

## Enter & View Report



# Chatham Street Surgery

121 Chatham Street, Reading, RG1 7JE

**Who:** 33 people completed a survey during two 'Enter and View' visits by Healthwatch Reading.

**When:** We visited 9-11am, Monday 25 November and 2-4pm, Tuesday 3 December 2019.

**Why?** We wanted to check patient experience following an inspection by the Care Quality Commission that found improvements were needed.

## Summary of survey findings

### Appointments

- 78% of the 33 people surveyed, booked that day's appointment by phone
- 52% of people were offered a same-day appointment
- 60% said they were recalled being seen on time (or within 10 minutes), during their last visit to the surgery
- 68% didn't know they could book routine GP appointments at evenings and weekends
- Most people (56%) said they would only book an appointment in the future during extended hours, if they had an urgent health issue

#### WAITING ROOM



### Clinical care

- 85% of people 'felt the doctor's surgery was the best place to go' and didn't seek advice from other services, beforehand
- 76% of people said the clinical care they got from doctors and nurses was 'good' or 'excellent' (55%, good, 21%, excellent)



### Reception



- 52% of people said they felt their last call to the surgery was answered in a reasonable amount of time
- 79% of people said help from receptionists was 'good' or 'excellent' (58% good, 21% excellent)

### Online services

- 24% of people said they were using online services to book appointments or order repeat prescriptions, but 36% said they preferred to deal with the surgery by phone or in person
- No people had booked that day's appointment online



## Feedback from extra comments in the survey

- Most comments related to problems getting through on the phone
- Single comments were received on a variety of other topics including hospital letter follow-up, the gender of doctors and helpfulness of staff

### *Selection of patient comments:*

*‘This morning I tried 25 times to call them.’*

*‘Lunchtime, took five attempts to get through.’*

*‘Very good surgery.’*

*‘Not enough lady doctors.’*

### Healthwatch Reading observations:

- Light and spacious reception area
- Posters up on noticeboards were helpfully arranged in topic sections (e.g. men’s health)
- The electronic screen in the waiting room included an invitation in four languages other than English for people to contact the receptionist if they needed an interpreter or translator
- Two local services promoted on the electronic screen had some out of date information, although the practice manager said these were being updated
- Posters about extended hours and online services were up in corridors, but not on noticeboards in waiting areas
- There is no lift in the building, but the manager said patients with limited mobility could be seen downstairs if required
- The receptionist told us that people can book on-the-day appointments and to see health care professionals other than GPs, using the online booking system
- Small car park at rear with seven spaces, unclear if any designated for disabled
- During our afternoon visit, GP appointments were not starting until 3.30pm
- We did not see any posters up inviting people to join the surgery’s patient participation group

### Chatham Street Surgery’s response to the observations:

- *At the time of the visit, the calling screen had only recently been reinstated some days ago, having been out of order due to a fault. The information was in the process of being updated and this was communicated to Healthwatch Reading.*
- *The noticeboards were being updated as part of the action plan, at the time of the visit; many posters had been removed and were being replaced with updated versions. The noticeboards in both waiting areas display current extended access information.*

- *The car park has a designated disabled place, with the markings updated recently.*
- *Posters for the PPG group are up in the waiting areas.*

### **Healthwatch Reading discussion and recommendations:**

Enter and View findings are only a snapshot of experience on the dates we visited. They are not a comprehensive judgement on the overall quality of a surgery.

We do believe, however, that they can help surgeries better understand what patients think of their services. The findings we collected at Chatham Street Surgery (set out in full in Appendix 2), suggest:

#### **Patient satisfaction with the quality of care and attitude of clinicians was good**

Our findings were similar to that of other experience measures: the Care Quality Commission’s most recent full inspection of the surgery, rated it as ‘good’ in the ‘caring’ category, while 77% of patients at the surgery told the most recent national GP Patient Survey (see background information in Appendix 2) that the last healthcare professional who saw them treated them with care and concern. However, this percentage was still lower than the local and national average score of 87%.

#### **Patients do not always find it easy to get through to the surgery on the phone**

This may have got worse since last measured. Only 52% of people told us their last call was answered in a reasonable amount of time (and some people volunteered extra comments on this topic), compared with the 70% of surgery patients who told the national GP Patient Survey that it was easy to get through on the phone.

