

Details of visit	Lime Tree Surgery (Lime Tree Avenue, Findon Valley - Worthing) Announced visit: 11 September 2017, morning surgery only
Authorised Representatives:	Team of trained representatives from Healthwatch West Sussex: Alan Packham, Hilary Church and Virginia Wood
Local Healthwatch contact details:	Healthwatch West Sussex 0300 012 0122

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch West Sussex would like to thank the partners and medical centre's management, its patients, visitors and all staff for their contribution to this Enter and View visit.

Disclaimer

Please note this report relates to findings observed on the specific dates set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all patients, visitors and staff, only an account of what was observed and was contributed during the visit.

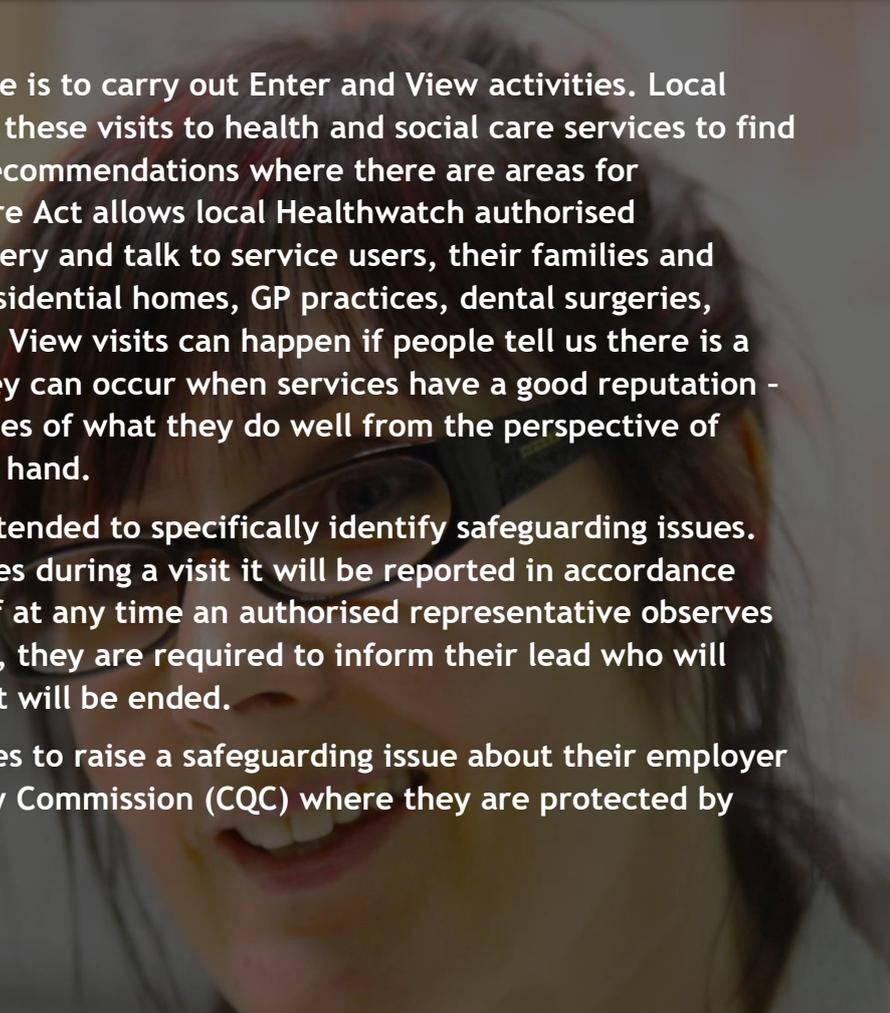


What is Enter and View?

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out Enter and View activities. Local Healthwatch representatives undertake these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch 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 Enter and Views are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if a safeguarding concern arises during a visit it will be reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policy. If at any time an authorised representative observes anything they feel uncomfortable about, they are required to inform their lead who will inform the service manager and the visit will be ended.

In addition, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer they will be directed to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.





Purpose of the visits

As part of our programme of engaging with local people we have a schedule of visits to GP's and hospitals across West Sussex. The purpose of this programme of visits is to:

- Speak to patients and their families to gain insight into their experiences
- Make general lay observations of staff and patient interactions, the care environment and how health and care is being provided locally.

Strategic drivers

Experience of care, clinical effectiveness and patient safety together make the three key components of quality in the NHS. Good care is linked to positive outcomes for the patient and is also associated with high levels of staff satisfaction.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/pe/>

As the independent watchdog for health and care in West Sussex we want to gather personal accounts from people who are currently receiving treatment, care and support. This in turn will enable us to help local NHS organisations to better understand their patients lived experiences to improve the health and wellbeing outcome for future patients.

Methodology

We contacted the practice to arrange a visit to the surgery to speak to patients attending the surgery on the day and to make observations. The visit involved a small team of trained authorised representatives. Our representatives are tasked with approaching patients; visitors and staff, to introduce Healthwatch and our role in supporting health and social care organisations to deliver the right quality of care. We invite people to share their personal experiences, good and bad. These are captured using our standard feedback form and then entered on our secure database.

Representatives are required to note their observations and to complete a summary sheet together, immediately after completing the visiting activity.

Where we have previous insight from local people, this may inform the areas we visit.

We spoke to people in the surgery's waiting rooms. We captured **14 personal accounts** during the morning surgery.

