



Elm Tree Surgery
Enter and View Report
November 2017



Introduction

Local Healthwatches have been set up across England to create a strong, independent consumer champion with the aim to:

- Strengthen the collective voice of citizens and communities in influencing local health and social care services to better meet their needs.
- Support people to find the right health and social care services for them by providing appropriate information, advice and signposting.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees works with local people, patients, service users, carers, community groups, organisations, service providers and commissioners to get the best out of local health and social care services. This doesn't just mean improving services today but influencing and shaping services to meet the needs of the local communities tomorrow.

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees is steered by a Board of volunteers, commissioned by the Local Authority and accountable to the public. Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees are the only non-statutory body whose sole purpose is to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak-out on their behalf.

Healthwatch has:

- The statutory right to be listened to; Providers and Commissioners must respond to Healthwatch within 20 days of submission of requests for information or reports.
- The statutory power to Enter & View publicly funded health and social care services.

A statutory seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

What is Enter & View?

Enter & View visits are conducted by a small team of trained volunteers, mainly accompanied by trained staff. The 'Authorised Representatives' conduct visits to any identified publicly-funded health or social care premises, to see and hear how people experience the service, and to observe the quality the service being provided. These visits enable Healthwatch to develop an understanding about the service and make recommendations for improvement. The visit also provides the opportunity to identify ways in which "best" practice can be shared.

An Enter & View is an opportunity for any Local Healthwatch to:

- Enter publicly-funded health and social care premises to see and hear first-hand experiences about the service.
- Observe how the service is delivered, often by using a themed approach.
- Collect the views of service users (patients and residents) at the point of service delivery.
- Collect the views of carers, relatives and staff.
- Observe the nature and quality of services.
- Collect evidence-based feedback.
- Report to providers, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Local Authorities, Clinical Commissioners, Healthwatch England and other relevant partners.

Enter & View is not an inspection, it offers an independent layperson's perspective.

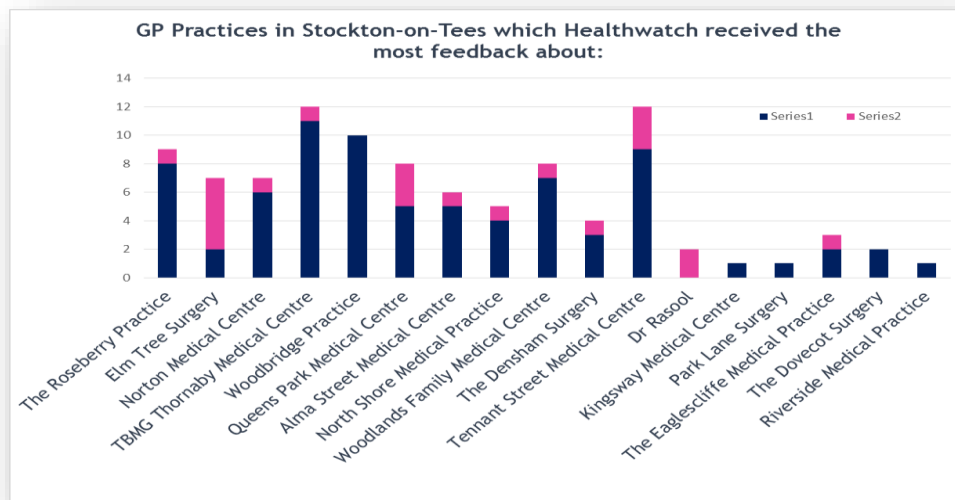
Enter & View visits are normally carried out as 'announced visits' where arrangements are made between the Healthwatch team and the service provider. However, if circumstances dictate, an 'unannounced' visit can take place.

Enter & View visits are carried out if people tell us there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation; therefore allowing us to learn about and share examples of what they do well, from the perspective of people who experience the services first hand.

Rationale

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees (HWS) received an overwhelming volume of feedback regarding access to and service provision of primary care services in the area throughout 2016. This feedback contains comments, concerns and praise for a number of GP surgeries in Stockton-on-Tees and informed the GP analysis report HWS published in October 2016. Feedback from the public continues to be captured by HWS. The positive responses and evidence to suggest some practices are delivering a quality service has led to HWS conducting an Enter and View at Elm Tree Surgery, to gather further evidence of this and share best practice with other providers in the locality.