#### **Helpfulness of reception staff may have decreased since last measured**

In our survey, 79% of people told us reception staff were helpful, compared with the 93% score recorded for the surgery in the national GP Patient Survey. The CQC’s last inspection also noted that the surgery had recently recruited reception staff who were not familiar with important patient safety information.

#### **There did not appear to be much evidence of patients being encouraged to sign to use online GP services**

The surgery has a relatively young population, who could be more familiar with using online services generally in other areas of their lives. However, only 24% of people told us said they had signed up to use online services, none had booked that day’s appointment online and 34% said they preferred to deal with the surgery in person.

Healthwatch Reading has recently worked with women from black and ethnic minority (BME) communities, who regularly use smartphones, to make them aware of, and help them, sign up to GP online services. One of the success factors appears to be helpful and trained reception staff who can assist patients.

## **Working age people might be missing out on convenient appointment times**

There was an overall low awareness (32%) among people we surveyed of the new extended hours scheme introduced from 1 October 2018 at all GP practices that lets people book an appointment up to 8pm on a weeknight and during the weekend. These may be offered at the patient’s own surgery or a neighbouring surgery via joint working between Reading doctors. It is interesting to note that more people thought they would use such appointments for urgent (56%) than routine (31%) issues.

## **Patients still see GPs as the default option for their health needs**

In our survey, 85% of people told us they didn’t seek help elsewhere before making their appointment. The NHS has been generally trying to encourage people to contact a local pharmacist or try calling 111 for advice on minor issues or if they are unsure whether they need to see a doctor.

## **More work appears to be needed on reducing delays for patients waiting to be seen after their appointment time**

In our surveyed, 21% of patients told us they recalled having to wait up to 30 minutes after their appointment time to be seen, the last time they visited the surgery and 18% said they waited longer than 30 minutes after the scheduled time.

This issue had been raised in the most recent CQC inspection report on the surgery.

## **Management of patient correspondence may need to be improved**

Two people volunteered extra comments in our survey about lack of communication about results. In the most recent CQC report, patient correspondence issues were also highlighted.

## **More could be done to keep patients involved and informed**

Healthwatch Reading notes that surgeries where we have collected very positive experiences in the past, tend to have good communication channels, such as regular surgery newsletters; ‘You said, we did’ posters on noticeboards; PPG meeting minutes on a noticeboard and the surgery website; Friends and Family Test results, comments and actions on a noticeboard and website; and open meetings and Q&A fact-sheets about major developments.

## **We recommend the practice tries to increase patient satisfaction, by:**

- encouraging more patients to sign up to GP online services
- improving telephone access to patients
- making more patients (especially working age) aware of extended hours and that these are routine appointments they can book in advance
- reducing the time people wait past their appointment time to be seen
- making patients more aware of how the surgery is responding to their feedback.

Based on some similar findings we have collected from other local GP surgery visits, we will also be recommending to Berkshire West CCG that it:

- launches a communications campaign that aims to make more local people across all surgeries aware of, and signed up to, GP online services
- explore what would motivate patients across all local surgeries, to seek health advice from other sources (such as apps, 111, pharmacists) before contacting their GP and tailor a communications campaign accordingly.

We thank the surgery staff for welcoming us on the visits and we hope the practice finds this report useful in developing South Reading services in the future