Our sharing of anonymised information here contains examples and/or quotes to amplify peoples' voices. The names used are ones we have given and not actual names.



Summary of findings

- People commented on the telephone triage system and generally there was positive feedback about the efficiency, however, some people had difficulty in getting through and felt there were too many 'options' on the menu.
- A number of people commented that there were long waits to see preferred doctors and some patients felt a lack of personal approach as they see different doctors at each visit.
- People spoke about the reception area being very busy at times and a perceived lack of staffing in this area.
- We heard from one patient who has been upset by a change in the 'system' regarding accessing a routine procedure.
- There is a positive relationship between the surgery and the on-site pharmacy which is greatly valued by patients.
- We didn't hear any feedback about the Patient Participation Group which could indicate a lack of awareness and involvement.

Results of Visit

We would like to thank the Surgery staff for being very friendly towards us during our visit and the patients who spoke to us. Our team was made to feel very welcome and unrestricted in their work.

Observations

The surgery is located in a suburb of Worthing which is cut-off from the main town by the A27 main road. There is a parade of shops close by and the surgery shares a car park with the local library.

Access is not a problem and the surgery has clear and welcoming signage from the street. The shared car park is relatively small, with a section for staff parking, but there is ample on-street parking in all adjacent roads, with no restrictions.

The Entrance to the building is via an automatic glass door and there were a number of posters and signs crudely stuck to the door, which gave a rather tatty and untidy first impression.

The door is heavy and single width, followed by a sharp right-turn into the main building. Our team witnessed this as being rather tricky to negotiate with a pram, pushchair, wheelchair or walking frame and a bit of a bottle-neck as people were arriving and leaving.

Under the Accessible Information Standard the surgery must record, share and take the right action to make sure patients with communication and information needs can participate fully in their care and treatment. There is no privacy at the reception desk, so other people can hear all that is being said either on the phone or to other patients in front of them.

People waiting to speak to the reception team block the thoroughfare between the front door and the waiting area / self-check-in screen.

The waiting areas are clean and tidy, but a little dark. There is an appropriate amount of seating and the environment is comfortable and not institutionalised.

Patient feedback

This is only my second visit since I moved to the area and I have been very pleased so far.
The staff are lovely and I am very happy with the service.

It took me 10 minutes to get through on the phone this morning, but they phoned me back promptly and I got an appointment straight away.

I have been a patient here for more than 5 years and I feel the team are professional and competent. It's good to have the pharmacy here, they provide an excellent service.

Most of the patients we spoke said they found making an appointment at the surgery easy, although there are a number of options on a menu and a lack of choice of who to see.

Patients said

Contacting the practice on the phone can take 5 to 10 minutes, which I think is good - but then there are too many options to choose from.

I have had to wait 3 weeks to see my preferred doctor, but if I didn't want to wait that long I could have seen any doctor.

I can usually get an 'on the day' appointment but hardly ever with the same doctor.

We didn't see many patients who were working. We mainly spoke to parents of young children and retired people. There was a mix of patients who were accessing a same day appointment and those who were attending for routine or pre-booked visits. There were a good number of people attending screening and preventative clinics such as diabetic and asthma checks, blood tests, blood pressure monitoring and follow-up appointments.

Whilst many of the patients appeared happy with the support and treatment they receive through the surgery, a few made some less than positive comments.

My doctor only works 2 days a week, so if I want to see them I have a 3 week wait.

I have a regular prescription and have asked repeatedly for it to be issued 2 months at a time but it is always issued for just 1 month. This is really inconvenient for my work and I have never had a clear explanation as to why it isn't possible.

More staff are needed on the front desk - and they could smile more!

Additional findings

For all leaders to consider. Robert told us that he has been frustrated by a change in the system for routine procedures and he is unclear why this has changed.

He regularly needs his ears syringed due to a build up of wax. For many years he simply called the practice and made an appointment when he felt he needed it. He has been told that the system has changed and he now needs to have an appointment to assess his ears prior to making an appointment for the syringing procedure.

He told us that this delays the process by 6 weeks and he is unable to book the appointment for the procedure before he has attended an appointment to assess his ears.

Patients who mentioned **Worthing and St Richards Hospitals** spoke positively about the services.

The staff at Worthing A&E were great and got me sorted quickly so I could go home.
I expected a long wait, but my referral to St Richards was really quick.

Recommendations

From our findings we would make the following recommendations:

- First impressions count - tidy up the entrance and lobby so that information is clear and relevant.
- Consider how the reception area and queueing system could be improved to increase privacy/confidentiality and to avoid patients blocking the entrance.
- We didn't hear anything about the Patient Participation Group. In our experience this is often an indicator that there isn't a wide awareness of the PPG. Think about how to promote Patient Participation and Involvement. Work with the Current PPG members to encourage more engagement and explore different ways to communicate with patients to ensure wider inclusion and representation.
- Look at appointment/triage system to see if it may be possible for those patients with a continuing medical condition to be able to access the same GP so they can benefit from a continuity of care.

Lime Tree Surgery's response

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Further Healthwatch comments

We would like to thank the practice and partners for working positively and proactively with Healthwatch to identify and implement positive changes.

Issues raised during our visit, which relate to other health and care services have been captured and are being included in our wider work across the county.

We would encourage local people to continue to share their personal stories so we can help GPs, hospital and other services to improve the way they provide health and care.



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