



Russell Street & Coley Park surgeries: findings from Healthwatch Reading visits

Where: Russell Street Surgery, 79 Russell Street, Reading, RG1 7XG and Coley Park Surgery, 80 Wensley Road, Reading, RG1 6DN (both part of Dr Swami's practice)

When: February 1, 2016, at Russell St for 2 hours in the morning, and February 9, 2016, at Coley Park for 2 hours in the afternoon

Who: 16 people at Russell Street and 8 people at Coley Park (24 in total) in the waiting areas spoke with a trained Healthwatch staff member

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

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



What patients like

- 20 out of 24 patients found it easy to make appointments (by phone)
- 15/24 patients were able to get an urgent appointment on same day
- 16/24 were satisfied with the care, treatment and service
- 13/16 Russell St patients were satisfied with the opening hours
- 10/16 Russell St patients felt it important to see doctor or nurse of choice; 9/10 said this happened



What patients dislike

- Some patients did not like being told to go to the walk-in centre
- Some patients at Coley Park disliked the limited surgery hours



Patients' suggestions

- Extend opening hours



Healthwatch observations

- Appointments seem to run on time
- Receptionist appeared helpful in trying to fit patients in
- Patients have a choice of three surgeries to attend
- Receptionists give out Friends and Family surveys to get feedback
- Online booking and extended weekend hours may need more promotion to patients
- Access may be difficult as doors into premises not automatic
- Limited onsite parking at Russell St - public road has 2 hr parking
- Russell St reception and waiting area in same room, although divided by glass window; patients can also request private room

'Easy to get through on the telephone.'

'If there are no appointments I am told to go to the walk-in centre.'

'Pretty good - I have been here [as a patient of the practice] for six years.'

'[Russell Street] should open on weekends as well.' (Patient was not aware it was open on Saturdays).

Read how the practice has responded on the next page



How the surgery has responded to the patient feedback

'In relation to opening hours we do offer a Saturday clinic [at Russell Street] from 8-12pm to accommodate those that have other commitments such as work or need to provide alternative care for those that are carers; these Saturday surgeries will continue until March 2017. We also have an early morning 7-8am at our Burghfield Health Centre [also part of the practice] twice a week, Tuesday & Wednesday. If [Coley Park] patients need to be seen in an emergency, an appointment will always (where possible) be offered at Russell Street, which is within walking distance. We have recently added an extra clinic at Russell Street four times a week Mon-Fri (except Thursdays) to accommodate patients requesting emergency appointments on our busiest days. This has proven to relieve the pressure of requests for emergency appointments in the afternoons and these are very popular. Overall, all patients have the option of booking an appointment at all three sites, making it flexible and accessible for those parents doing the school run or working.

'We feel that [providing a doctor or nurse of the patient's choice] is a valuable part of providing good patient care, as those staff are aware of their needs and background medical history. Doctors do rotations of all three surgery sites, allowing patients to see the doctor of their choice.

'Regarding the ease of phoning for appointments, this is reassuring as it shows the benefits of the new telephone system installed in the last year to make it easier and quicker for patients to get through on the telephone.

'To promote online services and Saturday opening hours, we will put up a poster in English and Urdu, to accommodate the majority of our patient population, or use the whiteboard in each of the three sites' waiting/reception rooms and also add to this to our website. From January, we have also been putting up a poster to publish the amount of DNAs ('Did not attend') we experience in a month. In February we had 298 DNAs where patients did not cancel their appointments so they could be offered to other patients. This is an extremely high number and if patients were to cancel appointments in advance that were not needed, this could relieve pressure for same day emergency appointments and normal pre-bookable appointments.

'We are in partnership with the walk-in centre, so if on the rare occasion we cannot accommodate patients with a same-day emergency appointment we do offer them the option of going to one of our branch sites, but some patients prefer to go to the walk-in centre [in Broad Street mall] for convenience.



The practice's response, continued...

'We are very pleased that you observed reception staff being helpful in trying to fit patients in. They deal with same-day requests on a daily basis on the telephone and also from patients walking in without a previously booked appointment. At reception we do try very hard to provide privacy to patients, but also advertise that if patients would like to discuss anything in confidence, a private room can be arranged.

If a longer appointment is needed to discuss more than one problem, double appointments are available on request; we will promote this using a poster in the waiting/reception rooms at all three surgery sites and on the practice website. The feedback about patient satisfaction with care, reflects our continuing efforts by GPs and nurses to provide better patient care. Doctors at this practice strive to do relevant investigations on the clinical need and follow-ups arranged, however some of the investigations that patients request are not always appropriate. We provide five parking spaces for patients with a disabled space and three at the rear of the surgery for staff. The doctors have parking permits on the street and within walking distance there are spaces for free two-hour parking. We are fortunate to have spaces, despite being an inner-city practice. The entrance doors are wide enough to take a wheelchair and prams, and there are no steps; patients appreciate bringing these in. There is a bell and intercom at Russell Street and a bell at Coley Park in order to request assistance.'

More information about Russell Street and Coley Park surgeries

Number of patients: 6,700 across 3 surgery sites

Number of female GPs: 1 full-time and 1 part-time

Number of male GPs: 1 full-time and 1 part-time

Appointment booking: By phone, online (routine only) or in person

Blood tests: Phlebotomist in every Friday at Russell Street

Open times: Russell Street: Mon, Tues, Weds & Fri, 8am-6.30pm; Thurs, 8am-2pm; plus 8am-12pm Saturdays

Coley Park: Mon, Tues, Weds & Friday 8-3.30pm (appointments 1-3pm); Thursday closed; Friday 8-3pm (appointments 1-3pm)

Accessibility: Ramp and wide doors for wheelchairs and pushchairs

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 charity with some statutory powers. We can take your feedback in confidence, help you make complaints, and refer serious concerns to other agencies. Phone us 0118 937 2295, email info@healthwatchreading.co.uk, visit our website www.healthwatchreading.co.uk or visit us on the 3rd floor, Reading Central Library, Abbey Square Reading, RG1 3BQ.