The graph below is from the analysis of GP service feedback report 2016¹ demonstrates the positive feedback received, highlighted in pink.



Methodology

HWS regularly carry out engagement activities in Stockton-on-Tees including; drop-in session in various locations, holding stalls at community events, visiting community groups in the Borough and engaging with project leads from a variety of organisations. This engagement work has been the primary source for gathering patient feedback on their views and experiences of primary care services. HWS talked to the Practice Manager, staff, family and patients, on 2 separate occasions to gather feedback on their experiences. In addition HWS researched the information available on Elm Tree Surgery's website² and the NHS Choices website³. A face-to-face survey⁴ was carried out by the HWS team with patients. A survey⁵ was also given to staff members.

¹ See appendix 1

² See appendix 2

³ See appendix 3

⁴ See appendix 4

⁵ See appendix 5

Objectives

- To gather information on the service provided at Elm Tree Surgery from patients, family, carers, staff, the surgery website and NHS Choices website.

Information on Elm Tree Surgery

Date of Enter and View: Thursday 30th November and Wednesday 13th December 2017.

Practice Manager: Glynis McCartney

Current Number of Patients Registered: 3787

Practice Contact Details: 51 Westbury Street, Thornaby , Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland, TS17 6NP

Opening Hours:

Monday - Wednesday: 8am-6pm

Thursday: 8am-1pm

Friday: 8am-6pm

Saturday & Sunday: Closed

Number of GPs	2 (1 male, 1 female)
Number of Nurses	2
Number of Healthcare Assistants	1
Number of Receptionists	9

Services Provided	Specialised Clinics
Anti-Coagulation monitoring	Diabetic
Minor surgery and joint injections	Coronary heart disease(CHD) Hypertension
Counselling	Asthma
Non NHS work/private sector services	Flu vaccination
	Phlebotomy

Observations

Elm Tree Surgery is located in small purpose built premises in Thornaby. The Practice Manager informed HWS that plans to move the surgery are confirmed and the surgery will move to Thornaby's old library premises in 2018. Due to lack of space the surgery is using a portacabin to the rear of the premises, for additional administration facilities.

The HWS team had a warm welcome from the reception staff and Practice Manager on the days of the Enter & View visits.

The waiting area is very small, with 16 seats. Although tight for pushchairs to manoeuvre and wheelchair access would be difficult, the surgery has an atmosphere that is welcoming and homely, light and bright with a suitably positioned TV screen. The screen advertises a number of appropriate information items, in line with Public Health Campaigns, such as smoking, alcohol, asthma in children and fractures.

HWS noted the information rotating on the screen had many more items than other practices they had visited. The TV screen is also used as an alert to patients for their consultation, this again is a superior system to other surgeries HWS has visited. The message is a clear visual one, highlighting the patients name and doctor they will see. This system also calls the patient's name. However, the sound can be drowned out by the other noise in the small waiting area, if it is busy.

HWS noted that there were no ringing telephones in the reception area which contributed to creating a calm relaxed atmosphere in the waiting area. On the first day of the Enter & View visit, the surgery had 4 reception and administration staff working; 2 on the front desk and 2 in the portacabin. The Practice Manager informed HWS that 15 patients had transferred from Stockton NHS Healthcare Centre at Tithebarn House, which had recently closed. She also informed the team that GP's working at Elm Tree Surgery will always extend daily appointments if patient demand is high.

The surgery does not have a Nurse Practitioner at the moment however, they are hoping to recruit one as well as 1 additional nurse.

New patients are registering on a regular basis at Elm Tree Surgery and the Practice Manager informed HWS that if a patient has attended the surgery for many years, and moves out of the area, the practice will continue to see the patient, but not conduct home visits.

In the waiting area information literature was relevant, and although there were minimal advertisements displayed, HWS felt that this contributed to ensuring the messages given were powerful and would be noticed by patients.

Displayed posters included a non-attendance notice, which highlighted that approximately 134 appointments are wasted each month, a failure to attend (DNA)

for 3 or more appointments may result in being removed from the practice and a poster advertising a chaperone service for patients during consultations.

