

Abbey House Medical Centre

Patient Survey Report

1. Introduction

In October 2014 Healthwatch Northamptonshire visited Abbey House Medical Centre in Daventry 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 eight patients at Abbey House Medical Centre 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

Abbey House Medical Centre is a large-sized practice (approaching 20,000 patients) at two surgeries in Daventry with 12 doctors (seven female, five male) based at Abbey House and three doctors (two male, one female) based at Monksfield. In addition there are 10 practice nurses, 3 health care assistants, 3 midwives and 1 counsellor.

It is a training practice (Deanery) and tends to recruit new GPs via these training appointments, although some return to work in London. At present there are no vacancies or GPs scheduled to retire.

2.2 Services provided

The practice provides a range of services and has a drop-in facility to treat conditions such as chest pains, stroke and obvious wounds. District nurses and health visitors are also based at the practice.

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

² <http://gp-patient.co.uk>

Specialists: The practice employs a counsellor.

Shared services: Training is shared with Danetre Medical Practice and both practices provide a ward round at the Danetre Hospital, transfer of patients to the Hospital can be complex and is paper based.

Extended opening: Abbey House is open until 8.05pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Home visits: GPs will make up to three home visits per day, including some at care homes.

2.3 Appointment booking system

The call centre answers all telephone calls and uses a triage system. Reception deal with people face-to-face, and bookings can also be made online. Routine appointments can be booked up to four weeks in advance and same day appointments are always made available.

Missed appointments

2.4 Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Up to 20 people attend a bi-monthly meeting chaired by one of the GPs, and another 40 to 50 people making up the virtual online group.

2.5 Complaints system

There is information on the noticeboard and leaflets at reception, plus an online form. The Practice Manager said that there were on average only two written complaints per month from 12,000 patient contacts.

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:

- online training in diversity
- an Eastern European translation service (to help cater for employees from nearby Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal)
- PEARL translation service via NHS Trust
- both sites have wheelchair access and hearing loop available for patients

3. Patient experience

3.1 Appointment system

More patients we spoke to (five of eight) found it easy (three) or very easy (two) to get an appointment when they needed it. One person thought it was 'OK', one thought it difficult and one thought it very difficult.

The positive or satisfactory experiences of getting an appointment mentioned that you could ring at any time and that it was 'OK' when seeing a nurse.

There were no negative comments.

3.2 Choice of doctor

Most patients (five) did not usually get to see the GP of their choice and of these three said that they would have liked to. Two people said they did get to see the doctor of their choice.

Three people said they would like to see the same doctor for continuity of care.

3.3 Treatment and quality of care and service

All the patients who commented said that they were always (four) or usually (two) satisfied with the treatment and service they receive. When asked to tell us more one person said the doctors seem short of time.

We asked people what they thought could improve the quality of care. Four people commented.

- One person would like to see more receptionists.
- One person would like it to be easier to see a nurse.
- One person found waiting times too long.
- One person would like the telephones answered sooner.

We also asked people what works well. One person thought that reception was good.

3.4 Communication and additional needs

Three of the people we spoke to said that they had no problems communicating with doctors or other staff. However three people did say that they had problems communicating: “sometimes mental illness - no time - too rushed”, “sometimes with language - not often” and “doctor availability”.

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 - English as a second language, which they said was being met.

3.5 Additional comments

We asked patients if they had any other comments to make about the practice. One patient said they would like longer opening hours.

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 numbers are increasing and many are transient due to local employment and it can take a long time to get test results, for example X-rays, from Danetre Hospital.

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 reasonably well and patients do not find it too difficult to get appointments. All patients found it was straightforward to get through to the phone lines for making bookings, although one person suggested the phones could be answered quicker. Most of the patients did not usually get to see a doctor of their choice, although all patients were satisfied with their care and there seemed to be a good level of communication between patients and practice staff.

5. Recommendations

1. The practice may want to consider expanding the specialist services or specialist doctors available to better meet patient needs.
2. The practice could consider ways to improve the choice of doctors patients can see.
3. 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 Abbey House Medical Centre 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? (Please tick one) Very easy Easy OK Difficult Very difficult <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>				
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? Yes No, but I'd like to No, but it doesn't matter to me <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>				
Please tell us more about how this is important to you or not:				
Q4: Are there any problems when communicating with staff or doctors? Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>				
Please tell us more:				
Q5: Are you satisfied with the treatment and service you receive here? Yes, always Yes, usually No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>				
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? Improvements: Works well:				
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. Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>				
If so, are they met? Yes No Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>				
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? 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?</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? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> 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>