



Melrose Surgery (Dr Dean): findings from a Healthwatch Reading visit

Where: Melrose Surgery (Dr Dean), 73 London Rd, Reading, RG1 5BS

When: September 10 and 30 September, 2015, for two hours in the morning on each visit (the first visit was quiet so we returned to speak to more people)

Who: 12 people spoke with a trained Healthwatch Reading staff member

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

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



What patients like

- 7 out of 12 patients were satisfied with the surgery opening hours
- 9/12 patients said urgent appointments were usually possible the same day
- 10/12 said they were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the quality of care, treatment and service they received



What patients dislike

- 1 out of 12 patients said they could see a doctor or nurse of their choice; 7/12 said seeing someone they knew was important



Healthwatch observations

- The reception area is very cramped and offers no privacy, especially as it faces another reception area for a different GP practice across a narrow corridor
- The main waiting room is pleasant, with leaflets on display.
- The building has a narrow staircase with consulting rooms on different floors, which could make access difficult for some patients



Patients' suggestions

- Make it easier to get through on the telephone
- Offer appointments at more convenient times

'The doctors are good with patients - friendly and helpful.'

'I would like later opening during the week until 7pm or 8pm, and on Saturday.'

'Getting through on the phone is very difficult - you are told to ring back in half an hour but then appointments are all gone.'

'Been a patient here 30 years - been good over that time. Reception staff are polite.'

Turn over to read the surgery's response to the feedback



How the surgery has responded to the patient feedback

'Since the visit from Healthwatch Reading, major changes have taken place. Dr Dean's surgery has taken over the patient list from Dr FAB Williams' surgery [which was based in the same building] due to his retirement, and is dealing with this period of growth by the appointment of three new doctors, one health care assistant and one new receptionist. A new phone system has also been installed to enable us to be able to take more calls. In conjunction these two improvements have led to more appointments being available. As part of the planned building works, one of the reception areas is to be taken down, opening up more space, and clinical rooms are to be developed. All appointments will then be held on level 1 or in the basement - a lift is available to both these floors and there is disabled access via the basement. We appreciate that patients would always like to see their favoured GP and we do our utmost to provide this, however it is not always possible due to annual leave and the different days doctors work.'

More info about Melrose Surgery Dr Dean (supplied by practice)

Number of patients: 8141, mostly working age, and of all backgrounds

Number of female GPs: 5 part-time (including one locum)

No. of male GPs: 3 part-time (including one locum)

In-house blood tests: Tuesday and Thursday mornings, soon to include Wednesday clinic

Open times: Monday 8am- 8pm (including late evening surgery with 2 GPs); Tues and Thurs 8am-6.30pm; Weds and Fri 7am- 6.30pm (including early surgeries with one GP); Saturday morning can be booked in advance
Appointment booking: Can book online for routine appointments up to 4 weeks in advance and for next-day appointments, opening up at 6.30pm the evening before

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.

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