During the Enter & View visit the Practice Manager came to see how the HWS team were getting along. During discussions it was evident that the Practice Manager has built up very good relationships with many of the patients. One patient engaged in conversation within our discussion, and the Practice Manager made reference to this particular patient's family member. This evidences the longevity of the relationships and good service the Practice Manager and her team have built, over a number of years.

Elm Tree Practice Website⁶

The surgery provides a clear, concise and up-to-date website, with a number of features to ensure information for patients is easily accessible. An example of this is a scrolling bulletin which has a variety of things advertised, such as reminders for patients to update their contact details, 'do you want to stop smoking?' information, holiday opening times, and that the practice are currently registering new patients.

Useful telephone numbers are advertised on the website which include Samaritans, NSPCC and NE Family Health Service Agency. Also, local hospital numbers and out-of-hour's service information is available.

Elm Tree Surgery hold Patient Participation Groups (PPG) meetings on a quarterly basis, these are advertised on the website with accessible reports and links to surveys to gather patient feedback.

Patient Feedback **Text in pink are quotes from patients*

22 patients completed a survey⁷ with the HWS team. HWS asked patients how easy they felt it was to make an appointment at the surgery, 82% said very easy and 18% said easy.

80% rated the booking system for making appointments 'Very Good', 20% of patients rated this 'Good'.

86% of patients spoken to, had booked their appointment on the same day, or had waited 1-2 days.

⁶ See appendix 2

⁷ See appendix 4

21 patients commented on what they liked about the surgery and these can be seen below;

‘The staff are friendly and helpful’

‘You never have to wait long for an appointment’

‘It’s easy to get an appointment’ Four participants commented on this.

‘The staff are nice and it’s easy to get an appointment’

‘Walking distance, easy to get appointments’

‘Easy to book appointment, everyone is friendly, close to where I live-accessible’

‘4 years - everything is not long to appointment and staff are very good, my English is not good’

‘Close to where I live’

‘Easy to get same day appointment - easy to get to/lives close by’

‘Close to home, all good in here’

‘Easy to get app - Dr’s are good’

‘Friendly, it’s fairly easy to get to from Stockton’

‘The fact that you can get in to see a GP when needed. In Woodbridge before and had to wait 3-4 weeks (I live over the road from Woodbridge) been at Elm Tree 4-6 weeks’

‘Phone the day before to make sure you get a next day appointment - text reminder service’

‘+40 years easy to book apps patient called this morning and had an appointment by 10am’

‘Staff are friendly, make it nice to talk to them’

‘Usually you can get appointment few days’

HWS asked patients how the practice could be improved and received 19 responses which are listed below;

‘Larger surgery/parking places’

‘Space is tight, has pushchair and there's little room for it’

‘Nothing I can think of at the moment - everything has been fantastic’

‘Dr - more research into the condition’

‘Bigger premises it's a bit crowded when prams need to be in. Got no complaints even from when it was in Stockton’

‘Happy with it - not long registered here - Woodbridge before’

‘Only been here a bit Woodbridge practice - forever but children and wait for 3 weeks and had to go to A & E Receptionists aren't as friendly at Woodbridge, they are lovely in here’

‘Space - but it's moving over the road’

‘All positive’

‘The place is small’

‘Would be nice to have online booking system’

‘If anything a bit claustrophobic in the building, especially in the waiting room’

‘A nicer waiting room’

‘A bigger waiting room. (Note the patient was informed that the surgery was moving over the road)’

5 patients commented, ‘No’

The NHS Choices website⁸ offers information on all practices, nationally. Individual practices are responsible for updating the information on NHS choices; Elm Tree Surgery are providing accurate and current information on the site. 94% of patients have recommended the surgery via the NHS choices website.

⁸ See appendix 3

NHS choices website most recent feedback is below;

