

ENTER AND VIEW VISIT REPORT

The Castle Practice 30th January 2019

Part of Healthwatch Solihull's remit is to carry out Enter and View visits. Healthwatch Solihull's Authorised Representatives will carry out these visits to health and social care premises to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement.

The Health and Social Care Act allows Authorised Representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation – so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch Solihull's Enter and View visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit, they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch Solihull's safeguarding policy, the service manager will be informed, and the visit will end. The Local Authority Safeguarding team will also be informed.

GP Surgery – The Castle Practice

Service Address: The Castle Practice, 2 Hawthorne Road, Castle Bromwich, B36 0HH

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Solihull would like to thank the Practice staff and the patients for their co-operation during the visit.

Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings during our visit made on Wednesday 30th January 2019. The report does not claim to be representative of all patients, only of those who contributed within the restricted time available.

Authorised Representatives

Nicola Standen

Carlene Scott (Shadowing)

Who we share the report with

This report and its findings will be shared with The Castle Practice, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Solihull MBC, Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group (CGG) and Healthwatch England. The report will also be published on the Healthwatch Solihull website (www.healthwatchsolihull.org.uk).

Background

The Castle Practice, located within North Solihull, has a practice list of 11276 patients (Source: <https://www.nhs.uk/Services/gp/Overview/DefaultView.aspx?id=36203>)

The Practice's consulting times are:

Monday	08:15 - 13:00	14:00 - 18:50
Tuesday	08:15 - 13:00	14:00 - 18:50
Wednesday	08:15 - 13:00	14:00 - 18:50
Thursday	08:15 - 13:00	14:00 - 18:50
Friday	08:15 - 13:00	14:00 - 18:30
Saturday	Closed	
Sunday	Closed	

The Practice also offers extended opening hours for appointments. Extended opening hours appointments are co-ordinated through the 'North Solihull Collaborative' that comprises 10 North Solihull GP Practices. Appointments are offered for all patients of Surgeries within the Collaborative at Bosworth Medical Centre between 6.30pm and 8pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 12pm on Saturdays and 9am to 11am on Sundays.

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Purpose of our visit

Healthwatch Solihull visited The Castle Practice on 30th January 2019.

The most recent CQC report (based on an inspection undertaken in April 2016) rated the Surgery as 'good' across areas of 'safety', 'effectiveness', 'caring', 'responsiveness' and being 'well-led' with an overall rating of good. (Source: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-548278457>). However, Healthwatch Solihull in their role of gathering intelligence from people living in the Solihull Borough regarding their experiences of local health and social care services, has received some mixed feedback from patients of The Castle Practice. Given the feedback we have received, the purpose of our visit was to explore first hand with patients present on the day of our visit, their experiences of the Practice.

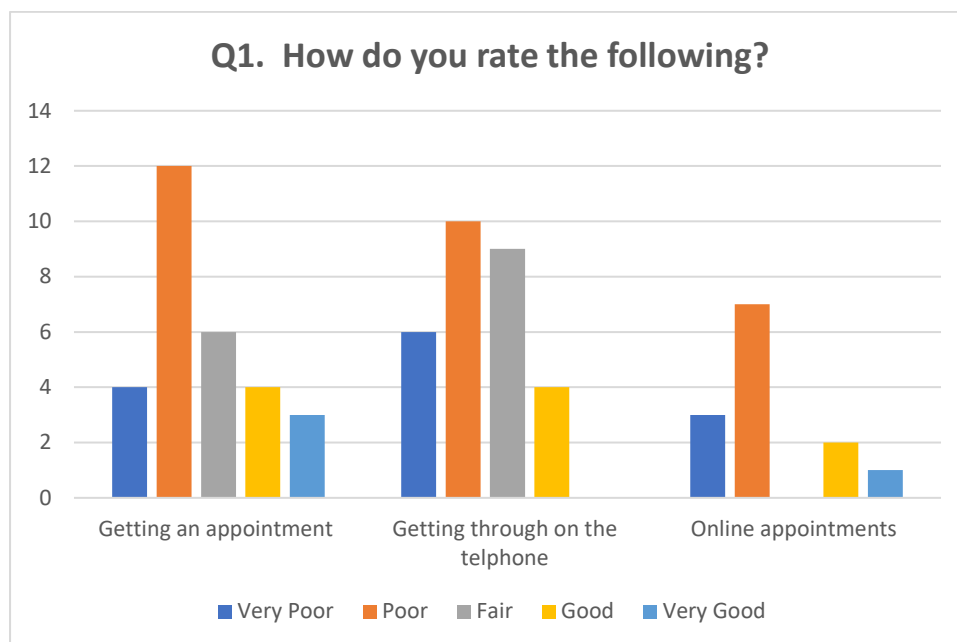
What we did

We visited the Surgery from 10.00 am to 12.30pm on 30th January 2019. During our visit we administered 30 surveys with patients and also observed the environment. The visit was unescorted and at no time during the visit did we enter consulting rooms.

This report will detail a range of recommendations based on the findings of our Enter and View visit and it is anticipated that these recommendations will contribute to improving service delivery within the Practice and in turn service experience for patients registered with the Practice.

