



Enter & View

Leatside Health Centre

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1 Introduction

1.1 Details of visit

Service provider	Leatside Health Centre
Service Address	Forth Noweth, Redruth, TR15 1AU
Date and time	19 th of November 2024 9am–12pm
Authorised representatives	Abi Harding-White Sandy Spence

1.2 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Cornwall would like to thank patients and staff for their positive contribution to this Enter and View visit and the subsequent report.

1.3 Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date above and is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all patients and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time of the visit.

2 What is Enter and View?

As a local Healthwatch we are authorised to “Enter and View” health and social care services through the following legislation;

- Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
- Local Authorities Regulations 2013 (part 4)

These services can include hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists, and pharmacies.

The goal of Enter and View is to see services in action and understand the experiences of individuals who use them. It is an opportunity for us to observe service delivery, listen to the views of the people using health and social care services and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement.

Enter and View visits are organised based on feedback received about individual services, in response to themes identified in our research, or when services have a good reputation enabling us to share examples of best practice from the perspective of people who experience the service first-hand.

Healthwatch Cornwall Enter and Views are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit, they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies. If at any time an authorised representative observes anything that they feel uncomfortable about they inform their lead who will inform the service manager, ending the visit.

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

2.1 Purpose of visit

- To observe the nature and quality of service facilities
- To observe how people experience the service
- To gather views from patients and staff on the service
- To learn about the provision of mental health services in primary care if possible

2.2 Strategic drivers

Healthwatch Cornwall is an independent organisation committed to amplifying the voices of Cornwall's residents in the planning and delivery of health and social care services. Through public engagement, we gather their views and experiences with these services. We ensure these perspectives are represented in decision-making processes both locally and nationally, driven by the belief that community feedback is vital to improving standards of care.

This phase of Enter and View visits was initiated in response to feedback from service users of GP practices across Cornwall. Our goal was to observe these services in action and hear directly from patients about their experiences. Where possible, these visits also aimed to explore mental health service provision in primary care, contributing to our broader research on access to mental health care in the region.

2.3 Methodology

This was an announced visit, and we worked with the practice to organise the date and time of the visit. We sent an initial email explaining the role of Healthwatch Cornwall, what Enter and View is, the purpose of the visit, and a proposed date and time for the visit to take place. We sent a further email confirming the agreed details of the visit and included a formal letter, Enter and View notice and a general Healthwatch Cornwall poster.

The Enter and View officer conducted the visit between 9am and 12pm in the main waiting area. When engaging with patients, the authorised representatives began by introducing themselves and explaining their role. They then asked if the patient would be willing to share their experiences of the practice, ensuring that any feedback provided would remain anonymous in the subsequent report.

In addition, we were able to speak with the practice manager. We also made observations regarding the quality of the facilities and patient experience of the service, including their interactions with staff.

3 Findings

3.1 Overview

Leatside Health Centre formed following the merge of two practices; Clinton Road and Manor Surgery in 2021. The practice has around 16,800 patients.

The practice uses a total triage system to prioritise patient care. Appointments can be accessed through the online Klinik system, but the reception team is available to assist with

bookings if needed. Patients with internet access are encouraged to use Klinik to keep phone lines free for those without online access.

3.2 Practice Observations

The practice is located in the centre of Redruth and is a short walk from the high street. It is close to bus routes and has a car park with disabled bays at the top of the slope near the entrance to the building. It was observed before and after the visit that a number of elderly patients were struggling to walk up and down the slope as the disabled bays were occupied.

The building has step free access throughout, a disabled toilet with baby changing facilities and a hearing loop. The practice seemed to have a welcoming atmosphere with the radio playing, book corner and suggestion box. There was an information screen, however, this was not in operation during the visit. Clear and informative signs were displayed on the walls throughout the practice to ensure patients were well-informed.

The practice team was observed as welcoming and supportive. The receptionist was direct yet friendly when assisting patients. One doctor greeted a patient with a smile when calling them in, while another doctor showed patience when waiting for a patient who was hard of hearing and greeted them warmly. The nurse was considerate, allowing a patient to finish speaking with the authorised representative, but to support smooth service delivery, the representative concluded the conversation so the patient could attend their appointment.

3.3 Summary of Feedback

Patient feedback indicated that overall experience with the practice has been positive and that patients appreciate the personable practice team. However, the feedback identified that communication could be improved to ensure patients know their appointment times and how to use the online system. Patients, particularly older patients, face a challenge in the physical location of the practice with needing to walk up the slope when disabled parking is not available.

We were able to speak with the practice manager during the visit and this conversation provided insights into the practice's strengths and challenges.

3.4 Patient Feedback

We heard from eleven patients about their experiences with the practice. Of those from whom we were able to gather demographic information, six identified as female and five as male. Three were White Cornish, four White British and one White Other. The largest age groups were 80+ and 65-79, with three patients in each, followed by 50-64 and 18-24 with one patient in each.