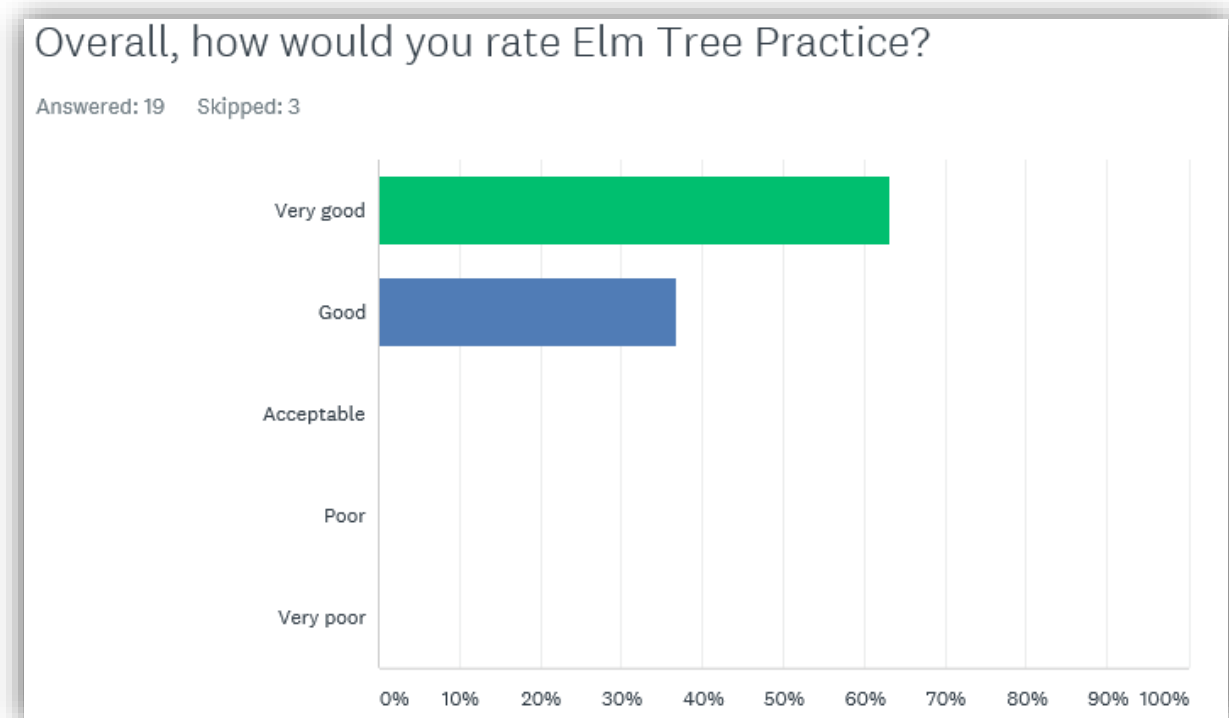
Latest reviews of this gp practice

★★★★★

Brilliant doctors
I had an awful pain in my side, rang Elm Tree Medical Centre and got booked in straight away. The doctor seen me and felt my stomach and ...

1 October 2017

63% of patients HWS spoke to rated the service at Elm Tree as 'Very good', with 37% rating it 'Good'.



Staff Feedback

9 staff members completed a survey⁹ to feedback their experience of working at Elm Tree Practice. Most staff members have worked at the surgery for over 2 years, with 2 who took part in the survey being employed there for over 10 years. Positive feedback was received from all staff participating in the survey, with a common theme of staff being friendly and working well as a team. Other feedback included the supportiveness of GP's and 1 staff member commented that they felt

⁹ See appendix 5

the practice provided a good service to patients which is shown through the patient feedback they receive.

Elm Tree staff were asked to provide the top 3 compliments they or a colleague had received about the practice. The comments can be read below.

‘Caring, listening to patients and having time for patients’

‘Good appointment system’

‘Friendly service- better than our nearest GP- they say’

‘Friendly and helpful staff’

‘Able to get an appointment on a daily basis’

‘Appointment availability’

‘Very easy to get an appointment to get an appointment within 24 hours’

‘Get appointment on same day’

HWS asked staff what they would like to improve about the surgery if they could? 8 responded by highlighting that the premises/waiting area was too small however, the plans for the new premises are confirmed for 2018.

Conclusion

Evidence from the consistent positive feedback HWS received serves to highlight the high standard of service patients are receiving at the practice. Although the surgery had recently supported the Stockton NHS Healthcare Centre at Tithebarn House, which reduced their resources at Elm Tree for a number of months, this did not appear to effect the quality of service Elm Tree patients received during that time.

The Practice Manager’s interaction with the patients, during HWS’s visit, shows how she has built up good rapport with patients; offering a more personal customer service approach with patients. The wider team also shows this in their interaction with patients and it is evident that patients value this quality service. Patient feedback is evidenced on the surgery’s website¹⁰ and during HWS discussions with patients all spoken to had been fully informed of the move to new premises for 2018.

