

Trent Vale Medical Practice

Date of Monitoring visit

24th September 2019. 1:45 p.m. - 3:00 pm

Address of Surgery

Trent Vale Medical Practice,
876 London Rd.,
Trent Vale,
Stoke-on-Trent,
Staffordshire ST4 5NX

Authorised Representatives

Hilda Johnson and George Wallace

Representatives have undertaken Enter and View Training and are enhanced DBS checked.

Purpose of visit

Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent were informed verbally, of a younger patient who was not registered with the Practice being refused an appointment and being told to go to Haywood Hospital instead. This may not actually have been the case, but our visit was to ask about the incident and to check procedures at the Practice and see how it operated generally.

Methodology

A letter was sent to the Practice Manager, Mrs M. Parkes, on 4th September letting the surgery know we were planning to visit at 'some point within the next three months'.

Overview of the surgery.

The surgery waiting room was very open, extremely tidy and pleasant with plenty of seating. Lots of useful information was readily available to all. The practice would be happy to display Healthwatch Stoke-on-Trent dignity & respect notices and make available Healthwatch enquiry cards so we will send them to the Practice Manager.

There is a good relationship between the surgery staff and the Lloyds Pharmacy which is located in the building (accessible from the reception/ waiting area).

Unfortunately, at the time we went 1.45pm there were no patients in reception to talk to.

There is car parking at the centre with two blue badge places at the front of the main entrance and a ramp to provide access into the building.

Just within the entrance, the flu vaccination information is very prominently displayed reminding patients to book for the flu jab.

As we were leaving, we noticed a sign asking patients to 'Please leave prams and pushchairs behind a glass wall', which was on the left-hand side. We thought this was useful but wondered how many people used this. We spoke to Practice Manager Michelle Parkes.

There are approximately 9,500 registered patients..

There are four Partners, four salaried GPs and one retained GP.

We were informed that the two main reception staff have both been with the Practice for more than twelve months.

The other staff members include: one nurse practitioner who is also a prescriber, two practice nurses (one of these is new and previously was a Health Visitor), two Healthcare Assistants and they additionally employ a Pharmacist.

There is also an independent Pharmacy on site which is not managed by the medical centre.

The Medical Centre is open 8am - 6pm Monday to Friday except for Thursday afternoon, when staff do work but telephone lines are switched off. This allows staff to catch up with the volume of administrative work. However, a message is given on the message service with a telephone number if patients need to talk to someone.

Booking an appointment can be carried out by telephone, face to face or internet.

They have a sign up to say that there are extended hours and weekend appointments available but these have to be pre booked through reception.

When the surgery is closed a message directs patients to use the 111 number.

More patients are registering online for their repeat prescriptions and while the Practice Manager has no specific numbers of patients using Patient Access, she is pleased that a high number of patients use the app to order repeat prescriptions, in addition to making appointments.

Our team specifically asked the question of the Practice Manager to see if she was aware of the duty of care to see any homeless person for treatment if they came into the centre. The response was that they were all aware of this. We then asked the Practice Manager about how visitors/holiday makers might be treated if they asked to see a clinician and we were assured that if the symptoms were worrying, they would do their best to ensure that they would be able to see a clinician. In the case of children this would always be a priority within the limitations of availability of clinical staff.

The Practice Manager attends meetings with other practice managers.

Health visitors come in to run a baby clinic on Mondays and on Wednesdays, the Practice runs a Bloods clinic.

Conclusion

Our visiting team found very little of concern during this visit and were impressed by the way in which the Practice was run.

Furthermore, they were reassured by the answer given by the Practice Manager regarding the reported incident.

The only recommendation we would make concerns the relative inactivity of the PPG and we understand that this is equally a concern of the Practice Manager.

As well as sending Healthwatch information for display in the waiting area, it may be of interest for us to come along to a future PPG group meeting to talk about our work which may be of interest to some of the members.