Findings:

- Please note not all patients answered all questions

***'Ease of getting an appointment' and 'Getting through on the telephone'***

Overall, 'ease of getting an appointment' received largely negative responses with 55% (N=16 of the 29 respondents who answered this question) rating ease of getting an appointment as 'poor' or 'very poor', six respondents rating this as 'fair' and only seven as 'good' or 'very good'. Some respondents further told us of difficulties they had encountered with getting an appointment at the Practice. For one respondent their concerns related to not being able to either call or come in to the surgery at 8:30am as they are at work at that time, *Unless you are not working and can get into the surgery at 8.30am, it is impossible to get an appointment...Very few pre-booked appointments for employed people available.* For other respondents concerns related to a perceived lack of appointments available both for on the day appointments and for pre-booked appointments,

I arrived at 8.30am to find the surgery already full with 30+ people when I finally managed to get to reception at 8.50am was told no appointments left

When a Doctor tells you that you need to see him again after the antibiotics you can't get an appointment even though you suffer with COPD

Very hard to get an appointment

Again similar finding emerged in response to the question of 'getting through on the telephone' with 16 of the 29 (55%) respondents who answered this question rating this as 'poor' to 'very poor', nine respondents as 'fair' and only 'four' as 'good'.

Patients that we spoke to on the day of our visit further elaborated on the difficulties they experienced in getting through on the telephone. One respondent told us that they had been trying to get through to the surgery at 8.30 but were unable to which led to them calling their Community Nurse to see if they were able to help with getting an appointment. Other respondents expressed similar concerns,

Always engaged on phone, a long time getting through. However they are trying their best.

Need more phone lines

You cannot get through on the telephone

Findings from these questions of the survey indicate that patients are experiencing issues with getting through to the Practice on the phone and in securing an appointment. Given these findings we would recommend that the Medical Centre reviews both their appointment booking systems and telephone access for appointments.

'On-line appointment booking'

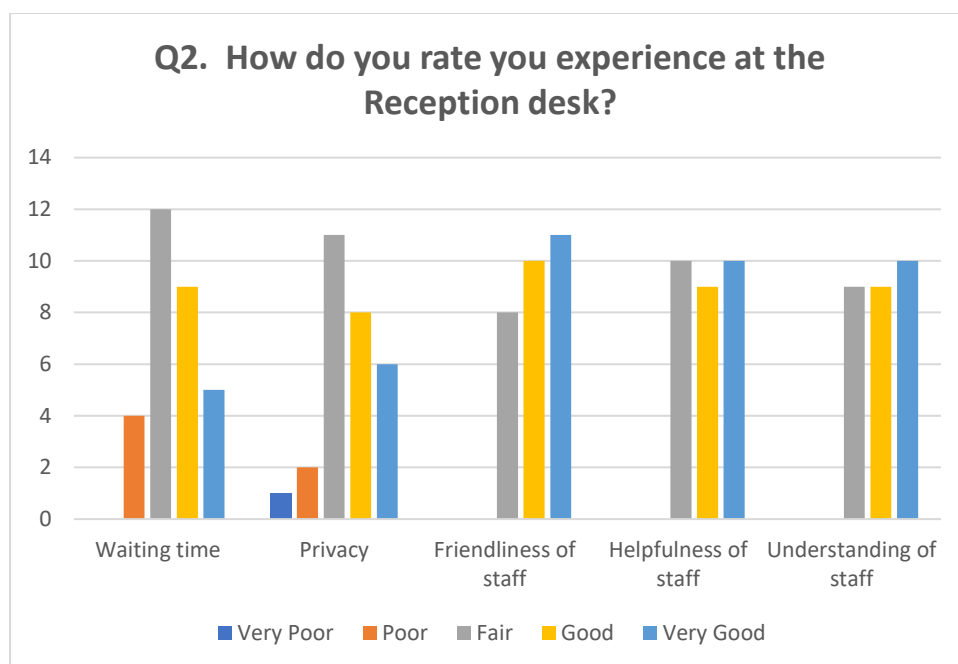
The survey further asked patients to rate their experiences of booking an appointment on-line and the majority of respondents (75%) rated this service as 'poor' or 'very poor'. However, only 13 of a possible 30 survey respondents answered this question. That fewer respondents answered this question may be indicative that fewer patients make use of the on-line booking system. This is to some extent supported by our findings where a number of respondents told us that they do not book appointments on-line. For one respondent this was related to their use of computers and the internet, *I don't go on-line*, and for another respondent to the 'booking process' of on-line appointments, *Need to improve their online appointments and mobile (app)*. For other respondents it appears to be related to their awareness on the on-line booking facility,

Never used on-line

Was not aware of getting on-line appointment

Haven't made on-line appointment before

Given these findings we would recommend that consideration is given to promoting on-line booking which may increase usage and uptake and in turn, reduce pressure on the telephone booking system. This could perhaps take the form of a 'promotional stand' in the waiting area that provides information about on-line booking and guidance on how patients can register for the service. However, given that some patients do not or choose not to use computers, it is important that a range of ways of booking appointments remains available for these patients.



Having explored patients' experiences of accessing appointments, we were also interested in finding out more about patients' experiences once they were at the Practice. As first point of contact for patients is usually with Receptionists we asked patients about their experience of waiting times and privacy once at the reception desk and the friendliness, helpfulness and understanding of Receptionists.

