

healthwatch
Walsall

Enter and View Report

Pleck Health Centre

Announced Visit
14th June 2023



Engaging
Communities
Solutions

Enter and View

Part of Healthwatch Walsall remit is to carry out Enter and View visits. Healthwatch Walsall Authorised Representatives carry out these visits to health and social care premises to find out how service users access, use and understand what the overall service user experiences are, highlighting findings and potentially making recommendations that may lead to areas of 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 that we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first-hand.

Healthwatch Walsall 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 Walsall Safeguarding Policy, the service manager will be informed, and the visit will end. The Local Authority Safeguarding Team will also be informed.

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Acknowledgments

Healthwatch Walsall would like to thank the Practice Manager and all the patients who took part for their co-operation during our visit.

Disclaimer

Please note that this report is related to findings and observations made during our visit made on the 14th June 2023. The report does not claim to represent the views of all service users, only those who contributed during the visit.

Authorised Representatives

Tom Collins – Authorised representative

Richard Jolly – Authorised representative

Roger Corbett- Authorised representative

Who we share the report with?

This report and its findings will be shared with the GP Practice (provider), members of the public, Black Country Integrated Care Board (Walsall Place), Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Healthwatch England. The report will also be published on the Healthwatch Walsall website and can be available as a paper copy if requested. Call 0800 470 1660.

Provider details

Name of Service: Pleck Health centre

Address: 16 Oxford St,

Walsall

WS2 9HY

Telephone: 01922 927300

Website: <https://www.modalitypartnership.nhs.uk/pleck-medical-centre>

Service type: e.g. GP practice and medical services

On site they have 5 GPs, 3 Registrars, 2 prescribing Nurses and Specialist Diabetic Nurse.

The practice is under the umbrella provider Modality.

There has not been a recent Care Quality Commission (C.Q.C.) inspection so no recent/relevant report available. This service was registered by CQC on 31 May 2018.

Healthwatch Principles

Healthwatch Walsall's Enter and View programme is linked to the eight principles of Healthwatch, and questions are asked around each one.

1. **A healthy environment:** Right to live in an environment that promotes positive health and wellbeing.
2. **Essential Services:** Right to a set of preventative, treatment and care services provided to a high standard to prevent patients reaching crisis.
3. **Access:** Right to access services on an equal basis with others without fear of discrimination or harassment, when I need them in a way that works for me and my family.
4. **A safe, dignified and quality services:** Right to high quality, safe, confidential services that treat me with dignity, compassion and respect.
5. **Information and education:** Right to clear and accurate information that I can use to make decisions about health and care treatment. I want the right to education about how to take care of myself and about what I am entitled to in the health and social care system.
6. **Choice:** Right to choose from a range of high-quality services, products and providers within health and social care.
7. **Being listened to:** Right to have my concerns and views listened to and acted upon. I want the right to be supported in taking action if I am not satisfied with the service I have received.
8. **Being involved:** To be treated as an equal partner in determining my own health and wellbeing. I want the right to be involved in decisions that affect my life and those affecting services in my local community.

Purpose of the visit

This was an announced visit but announced less than 24 hours before. We sought to gather patient experiences of accessing and using the GP and nursing services offered at the practice.

What we did

We arrived at the building at 9.30am. Patients had a choice as to whether they wished to participate. We used a pre-set list of questions/prompts and recorded patient and staff responses.

In total we spoke to 13 patients (1 patient did not complete the process as they were sent to hospital), the Practice Manager and another staff member, a total of 15 people.

Environment

External

The practice is situated in Pleck just off the main Walsall to Wednesbury Road. There is a large car park next to the pharmacy attached to the centre for a number of 20 to 30 cars. There is also parking off road at the front of the centre which includes disabled parking spaces.

We were told that there is exterior CCTV focused on the property.

There was a noticeable amount of rubbish and broken bottles outside the frontage of the building. There was clear signage to the GP services. The access was located at ground floor level, providing easy access to wheelchair users and parents with pushchairs or prams.

