



Grovelands Medical Centre: findings from a Healthwatch Reading visit

Where: Grovelands Medical Centre, 701 Oxford Rd, Reading, RG30 1HG

When: 15 September 2015, for two hours in the morning

Who: 16 people in the waiting area spoke with a trained Healthwatch staff member

Why: Healthwatch Reading is visiting all GP surgeries in Reading to get patient views

How: Healthwatch used legal 'Enter and View' powers to visit on a pre-agreed date

About Grovelands (information supplied by the practice):

Number of patients: 14,451, representing every section of society in west Reading, including many minority communities

Number of female GPs: seven (four who work part-time)

Number of male GPs: three (two who work part-time)

Open times: 8am-6.30pm Mon-Fri; no late evenings; Saturday slots can be prebooked

Appointment booking: People can book online, 24 hours a day, for routine appointments up to five weeks in advance; via touch-tone telephone to an automated system, also 24 hours a day; or by contacting receptionists during opening hours

Blood tests: Phlebotomist available each week

Accessibility: Can be accessed by people in a wheelchair

What patients like:

-  11 out of 16 patients were happy with the centre's opening hours
-  8/10 patients could usually get a same-day urgent appointment
-  10/16 patients praised the quality of care, treatment and service

What patients dislike:

-  10/16 could not always see a doctor or nurse of their choice (13/16 felt seeing someone you know is very, or extremely, important)
-  Not being able to see a GP when you want to - such as a two-week wait for an appointment

Healthwatch Reading's observations:

 The reception area is quite small, which can make it hard for staff and patients to talk privately when the surgery is busy

 The waiting room is pleasant, with poster displays

Patient ideas for fixing concerns:

 More doctors would help to solve two-week waits for appointment

Turn over to read a selection of patient comments and the practice's response

In your own words, feedback on Grovelands



“It really matters to see the same doctor who knows a patient. It is the personal side that matters.”

A patient with a serious condition seeing 4th doctor in 6 weeks due to usual doctor being on holiday. Patient said it would have helped if other doctors had read the patient’s notes, more than relying on the patient to describe their medical history.

“It’s a problem waiting a long time [weeks] to see your own doctor. Possibly more doctors would help.”

“I think this is the best practice in Reading. Been here many years, my husband is with another practice. The staff are polite and caring, it’s a good experience.”

“When I was in the front of the queue I had to say [to reception staff], not only that I had just had an operation and had an infection, but where that infection was.”

Patient who wants receptionists to, more often, be friendly and compassionate, and acknowledge people’s wishes to retain privacy in a busy surgery setting.



How managers plan to fix issues raised:

‘The practice has a mission to provide a personalised service to all our patients, irrespective of origin, or belief, in order to optimise their health and wellbeing. We recognised and appreciate the views expressed about the length of time it can take to see a registered, specific GP, as they value continuity of care as much as our patients. This is due to a national shortage of GPs, which is making recruitment of vacant GP positions very difficult. We do however, offer a guaranteed on-the-day appointment for any patient who feels their condition is urgent and cannot wait for a routine appointment. Any patient interested in joining our Patient Group is welcome and should contact Chris Maude, the practice manager at: management@grovelandsmedicalcentre.co.uk.’

Healthwatch Reading thanks patients for giving their time to share their views. We also thank practice staff for their assistance.

Enter and View findings are only a ‘snapshot’ of services on a particular day/s so they are not a comprehensive judgement on the overall quality of the service.

Healthwatch Reading is an independent organisation. We can take your feedback in confidence, help you make complaints, and refer serious concerns to other agencies.

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