Overall, respondents who completed our survey reported positive experiences with just under 50% (N=14 of the 30 respondents who completed this question of the survey) rating waiting times at the reception desk as 'good' or 'very good' and a further 12 (40%) respondents rating this as 'fair'. During our visit we observed that there was an electronic booking-in system available for patients to use and we noted patients making use of this. On the whole, patients did not appear to be waiting in the Reception queue for excessive periods of time during our visit with the exception of one time during our visit when the queue for the Reception desk numbered nine people and at this time, patients did seem to be waiting a while before seeing the Receptionist.

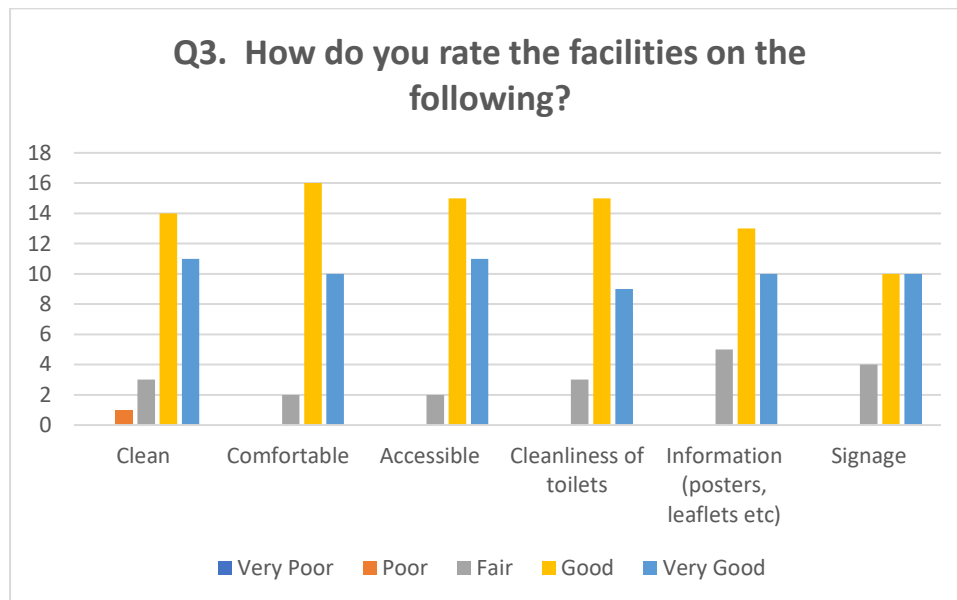
Similarly, respondents reported positive experiences when rating the friendliness, helpfulness and understanding of Reception staff with over 65% of the respondents who answered this question rating this as 'good' to 'very good' with no respondents giving a rating of less than fair. These positive findings are echoed in the some of the further comments received from respondents,

Excellent friendliness of staff , Staff try to do as much as they can

I find them to be very thorough and very courteous to the patients

Our Survey further asked respondents how they rated the privacy of the Reception area and 50% (N=14 of the 28 respondents who answered this question) rating this as 'fair' to 'very

good'. During our visit we noted that despite a sign asking patients to respect other patient's privacy when at the Reception desk, due to the open plan nature of the Reception area those in the queues and waiting areas are able overhear conversations between Reception staff and patients. Given this finding we would recommend that a private area is made available to patients who would like to speak confidentially with Receptionists and that patients are made aware of this facility.

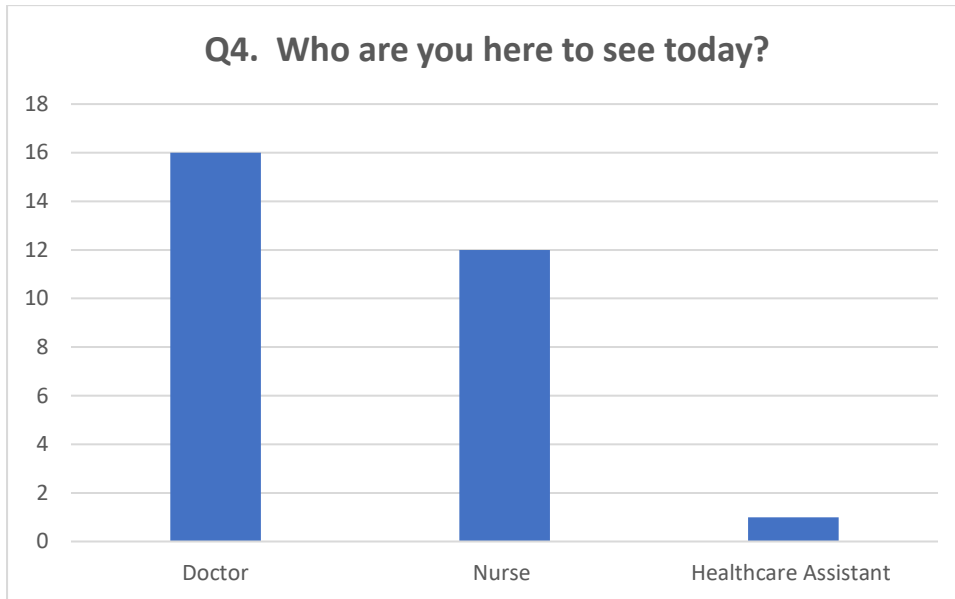


'Waiting area and facilities'