#### Chatham Street Surgery's comments on discussion and recommendations:

- *We have been monitoring the telephone lines for several months prior to the visit, due to concerns being raised by patients and have reported the issue to our telephone providers too; however, no faults have been detected.*
- *We have discovered that there is an increased volume of calls at certain times of the day, during which it is more difficult to get through. As a result, we have increased reception cover at peak hours to help cater to demand*
- *We have noticed that off peak, the telephones are very quiet and callers are able to get through with minimal waiting times. The practice has been promoting the off-peak times to patients, in an effort to divert callers to quieter times during the day.*
- *Additionally, in order to manage the incoming calls yet more precisely, the practice is investing in a new telephone system due for installation in the first quarter of the following year (when the current contract ends), which will display the call demographics, making it easier to reduce call waiting times.*
- *At the time of the CQC inspection earlier in 2019, the new staff had been in their roles for a period of 6 weeks only. They had completed training and were in the process of consolidating their knowledge. At the time of the HR visit, the staff were fully competent and capable in their roles. Our own in-house survey and the National Patient Survey both show much higher satisfaction. Additionally, we have 10+ examples of glowing verbal praise from patients specifically relating to the new reception team and their helpfulness. We are disappointed with the low satisfaction reported by patients.*
- *The practice actively encourages patients to use online services. The original national target of 10% practice population registered for Patient Online was met over a year ago, and currently 24% of patients are registered for online services - which is only slightly short of the next national target of 25%. The practice routinely registers all new patients for online services and we feel our efforts in this regard are demonstrably good.*
- *The practice actively advertises and promotes the extended availability, both online and via displays in the waiting areas as per CCG requirements. The working population which would most benefit from the extended access is the most difficult to target in this way. Our reception team actively offer extended appointments to callers unable to book during working hours.*

- *An audit (using data from EMIS) of all patients seen between the hours of 9am-11am on 25th November and 2pm-4pm on 3rd March showed the following:*
  - *The average waiting time to be seen from arrival, on 25th November, was 13 minutes*
  - *The average waiting time to be seen from arrival on 3rd December was 15 mins.*
  - *Out of 51 patients seen during the time of your visit, only 1 patient waited more than 30 mins, demonstrating that the figures from HR are in fact incorrect and we do not accept them. [Healthwatch Reading note: We asked patients to recall their waiting time on their last visit to the surgery, not the waiting time on the day we surveyed, as we usually survey patients while they’re waiting to be seen and they wouldn’t be able to answer this, at that point. We have explained this to the surgery but have yet to receive any further comment from them on this point].*
- *The surgery has robust document flow and management processes in place to deal with all types of follow ups. We do not accept that patient correspondence is not being managed appropriately.*
- *We are aware of patient expectations to be actively notified even in the event of normal results - which is not realistically feasible, nor is it standard practice within the NHS - and this is something we have been addressing with our patients on an ongoing basis. For months surgery policy is that patients should chase their results and a poster is present right by the counter to highlight this, as well as in various locations in the practice.*
- *The practice has faced challenges with a PPG group in the past and has finally established a working and proactive group. The agenda for our next meeting focuses heavily on communication and feedback and how this can be improved between the practice and patients.*

## Appendix 1: Background information

### About Healthwatch Reading

We are the local patient and public champion for NHS and social care services. We are independent of the NHS and Reading Borough Council. One way we collect feedback is by using our statutory ‘Enter and View’ powers to visit local services to survey people and observe the environment.

Our visits are agreed in advance and carried out by trained Healthwatch staff or volunteers. Our findings are a snapshot of patient experience at that point in time, rather than a comprehensive judgement on the surgery’s quality. Our visits are designed to help NHS organisations understand things patients think they do well or need to improve. Under NHS rules, organisations must provide a written response to Healthwatch findings.

### How do patients know if a GP surgery provides good care?

Various elements can help people understand the quality of their GP surgery:

- Patient feedback collected locally, such as surveys by independent local Healthwatch, or the NHS service itself via ‘Friends and Family’ surveys
- Patient feedback collected nationally about all surgeries in the yearly GP Patient Survey, published by NHS England
- Facts and figures about the surgery’s performance collected by Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group (BWCCG) to see whether the surgery is meeting its contractual obligations; the CCG might also run patient surveys
- Comprehensive inspections on the safety and quality of GP surgeries carried out on a rolling cycle by the Care Quality Commission, a national, independent body with significant legal powers to order services to make improvements.

Healthwatch Reading regularly meets with BWCCG and the CQC to share feedback with them or press for quality improvements at local services.

### About Chatham Street Surgery

Chatham Street Surgery is in a purpose-built centre in Reading town centre and has around 6,800 patients. It has a higher than average number of 25-34-year-old patients, and a diverse ethnic mix, including people who speak English as a second language.

There are five GPs, three male and two female. Three of the five are GP partners (‘owners’ and providers of the GP business) while two are long-term locums. Their working hours equate to 3.75 full-time GPs. There are also two practice nurses and two phlebotomists who take blood three GP partners and two long-term locum GPs.