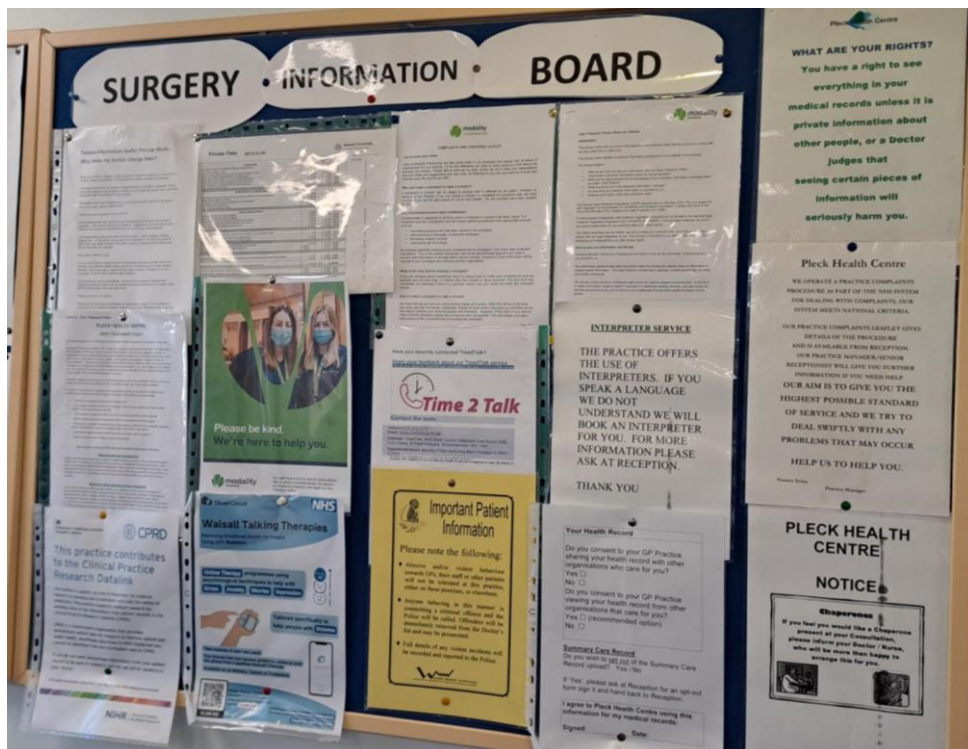
Internal

We entered at 9.30 a.m. and had an initial look at the main patient reception area and we noted the following:

There was reception desk, clearly marked with one reception assistant greeting patients.

- There was a self-book in electronic screen in reception
- The patient reception/seating area was clean and tidy
- Seating for approximately 20 plus patients and seats appeared clean and well maintained
- Main reception was clearly marked
- There is a toilet in the waiting area for patient use
- We were told there is a Hearing Loop for patients who may be hard of hearing/deaf
- Two wall mounted TVs though these were not turned on
- One wall mounted suggestion box at the main entrance
- Friends and Family collection box on reception desk area
- 2 hand gel dispensers were in place but both were marked out of order

- Information boards are placed all around the patient waiting area, which included a dedicated Patient information board, Patient Reference (P.R. G) board, a 'Carers' board and a 'Veterans board' as well as general health information boards or leaflets
- A range of patients in the surgery from various communities and different age groups
- There was access for wheelchair and mobility scooter users inside with a lower reception desk at the end of the main reception area



Practice Services

When you visit the practice website, whilst it has a heading that says 'Services', it does not clearly outline what services are available at the surgery i.e. vaccinations.

We were told that:

- The practice has 7,500 patients registered from a diverse local community, supported by a number of admin staff with the ability to communicate in various languages
- There are generally 5 GPs on duty each day
- The GPs also visit some local care/nursing homes
- GPs can undertake patient home visits if the patients are bed/home bound
- There are 2 Practice Nurses, of which, 1 is a prescribing Nurse and there are 2 additional Health Care Assistants

Access

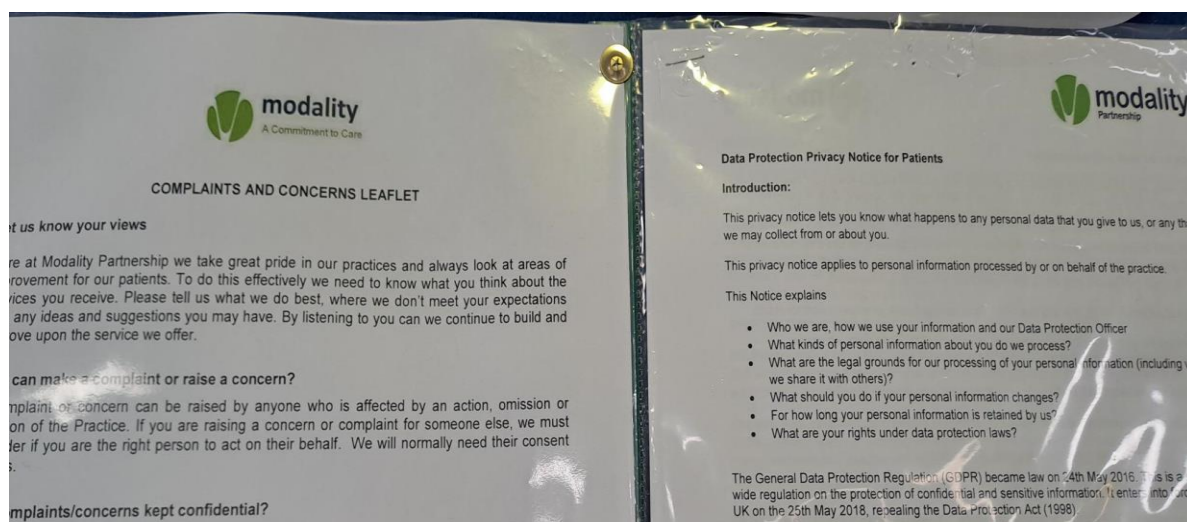
Access to the services can be by telephone, in person and using previously E Consult, but now a system called 'Accurx' an online consultation request portal (a form of E Consult). We were told there is a hearing loop available.