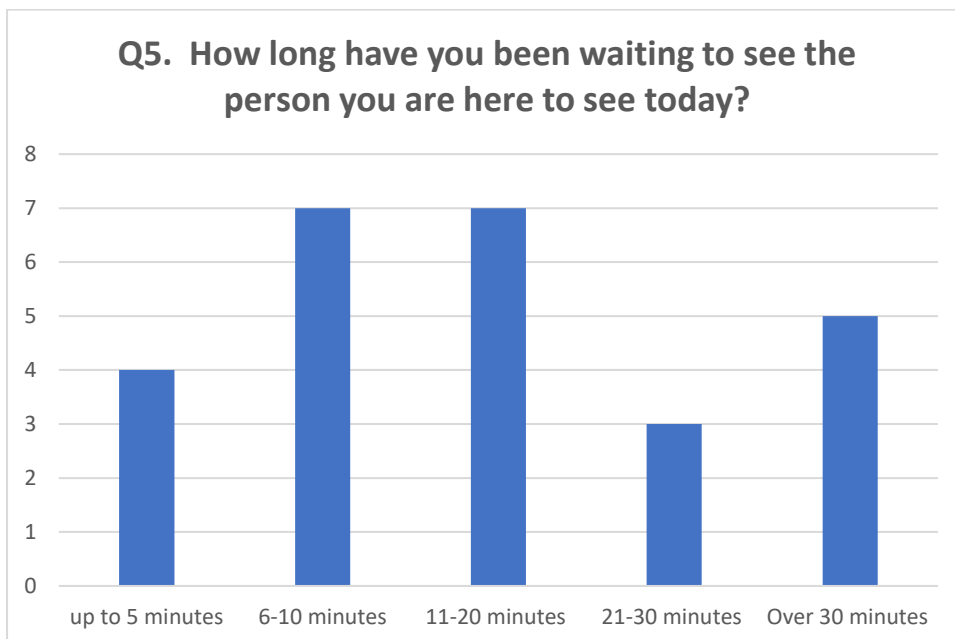
The responses relating to the waiting area and facilities were again positive with 86% (N=25 of the 29 respondents) rating the cleanliness of the waiting area as 'good' or 'very good' and 92% (26 of the 28 respondents who answered this question) rating the comfort of the waiting area as 'good' or 'very good'. There is one waiting area in The Castle Practice and we observed that the waiting area was clean and fairly comfortable.

We further asked patients about the information available in the waiting areas. Twenty-three (82%) of the 28 respondents who answered this question rated this as 'good' or 'very good' and no respondents rated this as less than fair. We observed a number of notice boards in the waiting area displaying a range of information including details of community activities and support groups, information on NHS111, condition-related health awareness and health promotion information. There was also an electronic screen in the waiting area and a digital display screen that informed patients of when the GP was ready to see them for their appointment and which room to go to. We further noted that all consulting and other rooms were clearly signposted.

All of our respondents rated accessibility into the building and once within the building as 'fair' to 'very good'. The Castle Practice is located on the second floor of a three-storey building and the Practice can be accessed by lift or stairs. The third floor contains offices for the Practice staff. We observed that the toilet facilities were well stocked and clean and that there were accessible toilets for Disabled people. Baby changing facilities were also available on site.



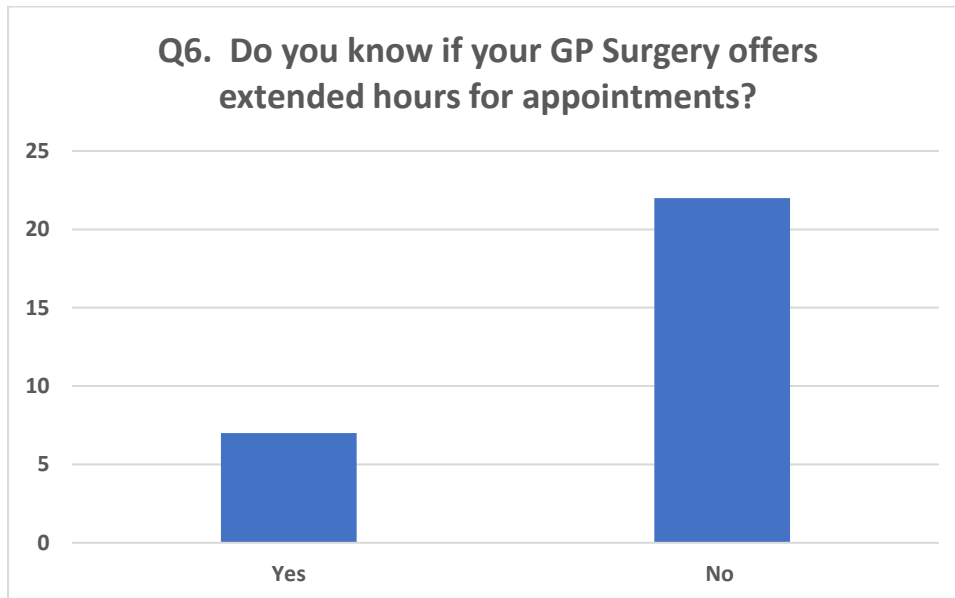
We asked patients who they were at the Practice to see that day and 16 of the 29 respondents who answered this question were there for appointments with their GP, a further twelve for an appointment with the Nurse and one for an appointment with a Healthcare Assistant.