Since July 2019, the surgery has been part of the Reading Central Primary Care Network, working with seven other GP surgeries. PCNs get extra government funding to hire new staff to help GPs cope with their workload and to deliver better care to patients through partnership working.

Chatham Street Surgery was most recently fully inspected by the CQC in February 2019. The CQC checks surgeries in five areas: whether they are ‘safe’, ‘effective’, ‘caring’, ‘responsive’, and ‘well-led’ and then gives them an overall rating. The surgery was rated ‘good’ for being safe, caring and responsive and ‘requires improvement for being effective and well-led, leading to an overall quality rating of ‘requires improvement’. A follow-up inspection in July 2019 found:

- ‘the practice did not have clear systems, practices and processes to keep people safe and safeguarded from abuse
- there were gaps in systems to assess, monitor and manage risks to patient safety
- the practice was unable to demonstrate that staff had the skills, knowledge and experience to carry out their roles
- the practice did not have clear and effective processes for managing risks, issues and performance’.

In the latest results from the annual national GP Patient Survey, published in July 2019, the surgery was meeting or exceeding the average score for GP surgeries in Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire, for six questions, but it was below the local average for the survey’s remaining 12 questions.

Latest results for the ‘Friends and Family Test’, for the month of October 2019, show Chatham Street Surgery as having no data available. We checked and also found no data for the surgery for September or August, suggesting that the surgery is not actively promoting the survey to patients or is not submitting data it has collected, to NHS England.

## Appendix 2

**Full survey results. All answer options are listed in order of highest to lowest number of respondents for the answer options.**

### 1. How did you make this appointment today?

Total respondents: 32, 1 skipped

- **Phoned the surgery: 78.13% (25 people)**
- **Booked it in person: 21.88% (7)**
- **Booked it online e.g. on a smartphone, tablet or computer: 0%**
- **It was booked for me by the NHS 111 helpline: 0%**

### 2. How far in advance did you have to make this appointment?

Total respondents: 33

- **I contacted the surgery today and was offered an urgent appointment: 36.36% (12 people)**
- **This appointment was available within a week of first trying to book it: 24.24% (8)**
- **Other: 18.18% (6)**
- **I contacted the surgery today and was offered a routine appointment: 15.15% (5)**
- **This appointment was available within two days of first trying to book it: 3.03% (1)**
- **This appointment was available within two weeks of trying to book it: 3.03% (1)**

Note than the ‘other’ comments, included:

- two that said appointments had been arranged/rearranged by the practice rather than actively booked by the patient
- one person said ‘follow-up’
- one person said ‘week in advance’
- one person said ‘blood test’
- one answer was unclear in its meaning.

### 3. Before booking this appointment, did you seek health advice from somewhere else?

Total respondents: 33

- **No, I felt the doctor’s surgery was the best place to go: 84.85% (28)**
- **Yes, other: 6.06% (2)**
- **Yes, from a pharmacy: 6.06% (2)**
- **Yes, from the NHS 111 helpline: 3.03% (1)**

*Note the two ‘other’ comments said ‘hospital’ and ‘private’ health care professionals*

**4. Thinking about your experience of this surgery since the beginning of 2019, how would you describe the quality of care you receive from doctors or other clinicians?**

Total respondents: 33

- Good: 54.55% (18)
- Excellent: 21.21% (7)
- Okay: 18.18% (6)
- Poor: 6.06% (2)
- Other: 0%

**5. Thinking about your experience of this surgery since the beginning of 2019, how would you describe the helpfulness of receptionists/administration staff?**

Total respondents: 33

- Good: 57.58% (19)
- Excellent: 21.21% (7)
- Okay: 15.15% (5)
- Poor: 3.03% (1)
- Other: 3.03% (1)

The 'other' comment states: *'Very variable.'*

**6. Thinking about the last time you phoned the surgery, did you feel your call was answered in a reasonable amount of time?**

Total respondents: 33

- Yes: 51.52% (17)
- No: 18.18% (6)
- Other: 30.30% (10)

