



Houghton Thornley Medical Centres

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*"There for you all your life,
your good health with our
support, empowering you to
live well"*

www.htmc.co.uk

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This didn't start off as a testimonial. Testimonials are written by supporters of organisations intent, for whatever reason, on writing positive and complimentary accounts.

So the background to this testimonial is rather important. There's been quite a lot of dissatisfaction about the system for booking appointments and in Haughton Green this has been expressed, sometimes angrily, on Facebook. While these comments might be dismissed as a few people with axes to grind I take the view that they are legitimate accounts of people struggling with the shortcomings of a system designed help them, but in their minds preventing them, gain access to their doctors. Struggling to shake off an illness I knew I would have to make an appointment and, in all likelihood, visit the surgery. So I took the decision to conduct a little experiment: whether the experience was good or bad, I would document it on Facebook. Rather like the hotel trade uses secret guests and the retail industry uses secret shoppers to test the quality of the customer experience, I was to be a self-appointed secret patient. What follows is that Facebook account.

"Haughton Vale Medical Centre.

In the best traditions of community journalism, I determined to report accurately without fear or favour on my patient experience today. As a member of the Patient Participation Group and of a Greater Manchester NHS Health and Social Care Board, I was keen to report accurately, irrespective of any embarrassment it might create. Now in writing this I am not wishing to deride any of the accounts of poor and unacceptable patient experiences I've seen reported on this website, I just wanted to share my own, honest experience.

I rang at exactly 8.00am to get a telephone consultation. I was advised that I was ninth in the queue and two and a bit minutes later, my call was answered by a very polite and friendly receptionist. She advised me that a doctor would call me after 9.30. He rang at 9.50 and asked me to go in at 11.30. I was greeted by a friendly and professional receptionist who asked me to take a seat. (The new layout with open reception is a vast improvement on the previous dreadful security-glazed reception.) I was called at 11.42, a very acceptable wait in my view - after all, I didn't know with what conditions my doctor's previous patients were presenting. I went from there for a chest x-ray and was seen immediately. In a few days time, the results will appear in my medical records which I can access via an app on my smart phone.

I've been with Haughton Vale for two and a half years now, before which I was with a practice in Didsbury which, even with their state of the art building, many more doctors, nurses and practice staff, they could only dream of offering the service I received today."

36 hours later I had received 63 'likes', three positive comments and no negative ones, suggesting to me that the people in the Haughton Green community, or at least the Facebook subset, are fair minded and do want the Haughton Vale practice and the partnership of trust to work for them.

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D D, a patient of Houghton Thornley Medical Centres
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