Of the 26 respondents who answered this question, four had been waiting for less than five minutes to be called for their appointment, seven respondents for between six and ten minutes, seven respondents between 11 and 20 minutes, four respondents between 21-30 minutes and five respondents for over 30 minutes.

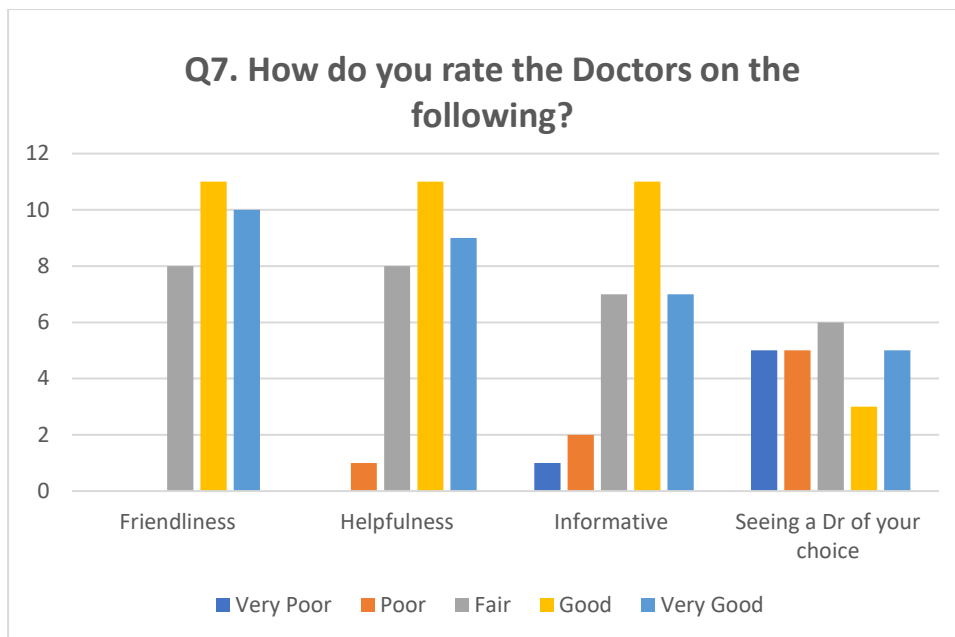
We spoke with the Practice Manager about waiting times and asked whether the Practice had any procedures in place for informing patients if appointments were running late. We
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were informed that if appointments are running late, Receptionists tell patients of this on their arrival and it is also usually advertised on the screens in the waiting areas. The Practice Manager further told us that there is the facility to be able to include a message on the electronic booking-in system if GPs are running late.



A recent initiative within Primary Care services has been the introduction of 'extended' opening hours to accommodate appointments for patients to fit in with their work, family and other commitments. We asked the Practice Manager how The Castle Practice was managing 'extended' opening hours. The Practice Manager told us that extended opening hours appointments are co-ordinated through the 'North Solihull Collaborative' that comprises 10 North Solihull GP Practices. Appointments are offered for all patients of Surgeries within the Collaborative at Bosworth Medical Centre between 6.30pm and 8pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 12pm on Saturdays and 9am to 11 am on Sundays.

However, despite the availability of extended opening hours appointments, only seven of the 29 respondents who answered this question were aware of their availability. Given this finding we would recommend that the Practice actively promotes and advertises the availability of extended hours appointments to improve patient awareness.



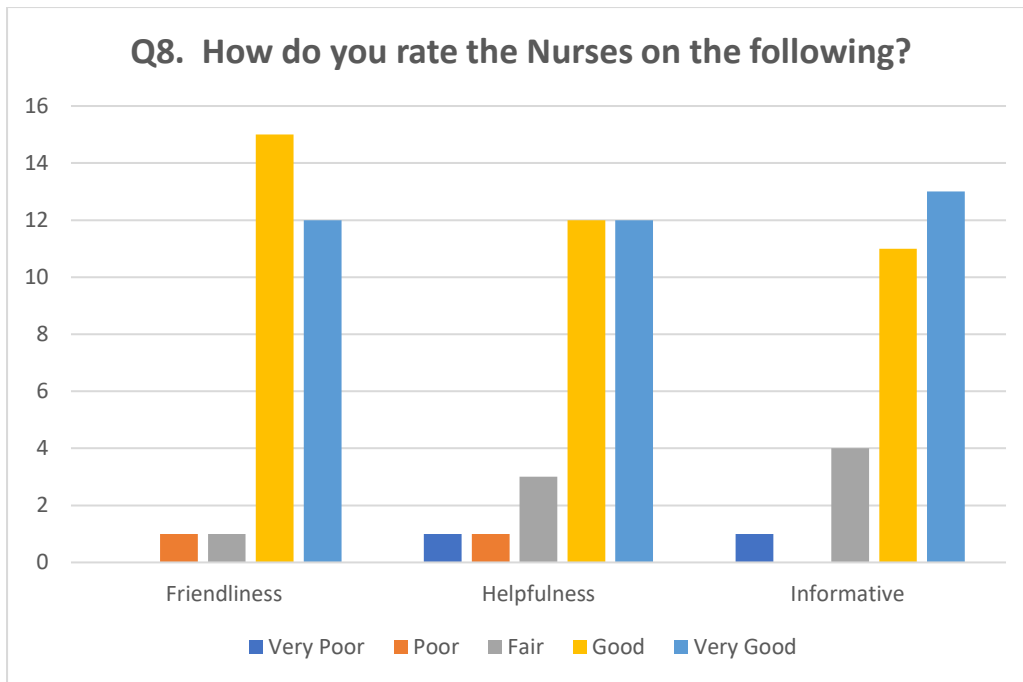
Overall, the Doctors were ranked positively by patients with 21 of the 29 respondents who answered this question, rating the Medical Centre's GPs as 'good' or 'very good' for being friendly, 20 for being helpful and 18 of the 28 respondents who answered this question for being informative. However, some of the further comments provided by respondents were less positive than the survey findings suggest,