There is plenty of room for wheelchair/push chair access and all treatment rooms run off ground floor corridors. There is a lift to the second floor of the building if needed.

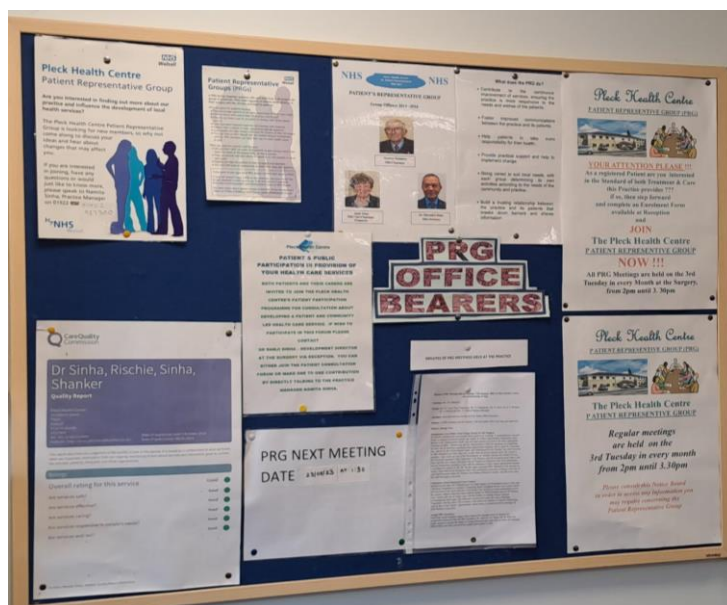
Patient information available

In the main patient waiting area there are a number of patient information boards relating to healthy living styles, a carers board and general notice board, with posters and information flyers.

Displayed on one of the notice boards were the practice opening hours, the procedure/process for patients to raise a concern or a complaint.



There is a dedicated Patient Reference Group (P.R.G.) board displaying the last meeting minutes and useful, condition related or support information for patients.



Patient interviews & responses

We spoke to and collated 12 patients experience(s) and view(s) during the visit. 1 patient did not complete their experience question session after the 1st question due to being called in for treatment.

We asked 12 Patients how often they sought to make contact with the practice?

The responses were:

- 7 patients as they needed
- 4 patients monthly
- 1 patient quite regularly

Note: 1 patient left for treatment and did not complete their questionnaire so the pool of patients dropped to 11.

We asked them how they currently communicate with practice? This was a multi choice selection

The responses were:

- 6 use the telephone
- 2 occasionally used online, Accurx system
- 3 waiting patients did not answer this question

We asked if patients are given alternative routes of care if appointments are not available?

The responses were:

- 6 patients answered Yes there were offered alternative routes of care
- 5 patients answered No

It appears that a number of patients are offered alternative care pathways, this may include NHS111, Urgent Treatment Centre (U.T.C.) and Accident & Emergency (A&E)

We asked if the patient(s) knew of Extra GP appointments?

Note: Extra GP appointments may also be known as 'out of hours' or WALDOC'.

The responses were:

- 5 patients did have knowledge
- 6 patients did not have knowledge

The practice operates an extended hours system which can be picked up by a sister GP practice within the Modality umbrella so patients can be seen.

We asked if patients feel they are listened to around their health needs?

The responses were:

- 7 patients answered Yes with one saying, "when you can access",
- 1 patient felt that they were not listened to by GP
- 3 patients felt somewhat

We asked what barriers do they face at the practice?

