to go into the surgery again on day 8 to find the prescription and take it back to the pharmacy."

"Weaknesses- the reception staff have told me I should not be asking for an appointment multiple times but when I finally got an appointment I was prescribed antibiotics and told I should've been seen sooner. Some staff rush appointments, I understand they have a small time frame for each person but some of them don't make you feel listened to. Reception staff are rude and I feel they ask too many personal questions. Wait times once you arrive at the surgery have been over 90 minutes before."

"The problem is actually getting an appointment. Pre-pandemic you could book a routine appointment online with the doctor of your choice but that option is no longer available. You have to ring at 8.00 am to ask for a triage call from a GP, but often after holding on for 25 minutes there are no slots available when you finally get through. After speaking to a doctor you may be offered an appointment but there is no choice of clinician."

"I can't access the surgery because the line is always busy. Once I had rung 378 times and when I got through there were no appointments left. This is not unusual!"

"They do not offer you an appointment for even for the next day if full that day, but just tell you to call at 8 tomorrow!"

"I would like booking appointments made easier and appointments made more available."

Unable to get appointment. Can't see same doctor again while investigating an issue. No correspondence when requesting repeat prescriptions by email or NHS app. No regular 'over 50' check-up."



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