Cannot get to see them. Almost impossible. They don't have enough time to do things thoroughly. I feel I am being rushed all the time.

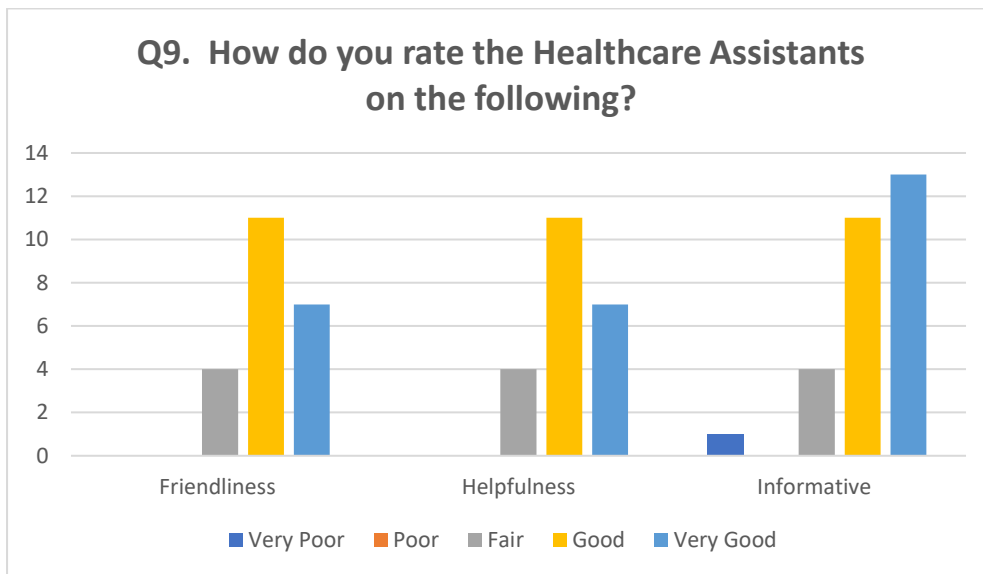
[Name of] Doctor is extremely rude/[Name of] Doctor is a very good doctor

Need more Doctors...

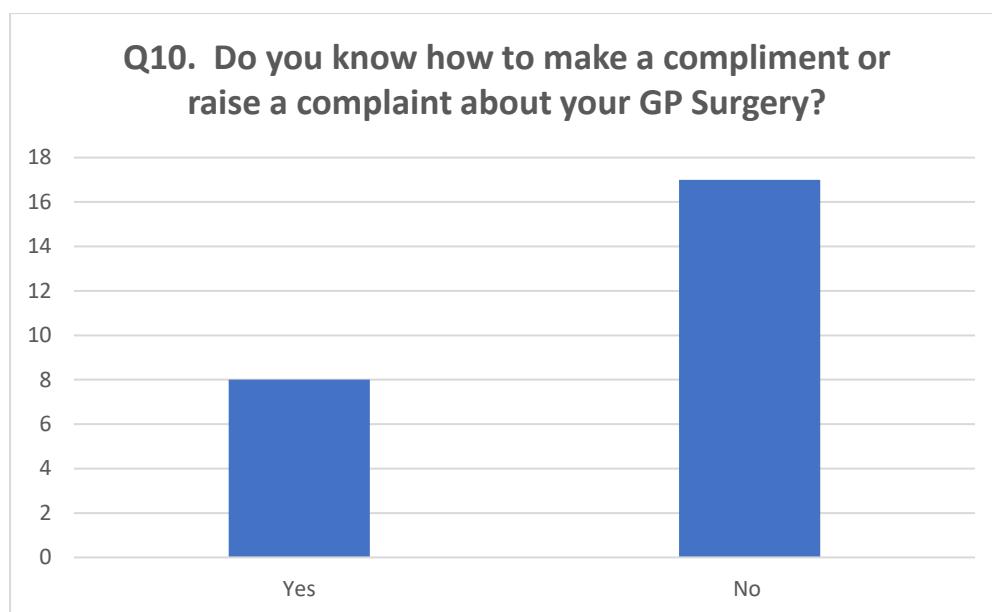
Less positive responses were also provided by respondents when rating their experiences of 'seeing a Doctor of your choice' with eight of the 24 respondents who answered this question rating this as 'good' or 'very good', six respondents as 'fair' and ten as 'poor' or 'very poor'. Our findings suggest that satisfaction with seeing a Dr of choice is fairly low among those who completed our questionnaire and we would recommend that where this can be accommodated, appointments are arranged with patients' GPs of choice.