The responses were:

- 7 patients did not identify any barriers
- 4 patients did

Patient comments were:



"Appointments can be a problem"

"Still problem with appointments"

"Getting appointments with certain doctors"

"Can have a problem with appointments, told to ring back, but often has to have a phone consultation"

Patients' comments around positive and negative points to do with the practice

Positive(s) highlighted by patients:



"Good doctors"

"Staff know their roles"

"Friendly"

"Friendly helpful"

"Some people really nice"

"When I have been here, it has been good"

"Get called back, no issues with appointments"

"Availability"

Negative(s) highlighted by patients:

- 3 patients did not indicate that there any negatives
- 4 did not have a comment
- 4 did respond and commented:



"No appointments"

"Early appointments"

"Appointments"

"Train receptionists – can be rude"

We asked if they had choice of hospital if they are referred?

The responses were:

- 5 patients were offered a choice
- 3 patients did not answer
- 3 patients said they had not been offered a choice

We asked how the patients are notified of any changes by the practice?

The responses were:

- 8 of the patients informed us they receive text messages or a call
- 1 patient said no
- 1 patient had not heard of a Patient Reference Group (P.R.G.)
- 1 patient did not answer

We asked if the patients understood the information given and if they are able to ask questions or ask for explanations?

The responses were:

- 6 patients answered Yes
- 1 patient answered No
- 2 were recorded as not applicable

- 2 patients did not answer

We asked how are patients notified of any changes at the practice?

The responses were:

- 8 patients receive text messages from the practice
- 2 patients did not answer

We asked if the patient knew how to raise a concern or make a complaint?

The responses were:

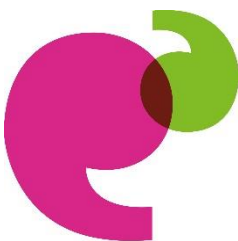
- 7 of the patients asked, said they knew how to make a complaint if they chose to
- 1 patient said that they had never complained
- 2 said they did not know how to make a complaint.
- 1 patient did not answer

We noted the process on how to make a complaint is on the patient notice board clearly marked for patients to see

We asked if the patient could change/improve anything what would it be?

The responses were:

- 3 patients commented that there could be more appointments available
- 1 patient commented that it would be good to see their own named doctor as they are very understanding
- 1 patient commented that it would be to have face to face consultations
- 1 patient had a concern about a receptionist being rude, which another patient overheard and agreed
- 4 other patients said they could not think of anything to change, 1 patient did not answer



“By and large, very well cared for”
“Can’t think of anything”

Staff interview

As the Practice Manager was on leave the day of the visit, we spoke to a senior staff member.

We asked if there was a Patient Reference Group (P.R.G.)?

We were told yes. It comprised of about 9 patients who meet approximately every 3 months. A ‘P.R.G.’ notice board contained last meeting notes, useful information, how to

join, etc. There were minutes of a meeting in January 2023, the last meeting was held 23/05/23 and those minutes were in draft status.

We asked what alternative services are offered to patients and how?

There is a pharmacy next to the service.

Alternative care pathways are:

- NHS 111, 999, Extra GP appointments, A&E, Walk In at the hospital.
- Mainly over the phone or in person. Information also available on the website.

We asked the staff to highlight any positives and negatives around the practice?

Positives:

- Multi-cultural patient base and has a good team with multilingual abilities to meet those needs
- Offer a large number of services
- Staff try and help patients
- Communication to patients can be by telephone, text and Accurx.

When certain language needs cannot be met they have access to an interpretation service, which can be booked, double appointments are booked to ensure there is enough time for the patients' needs to be met

Negatives:

No negatives were given

We asked how patients are given choice?

- Given choice of hospital, this may be due to differing hospital waiting times
- Use of interpreter services
- Offered a chaperone in some cases

We asked if the staff/practice encounter anti-social behaviour from patients/relatives and how they deal with it?

- Can issue patient 'Zero' tolerance letters
- Operates a 'Zero' tolerance policy
- Patients can be removed from patient list and sent to a 'special allocation service'

We asked how many telephone lines they have?

We were told that they have 3 staff answering calls. With up to 10 calls per line handling 30 calls at any one time. There is also a triage system on the telephone that the patient can use to get to the right service to meet their need. This may not always be to see a GP.

The practice also operates a patient 'Carer' and vulnerable person/patient list to prioritise those patient needs.

We asked how do staff educate/ inform patients about the person person/professional to see to meet their care needs?

- Practice website
- Initial patient triage
- Specialist visitors such as 'Social Prescribers'
- Specialist diabetic Nurse

We asked how does the practice update patients of any changes

- Notices in surgery
- Ringing patients (i.e. if appointments changed or cancelled)
- Texting
- Practice website

We asked a staff member if they could change one thing about the practice what would it be?