¹⁰ See appendix 2

HWS received outstanding feedback regarding access to appointments and the booking system, in contrast to other GP surgery's HWS have visited. Patients were given 5 options for rating these elements of the service, all patients rated the ease of making an appointment as 'Very Easy' or 'Easy', and the system for booking appointments as 'Very Good' or 'Good'.

It is evident that some patients have transferred to Elm Tree Surgery due to not being happy with their practice. Their feedback praised the service as being superior to their previous practice; especially in terms of access to appointments and the booking system.

HWS have noted some practices within the locality do not regularly update the NHS Choices website¹¹. Elm Tree Surgery however, have up-to-date information on NHS Choices with evidence of the surgery being highly recommend by patients. Feedback from staff members highlights their commitment to ensuring effective team work and maintaining positive working relationships with all members of staff in the surgery.

Recommendation

HWS recommend that the CCG share this report with all practices in the Borough as an example of good practise.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees would like to acknowledge special thanks to the Practice Manager and staff at Elm Tree Surgery for their full support and cooperation in the facilitation of our visit. Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees would also like to thank the patients who contributed to this work by providing their views and experiences of Elm Tree Surgery.

Response from the Practice Manager at Elm Tree Surgery

The Practice Manager responded, informing HWS that the staff team at Elm Tree Surgery were very pleased with the report. The following response was also gratefully received.

"All staff at Elm Tree Surgery pride themselves on our commitment to giving the highest quality of care available to our patients. The whole team is very responsive to patient's needs with regards to access of appointments. The appointments are monitored by the GP's at least 2 hourly to ensure that we have enough capacity to cope with demand and if needed the surgery

¹¹ See appendix 3

appointments will be extended on the same day. All emergency request appointments are seen on the same day as well as all young children.

We have a well-trained and motivated practice team, which helps to make it easy and convenient for our patients to access a GP or nurse when they need them, as patient health is a major priority.

Chronic disease management is monitored on a regular basis, we have a very good re-call system to ensure that all patients are seen at least on an annual basis

The practice operates within an ethical framework with openness and transparency.”

Appendices

Appendix 1

<http://www.healthwatchstocktonontees.co.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/AnalysisGPdatareport.pdf>


Appendix 2

<http://www.elmtreepractice.nhs.uk/about-us,53337.htm>

Appendix 3

<https://www.nhs.uk/Services/GP/Overview/DefaultView.aspx?id=36728>

Appendix 4



Elm Tree Surgery Patient Survey

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees have received positive feedback about Elm Tree Surgery, and we would like to share this 'best practice' with other surgeries in the locality. Please take a few moments to tell us about your experiences at the practice. This information will help to inform and shape future service provision.

1. How easy is it to make an appointment at this practice?

- Very easy
- Easy
- Relatively easy
- Difficult
- Very difficult

2. How long did you wait to get your appointment today?

- Booked today
- 1-2 days
- 3-7 days
- 10 day - 2 weeks
- 3 weeks
- 4 weeks or more

3. How would you rate the system for booking appointments?

- Very good
- Good
- Acceptable
- Poor
- Very poor

4. Please tell us what you like about this GP practice:

5. How could your experience of using this practice be improved?

6. Overall, how would you rate Elm Tree Practice?

- Very good
- Good
- Acceptable
- Poor
- Very poor

Appendix 5

healthwatch
Stockton-on-Tees

Elm Tree Surgery Staff Survey

Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees have received positive feedback about Elm Tree Surgery, and we would like to share this 'best practice' with other surgeries in the locality. Please take a few moments to tell us about your experience of working at the practice. This information will help to inform and shape future service provision.

1. What is your role at the surgery?

- Doctor
- Practice Nurse
- Nurse
- HCA
- Receptionist
- Phlebotomist
- Other (please specify)

2. What is your length of service?

- Under 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 5-7 years
- 7-10 years
- Over 10 years

3. What are the top 3 compliments you, or your colleagues, have received about the surgery?

1.	
2.	
3.	

4. Please tell us what you like about working at Elm Tree Surgery:

5. Please tell us 1 thing that you feel would improve patient experience at the surgery?