The 10 other comments were

*'Room improvement (reasonable).'*

*'Less about the time taken more about the lack of helpfulness /efficiency.'*

*'Probably about 5 mins.'*

*'This morning I tried 25 times to call them.'*

*'Lunchtime, took 5 attempts to get through.'*

*'No unless you call @8am you want to get an appointment as they will have ran out and at this you can be on hold/ in a queue for an extended period (30 minutes is the longest in my experience).'*

*'No, not too long.'*

*'No, on hold for 7 mins.'*

*'It took 10-20 min.'*

*'Only sometimes.'*

**7. Thinking about the last time you visited the surgery for an appointment, how long did you wait from your appointment time to be seen by the doctor/nurse/clinician?**

Total respondents: 33

- I was seen on time: 30.30% (10)
- I was seen within 10 minutes of my booked time: 30.30% (10)
- I was seen within 30 minutes: 21.21% (7)
- I had to wait longer than 30 minutes: 12.12% (4)
- Other: 6.06% (2)

Two people gave extra comments:

*'45mins wait.'*

*'With the nurse is on time, with doctor more than an hour.'*

**8. Did you know that you can book appointments and repeat prescriptions online?**

Total respondents: 33

- No, I prefer to deal with the surgery by phone or in person: 36.36% (12)
- Yes, I have already signed up and use these online services: 24.24% (8)
- Yes, but I haven't signed up yet: 24.24% (8)
- No, but I am interested in finding out more: 12.12% (4)
- Other: 3.03% (1)

The one 'other' comment was 'don't use online'.

**9. Did you know that you can now book routine GP appointments until 8pm weekdays or at weekends (although you might have to be seen at a different doctor's)?**

Total respondents: 31, 2 skipped

- No: 67.74% (21)
- Yes: 32.26% (10)

**10. In the future, would you book a GP appointment in the evening or weekend? Tick as many as apply.**

Total respondents: 32, 1 skipped

- Yes, but only for an urgent issue: 56.25% (18)
- Yes, I would find it a convenient option for non-urgent health problems: 31.25% (10)
- Yes, but only if I could be seen at my own surgery: 9.38% (3)
- Yes, but only if I could see a doctor I know: 9.38% (3)
- No, normal day-time hours suit me: 9.38% (3)

- Other: 6.25% (2)
- No, I think doctors deserve time off from non-urgent work: 3.13% (1)

In the other comments, one person said, ‘yes, maybe’, and the other answer said: ‘was told to ring next morning @8.00’.

#### 11. Any other feedback?

Ten people gave extra feedback, five of which were negative comments, one positive, three where the meaning was unclear and one person who stated ‘none’.

The positive comment stated: ‘Very good surgery’.

The negative comments included:

*‘We are in the process of thinking about changing surgeries. Letters are not followed up from consultants and despite being here for 30yrs it is like the first time everytime.’*

*‘Not enough lady doctors.’*

*‘I was late to the doctors due to the car park being full. I checked in late the Dr kept me waiting for 1 hr cos I was 10mins late, due to waiting at reception to be signed in. Not happy at all.’*

*‘I am NEVER contacted by the surgery when they receive letters from hospital consultants or blood tests (or other medical test) results.’*

*‘Been told to ring 8am next morning and book takes a long time to answer phone, not good.’*

Other comments included:

*‘This surgery has been looking after my family and I since 2000.’*

#### Demographics for survey respondents

- 97% of respondents (31) said they were the patient; one person was a ‘carer/friend/relative
- Age breakdown: 28% (7) were aged 35-44; 20% (5) were 55-64; 16% (4) were 25-34; 16% (4) were 65-74; 12% (3) were 45-54; 4% (1) was 75-84; and 4% (1) was aged 85+. Eight respondents did not answer this question
- Asked about gender, 52% (14) said they were men, 44% (12) said they were women and the rest did not answer
- Of the 22 people who answered about their ethnicity, 27% (6) said they were White British; 27% (6) said ‘Other’ (self describing as Asian (3), Black British (1), Bangladeshi (1), and British Filipino (1)); 23% (5) said Indian; 9% (2) said Pakistani, 9% (2) said Black Caribbean and 5% (1) said Black African
- 80% (8) said they did not have a disability, 20% (2) said they did.