- We were told no changes needed to be made

Additional comments

We were told that 'Did Not Attend' (DNA) patients have been greatly reduced because of the telephone system operated. Also the use of text messaging for use such as reminders of appointments has played its part.

1 patient mentioned that referrals seem to take a 'very long time' they had been waiting since February 2023. *It was not clear whether this was to get a practice referral to another service or whether it was the service response time to see the patient?*

1 patient had turned up expecting to have tests, they were asked to come in a months' time, but they expected tests today. No reason given for delay.

Findings

- Most patients access the practice services as needed, some have conditions which require more checks
- Appointments are booked mainly via the phone, some use Accurx or both
- Patients are offered alternatives, care professionals or hospitals if referred
- Patients are given some choice
- The majority of patients do not know about Walsall 'Extra GP Appointments'
- 2 hand sanitiser units in the reception were not operating

- The use of texting patients seems to be a good and positive action for patients
- It was not clear on the range of services available at the practice to patients (website and at practice) link: <https://www.modalitypartnership.nhs.uk/pleck-medical-centre>
- Some patients thought that the only barriers to the service was getting an appointment, appointment with certain doctors, being told to call back to get an appointment
- There were a number of positives (see previous patient comments)
- Again the main negatives were getting appointments and one patient mentioned that receptionist can be rude (we did not observe on day)
- Most of the patients knew how to raise a concern or make a complaint if necessary
- Some patients felt that there could be more appointments available etc.
- There is a Patient Reference Group (P.R.G.) in place which meets regularly
- 1 patient questioned the waiting time of referrals
- 1 patient did not understand why tests were not carried out on the day they attended as they thought were going to be?

Recommendations

- Repair or reinstate hand gel dispensers in patient waiting area
- Although surgery offers additional GP appointments within their own Modality GP practices, the practice should consider informing patients of: Extra GP Appointments, Walsall Urgent Care etc to enable more availability and choice
- Monitor effectiveness of appointment handling, distribution, especially those that may require early appointments due to work or school drop off time restrictions
- Assess patient to reception staff interaction, consider displaying staff 'Thank You' cards in reception area so that patients can see the staffs' level of assistance
- Whilst the rubbish outside is not the fault of the practice, it may represent a health, trip hazard to visitors/patients. Cleaning of the area could be undertaken more frequently
- Provide more clarity of what services are delivered onsite and by whom so that patients can be navigated or ask to see the appropriate health professional to deliver that particular service

Provider feedback

- The TV were put up by PCT and the company life channel used to operate it but they went into liquidation and did not take the TVs back but we are in talks with ICB if they can be utilised as a calling system. Talks are in progress
- Hand gel Dispensers: Were put by a company but we are not able to get the appropriate refills for them hence they cannot be used. These will be removed. Stand-alone hand gels have been put in reception for patients

- Website : On the website under the services section, there is a link to the practice leaflet which gives all information regarding the services offered by the surgery. It has names of all the clinicians, nurses, HCA and the services that they offer
- Extended Access: Extended access appointments are provided by the PCN (primary Care Network) every day and patients are offered these extended appointments
- PRG: PRG meets up every 2nd month and the dates and minutes are put in reception for all patients to see. Patients are free to join the PRG
- Referrals: All referrals are dealt immediately by the secretary within a day or two and the patients are referred to secondary care as per clinician instructions. The waiting time at secondary care can be long and that is not in the control of the practice though we do chase them for patients but the wait time in secondary care is outside our control.
- Patient Blood Tests: At times patients come when they are not due for the blood test or come on the wrong date. Patient may have come on the wrong date but I agree that this should have been explained by the reception staff to the patient
- Appointments: Patient can also book telephone calls or Face to Face on-line, if they have online access.
- Seeing Dr of choice: As far as possible we offer the patients to see the doctor of their choice but there may be a longer wait for them to see the doctor of their choice as they may be fully booked. If patients are happy to wait to see a doctor of their choice it is their choice
- Call Back: With the online Triage system, patients can fill a form online by following a link. The telephone message gives them the option to press a number so that the link can go directly to their phone
- Rubbish around the building: The practice invests in getting the area around the building cleaned and cleared up of rubbish but it is difficult as being in a deprived area rubbish is dumped very often. The practice would be obliged if the Walsall Council is recommended to have the area cleared
- Staff being rude: All staff are given customer service training and they strive to provide the best customer service to the patients
- They go an extra mile to help the patients

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