As with GPs, again overall the Nurses were ranked positively by patients with 27 of the 29 respondents who completed this question of the survey rating the Nurses as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ for friendliness and 24 for helpfulness and for being informative.



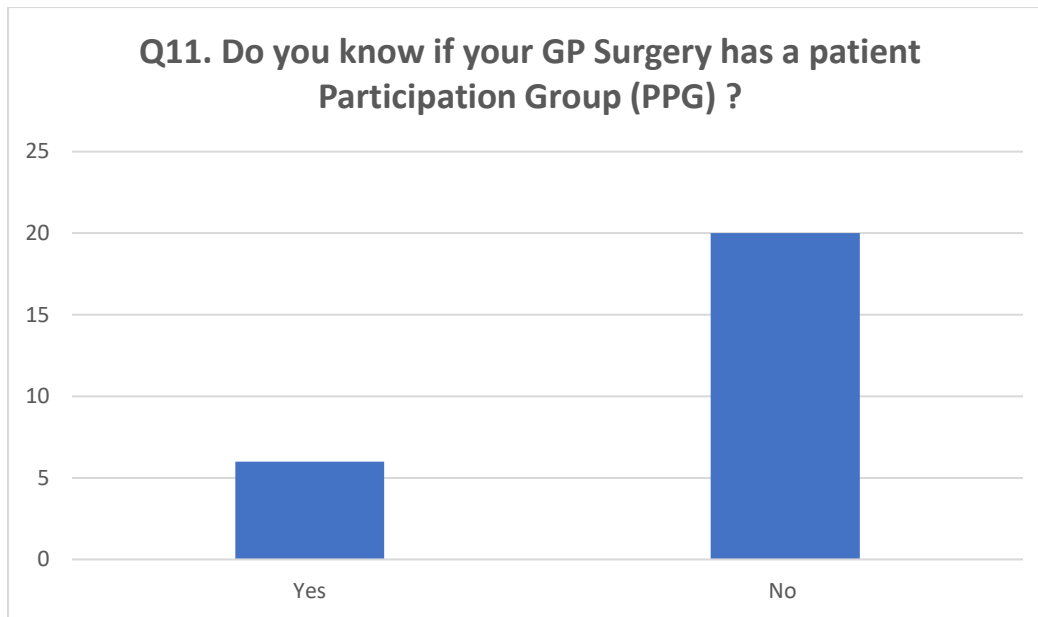
As with the question about Doctors and Nursing staff, Healthcare Assistants also received positive ratings from patients for being friendly, helpful and informative with no respondents rating them as less than fair for being friendly and helpful.



Question 10 of our survey asked respondents if they were aware of how to make a compliment or how to raise a complaint within the Practice should they wish to do so. Our findings indicate that awareness of the process for making a compliment or raising a complaint appears low among the respondents who completed our questionnaire. Of the 25 respondents who answered this question, eight were aware of how to do so and 17 told us that they were not aware of the process. During our visit, we did not observe any information being provided to patients on how to make a compliment or raise a complaint.

We asked the Practice Manager how patient feedback is collected and shared within the Practice and we were informed that feedback is collected through a 'suggestion box' and by way of the 'Friends and Family' feedback box both located in the waiting area and we were informed that patients often make suggestions directly to staff. All of these forms of feedback are discussed at Practice meetings. We would recommend that the Practice continues to encourage patient feedback and continues to share this feedback with staff. It may also be good practice to share this feedback with other patients and outline what actions the Practice has taken in response to the feedback received. This could be shared through Surgery newsletters or included on noticeboards and could take the format of 'You Said, We Did'.

