

Eskdail Medical Practice

Patient Survey Report

1. Introduction

In December 2014 Healthwatch Northamptonshire visited Eskdail Medical Practice 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 Eskdail Medical Practice 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

Eskdail Medical Practice is a medium-sized practice (approximately 11,887 patients) with eight doctors (five partner GPs, three salaried GPs), two trainee GPs, two practice nurses, two nurse practitioners, one health care assistant and 15 receptionist and admin staff.

2.2 Services provided

The practice provides a range of services, including Antenatal; Asthma; Cervical smear; Child Development Assessment; Diabetes; family planning; immunisation and vaccination; minor illness clinic and minor surgery; warts and contraception.

Shared services: Some services are shared - the practice building is shared with Weavers Medical, Out of hours and the dental practice.

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

² <http://gp-patient.co.uk>

Extended opening: The practice is open on Tuesdays between 6pm and 8pm and on Saturday mornings from 8.30am until 11am. One or two GPs provide services during these times.

Home visits: Home visits are telephoned in by 10am every day. All visits are carried out by GPs during lunchtime hours and emergency visits may take place following afternoon surgery sessions.

2.3 Appointment booking system

The practice uses a telephone system or patients may book in person. Receptionists take appointment bookings via telephone or in person from 8am every day. The practice offers same-day appointments, appointments available 24 hours in advance and routine appointments up to six weeks in advance. Telephone call-backs from clinicians are available in the morning for routine appointments and in the afternoon for emergencies. Emergency appointments are available at the end of both morning and afternoon surgeries. Extended phoning hours are on Tuesday evenings from 6.30pm until 8pm and Saturday mornings from 8.30am until 11am and the practice does not use an 0845 phone number. There is one dedicated doctor available for telephone queries in the mornings only. Temporary patients are put on a system as temporary and appointments are booked as any other patients. All booked appointments are acknowledged by sending SMS messages to patients with mobile phones.

Missed appointments

Patients who do not turn up for appointments (Do Not Attends, DNAs) continue to be a problem at the practice particularly with nurses who often book further in advance than GPs.

2.4 Patient Participation Group (PPG)

The practice has a virtual PPG. PPG membership is advertised on the information boards within the practice and all contact within the group is made via an emailing system and/or letters.

2.5 Complaints system

The complaints system is advertised on noticeboards, the website, information screens, via text messaging and in leaflets which are available at reception. All complaints go directly to the Practice Manager, or in his absence, the Deputy Manager. All complaints are handled in line with practice policy. Area teams are notified about all written complaints on an annual basis.

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:

- The practice is Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant with patient access to all areas without steps.
- Hearing loop available on the ground floor.

- Interpreters are available and booked in advance for patients requiring them.
- Staff receive training about equality and diversity.

3. Patient experience

3.1 Appointment system

Most patients we spoke to found it easy (five out of eight) to get an appointment when they needed it. Two found it 'OK' and one patient found it difficult.

Most positive or satisfactory experiences of getting an appointment mentioned the telephoning system. For example:

- Patients appreciated how easy it was to get same-day appointments.
- One patient explained that it wasn't really a problem.
- One patient found that appointment were straightforward to book mid-week.

The patient that found it difficult was unimpressed with the telephone booking system and the receptionists' attitude and response to the patient. Other negative points included.

- One patient thought that booking online was not so easy.
- One patient found that booking appointments in advance were more difficult than on-the-day bookings.
- Two patients said it was difficult to get through on the phones or they had to wait a while before being put through.
- One patient found that before or after the mid-week period or prior to weekends it was more challenging to get an appointment.

3.2 Choice of doctor

Half the patients we spoke to (four) did not get to see the doctor of their choice, two of which stated that this didn't matter and the other two patients said they would like to. Four patients said they did usually get to see the doctor of their choice.

3.3 Treatment and quality of care and service

All the patients we spoke to were satisfied with the treatment they received. Two of these patients usually were satisfied, and another four were always satisfied with treatment. When asked to tell us more:

- One patient said the blood test procedure was carried out at a planned time efficiently.
- One patient explained that if feeling unwell, receptionists will treat patients kindly.
- One patient told us they were "always satisfied".

- One patient found they felt satisfied.

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

- Two people said improvements on the number of phone lines would be good.
- One person explained that the car parking needed to be improved.
- One person mentioned that changes to the appointments system should be made - everyone rings at 8am so appointments are booked up quickly.
- One person stated that some reception staff could have a 'less sharp' manner.

We also asked people what works well. Four people gave the following answers:

- "Everything is very well organised".
- "Totally satisfied with the service".
- "Always very speedy with appointment schedules".
- "I think everything works well".

3.4 Communication and additional needs

None of the patients had any issues with communicating with any of the doctors or other staff at the practice.

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. None of the patients we spoke to had additional needs.

3.5 Additional comments

We asked patients if they had any other comments to make about the practice. There were three additional positive comments and one additional negative comments.

Positive:

- One person believed in their opinion, that the practice was managed very well.
- One person said themselves and their family are well-cared for, both doctors and staff are friendly and helpful.
- One person mentioned that they were very satisfied with the system.

Negative:

One person said that the front entrance to the surgery was difficult for disabled people to use but that there was a disabled entrance at the back of the surgery.

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

There has been a challenge in the increase of in the number of patients with no additional funding to increase clinical staff levels. Other practices in the locality have had trouble with recruiting GPs and the practice may face similar issues as partners come up to retirement in the near future. A&E attendance is at the higher end of practices in the locality.

4. Highlights

According to our survey and the National GP Patient Survey most patients were able to get an appointment when they wanted one but not all patients were able to see their doctor of choice. Some people thought that some of the reception staff were not as friendly as they would have liked and found it difficult to get through on the telephone lines. All patients were satisfied with their treatment and care from the doctors.

5. Recommendations

1. The practice may benefit from having more phone lines for the telephone booking system to run smoother.
2. Reception and administration staff training should include answering phones in a friendly manner and with good etiquette, as this is a problem for some patients who would like them to be more understanding and helpful.
3. The online booking system may need improving as one patient did not find it easy to use.
4. 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 Eskdail Medical Practice 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

<p>Q1: How easy is it to get an appointment when you need it? (Please tick one)</p> <p>Very easy Easy OK Difficult Very difficult</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>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></p>
<p>Q3: Do you usually get to see the doctor/nurse/health professional of your choice?</p> <p>Yes No, but I'd like to No, but it doesn't matter to me</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please tell us more about how this is important to you or not:</p>
<p>Q4: Are there any problems when communicating with staff or doctors?</p> <p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please tell us more:</p>
<p>Q5: Are you satisfied with the treatment and service you receive here?</p> <p>Yes, always Yes, usually No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please tell us more:</p>
<p>Q6: What do you think could improve the patient experience at your GP practice and what do you think works particularly well?</p> <p>Improvements: Works well:</p>
<p>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.</p> <p>Yes No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If so, are they met?</p> <p>Yes No Don't Know</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please tell us more:</p>
<p>Q8: Is there anything else you would like to tell us?</p>

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>