All patients interviewed expressed a positive or neutral view of their overall experience at the practice. A patient shared that they appreciated the surgery was always warm. One patient,

however, rated the practice environment negatively due to the slope leading up to the building. While other patients noted the accessibility challenges posed by the slope, it did not affect their overall opinion of the practice.

The hill leading up to the surgery is a common concern for patients, with several mentioning the difficulty of walking up the slope. One patient felt the hill and parking area were poorly designed, making access challenging. However, another noted that parking is generally good, even during roadworks. One patient was able to park at the top of the hill, though they noted that when they must park at the bottom, the walk up can be time-consuming.

Patients have mixed experiences with the Klinik system. Some find it challenging, one patient noting that it is not always available and that receiving a call back from the practice can be difficult if they are not near their phone, while another patient experienced that it is easier to visit the practice in person. However, a further patient thought that the online booking system made it easier to schedule appointments.

The vaccination service held in the building opposite is praised for being efficient, with one patient finding the staff very helpful when rebooking and a further patient being seen within two minutes of joining the queue. However, the same patient expressed frustration that the vaccination was expected to be administered at home due to a fall and this didn't materialise, with no updates provided.

Overall, patients report a mix of experiences with booking appointments. Many find it easy to get an appointment with one appreciating that the onward referral process is straightforward and another noting that patients receive a callback from the practice soon after submitting the form to confirm appointments. However, a couple of patients expressed that the phone wait times can be long, with one patient noting a half-hour wait. The practice is proactive in contacting patients for routine appointments and keeps in touch through email, text reminders, and the NHS app. However, there have been frustrations, such as one patient not hearing back after reporting a fall in September and having to follow up multiple times to schedule an appointment. Additionally, another patient had an appointment cancelled by the practice and was rebooked for the following day.

Two patients had difficulties with their appointments, both related to scheduling over the phone. One patient arrived an hour late and missed their appointment, possibly due to forgetting the time, while another was unsure about the correct time and therefore arrived early to avoid being late. The patient who missed their appointment expressed that the practice staff were very helpful in making them another appointment and writing the details down to help them remember.

Patients generally shared positive experiences of interacting with the practice team, with one describing staff as brilliant and another stressing the importance that patients show respect to the team in return. Receptionists were described as polite and helpful. One patient appreciated that clinicians provide clear answers to concerns, allowing care to progress smoothly, but suggested follow-ups for ongoing treatment could be better organised. A further

patient described doctors as attentive, and another patient praised the quality of care their partner received. A patient successfully obtained milk for their child and felt confident that children are seen promptly when needed. Staff were also described as helpful with prescriptions.

3.5 Staff Feedback

The practice Patient Participation Group (PPG) is heavily involved in the practice activities and they are helping to positively transform the community's perception of practice services. The practice excels in reaching and supporting individuals with depression, anxiety, and long-term health conditions who may not regularly visit, ensuring they feel valued and included. Additionally, the practice is committed to educating the public, actively raising awareness and sharing important health information to benefit the wider community.

The practice identifies its strengths in maintaining a resilient and supportive team, even during a challenging year. The partners and salaried GPs are approachable, genuinely invested in staff well-being, and consistently available to support the entire team. A key improvement has been reducing the number of appointments per GP to 25 per day, which has positively impacted staff well-being while allowing clinicians to spend more quality time with patients. The triage system ensures that all patient needs are assessed, offering multiple access points for assessment, all overseen by a GP. The practice also fosters a strong learning culture, emphasising continuous development and improvement.

The practice faces challenges, particularly with high levels of health anxiety, which contribute to increased demand for services. On Mondays alone, the practice receives between 350 and 550 requests for clinician appointments, with a dedicated clinician triaging these requests throughout the day to manage patient care effectively. The complexity of medical concerns has also risen, prompting the practice to take collective action to manage these demands.

Rising operational costs present further strain, with an increase of £74,000 driven by higher national insurance contributions and adjustments to the national living wage. Additionally, funding remains a challenge, as the NHS assumes that 60% of funds go to wages, while this practice allocates 90%, which has increased by 7.4%.

The practice is also in need of a new building due to limited space and secondary care services seem to be shifting more tasks back onto primary care. Staff have also observed a rise in physical aggression from patients, further impacting the working environment. There are limited community services, with a notable example being a mental health service that opened but closed within three days after reaching full capacity, emphasising the gap in community care support.

4 Recommendations

The visit was overall a positive one and Healthwatch Cornwall have offered some recommendations based on observations and feedback from patients.

- Display safeguarding information clearly throughout the practice, guiding patients on where to go if they have concerns.
- The current booking process by phone may be causing confusion, highlighting the importance of additional reminders and/or additional methods of reminding patients about appointments, particularly those without mobile phones or internet access to receive the standard text reminders.
- Explore methods to educate patients on how the service operates including how to use the Klinik system, potentially through a patient handbook or with support from the patient participation group.
- Consider whether the parking bays near the entrance could be reserved for patients with the greatest need or provide those patients with a number to request assistance.
- Review written materials, such as leaflets and posters, to ensure they are available in Easy Read formats where necessary.

5 Provider Response

Healthwatch Cornwall did not receive a response to the report from the provider.

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