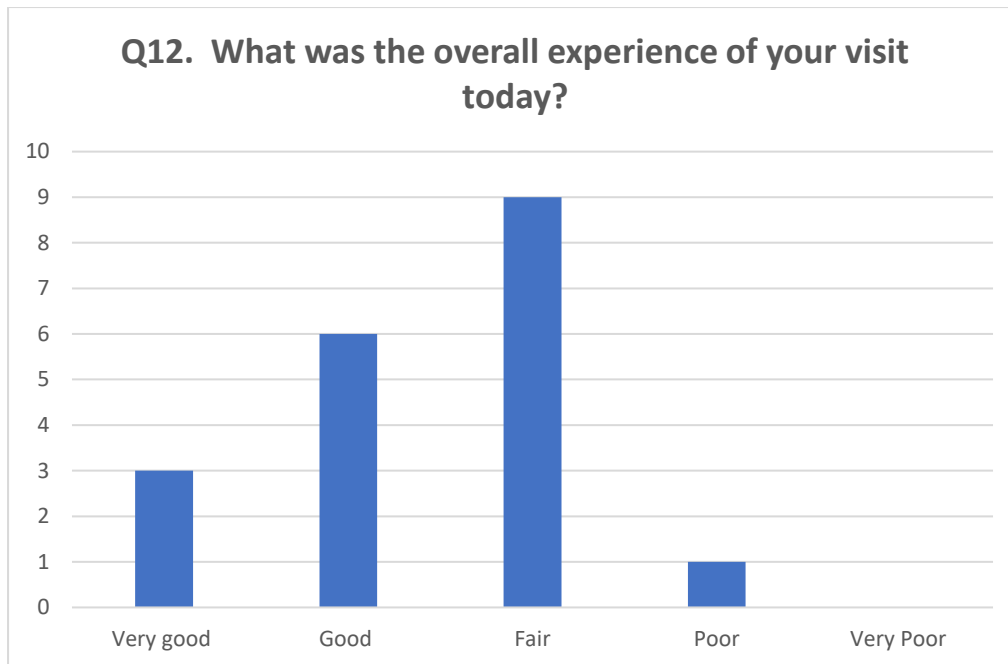
Furthermore, whilst we did observe a 'Friends and Family' feedback box in the waiting area on the day of our visit, we observed that there were no forms available for patients to complete. We would recommend that the Practice regularly replenishes forms to ensure that patients have an avenue for feedback.



We asked respondents if they knew whether the Practice had a Patient Participation Group (PPG). Of the 26 respondents who answered this question, only six respondents were aware that the Practice did have a PPG with a further 20 respondents stating that they did not know if the Practice had a PPG.

We asked the Practice Manager about the Practice's PPG and were informed that they do have an active and supportive Patient Participation Group (PPG) who meet quarterly and that the PPG have been involved in a range of activities including Patient Education events such as supporting the Practice during 'flu' season with their immunisation campaign, undertaking questionnaires with patients and producing newsletters and posters. We noted that there was a poster on the notice board in the waiting area advertising for new PPG members.

However, given that awareness of the Medical Centre's PPG appears to be low among the respondents who completed our questionnaire, we would again recommend that the Practice undertakes some work to raise awareness with patients of the role and function of the PPG and activities they have participated in.



At the end of the survey we asked patients to rate their overall experience of their visit that day. This question was answered by 19 patients, nine of whom rated this as 'good' or 'very good', a further nine as 'fair' and only one respondent rating their overall experience as less than fair.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions:

- That the Practice undertakes a review of patients' experiences of getting through to the Surgery by telephone to identify key concerns and to consider new ways of increasing accessibility for booking appointments over the telephone;
- That the Practice promotes on-line booking facilities to patients;
- Where this can be accommodated, patients are offered a choice of which GP they would like to see;
- That the Practice actively promotes and advertises the availability of extended hours appointments to improve patient awareness;
- That the Practice continues to encourage patient feedback and shares this feedback with staff and that patient feedback, and any actions taken in relation to it are communicated to patients;
- That the Practice ensures that 'Friends and Family' feedback forms are kept stocked in the waiting areas;
- That the Practice actively provides information of its processes for making a compliment or raising a complaint;
- That the Medical Centre actively raises awareness of the Patient Participation Group and its role and function.

Provider's Response:

1. We have carried out a telephone survey with our patients, we have had our new telephone system installed last week and plan to repeat the survey in 6 months. We also have plans in place in Reception to change the way of working, including how we deal with phone calls coming into practice, taking admin tasks out of the reception area and having more bodies answering the telephones during busier times, changing appointments and signposting patients to the correct member of staff.
2. The practice offers on-line booking to all new patients, there are posters on the 'Jayex' display screen and posters around the surgery. Ad-hoc patients are offered on-line facilities from Reception staff when booking appointments. We have a PPG meeting on 10th April and are planning to get the group involved with promoting on-line booking. We have offered on-line booking to our patients since 2010 and are one of the highest patient take ups in Solihull already.
3. Patients are offered a choice of GP when booking appointments, we have had issues in recruiting clinical staff over the last few years and have had to rely on various locums internal and external to keep up with demand for appointments, we are looking at expanding the time for booking with each GP to up to two weeks, we have tried this in the past and plan a roll-out of 1-2 bookable appointments with each GP for up to 2 weeks in advance.
4. We have had a campaign promoting the Extended Hours hub, both on the 'Jayex' display screen and on notice boards and will continue to remind patients of this facility.
5. The practice will continue to encourage feedback and share this with staff and patients including any actions taken, at PPG meetings and on posters, newsletters etc.
6. It was unfortunate that there were no forms for the Friends and Family Questions, we have made sure that these are checked to make sure they are always available to patients.
7. We have put complaint forms in reception and are advertising this to patients in order that they know the process.
8. The PPG meet every 2 months, the next meeting is 10th April, we are planning to get them involved in promoting the group and plans to get the group more active moving forward.

We have had a meeting with a member of staff from each area in the practice (1 Nurse, 1 Receptionist, 1 IT, 1 Secretary, 1 GP) and have had a discussion regarding your report. We have an action plan to address these issues, including how to address them and make the patient experience better for our patients.

Healthwatch Solihull thanks the provider for their feedback and looks forward to working with the practice in the future.

