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## Acknowledgements, disclaimer and context

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Healthwatch County Durham would like to thank the service provider, service users, visitors and staff for their contribution to the Enter and View programme.

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out Enter and View visits. Local Healthwatch representatives carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows Healthwatch Authorised Representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation - so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch Enter and View are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies. If at any time an Authorised Representative observes anything that they feel uncomfortable about, they need to inform their lead who will inform the service manager, ending the visit.

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## Purpose of the visit

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We ran a successful pilot with surgeries in 2017 and 2018, where we used ‘appreciative questions’ to explore what was working well in surgeries as well as areas for improvement. Key themes that were important to patients were shared with all practices and Enter and View visits were identified by the Clinical Commissioning Groups as a positive way to gather independent patient feedback.

*‘Your visit has certainly helped us focus our minds not only on what we are doing well, but also on areas where we knew we needed to improve, in addition it has also highlighted further areas where we need to develop and improve our service to patients.*

*The whole experience, from the initial approach by Marianne through to our involvement with Claire and then the volunteers on the day has been extremely pleasurable and informative; the staff here on the day have all been extremely complimentary of your approach and methods.*

*In our opinion the Enter and View visits are a great way to break down barriers, give practices an independent view on the success of their service and help them highlight areas for improvement. We would recommend an Enter and View visit to any practice.’*

Brian Woodhouse, Practice Manager

We wrote to all Practice Managers and Patient Reference Group Chairs (Appendix A) to offer them the opportunity to request an Enter and View visit, to either gather overall patient feedback or explore a particular topic.

Murton Medical Group requested a visit as they were keen to listen to their patients and learn from their feedback.

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## Planning and preparation

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Authorised Representatives who had taken part in the pilot were keen to be involved, as were new volunteers. The survey used was carefully put together beforehand to reflect the 'positive approach' to be taken. This was circulated to staff, Authorised Representatives and the practice manager for comment.

We realised that there might be people who would like to make a comment about the services who were not going to be around on the day of the visit so the surveys were left one week before the visit in the waiting area, on a HWCD display table, with a box for completed surveys to be left in. We also prepared slips which could be handed to a user, if they were to leave mid conversation due to their appointment being called. This meant they could still complete the form, after they had been seen.

We advertised the visit in advance (Appendix C) and Angela Taylor (Practice Operations Manager) briefed the staff, before the day.

We carried out a preparation visit one week before the Enter and View to do a risk assessment and consider areas such as layout, introductions, venue space and safety procedures, the process for taking photographs and we agreed use of a private space for conversations if needed.

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## Information and data

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At this surgery we used an authorised representative and carried out 10 individual conversations with patients and staff, using a set of appreciative questions to give people the opportunity to describe good practice they had experienced or seen.

Three surveys were completed prior, by people who wanted to feedback on the service but did not have a GP appointment, on the day of our visit.

We observed activity and spoke to people during our two hour visit, to collect their own independent impressions of the practice and its services, which were recorded during and after the visit.

A private space was available if patients felt the need to talk in confidence to us.

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# What people told us

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People shared their experience and opinions of the practice, all are noted in Appendix E. Some are unique to individuals but there were several trends that we heard numerous times, which include:

## Professionalism and Empathy of staff

“Staff go over and beyond their job role to help”

“Being personable and approachable-would be not so good if this was lost”

“GP always listens”

“Doctors are lovely-friendly-family doctors who know my whole family. The doctor asked how one of my family members were during my appointment-this is really lovely!”

## Appointment availability/system

“Getting an appointment-normally 2 weeks but I prefer a particular named doctor”

“Length of time to get an appointment”

“Wait 2 weeks for an appointment, they need more doctors (the village is expanding rapidly) and also they can't do as many home visits because of this”

“Manage to get an appointment-but sometimes have to wait-but that's to do with my own shifts at work”

## Services and the Environment

“Being personable and approachable-would be not so good if this was lost”

“Problem getting my prescriptions-glitch with this either not ready or incomplete and I need them on time and in time”

“There have been a lot of improvements: reception/receptionist so easy to know what to do, there is new furniture and more of it”

“Don't get rushed out of appointment when running late. The surgery is local for me and I use and think the 'pod' is really good “Pill checks and blood pressure” that then updates my record and is sent through to doctors and nurses”

“Reception staff and doctors are really nice-when having a procedure I am more comfortable because of this. I feel I can be honest if I don't understand what I'm being told”

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# What we observed

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The patients we observed in Murton Medical Group appeared to be very happy with the services overall

Observations considered the physical space and how it was managed, as well as communication with staff and users

Key areas of observation were:

## **Effectiveness of the physical space and layout**

We observed a clean and friendly surgery with comfortable and tidy seating area, good access and plenty of parking at the back of the surgery. There were TV monitors running giving health related advice/information and low level music playing in the background. The reception area was an open area which had enough space to allow users to talk to staff without being overheard and users seemed sensitive to this, although this may become a little more difficult when a queue developed.

Notices and information were very clear and set out well for users. There were overhead monitor screens calling patients to their appointment which expressed a 'Beep' sound also, to draw attention to this.

Reception staff were clear about procedure and were friendly and welcoming with patients.

Appropriate security, as we were asked to sign in and were given an ID visitor badge before being shown around the surgery and given information on where the appropriate areas were, to use.

We observed the set-up of a 'Pod' which could be used at any time by individual patients to monitor their own health, i.e. -take blood pressure readings, check up on contraceptive pill etc. which then updated medical records.

## **Service and Positive social interaction**

We saw people being greeted in a friendly manner-reception staff were very polite, patient and respectful to people. We also observed the Patient Services Manager and another member of staff coming from behind the desk in order to assist a patient that needed some physical help and reassurance. We observed good communication between reception staff and patients, professional but friendly-this was pleasant, some first names were used and there was even an odd joke passed back and forth.

We observed patients (who did not have an appointment) waiting in the reception area for other services in the village to open.

Patients did not wait long to be seen and were happy to share their experiences here with the Healthwatch County Durham representatives.

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## Recommendations for Murton Medical Centre

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We have listed the recommendations below based on what we were told and what we saw and heard, during the visit.

1. One of the most conveyed messages from the patients on the day, was how happy they were with the staff. The patients very much valued and appreciated the good relationships and service they receive at the surgery. Patients felt that there is a good balance of professionalism and friendliness (personable, sociable and polite) between staff and patients and that they are listened to and not rushed. We witnessed examples of good and effective communication and we were told of positive teamwork with no hierarchy. Staff behaviors and culture is clearly to be celebrated and retained here.
2. Being able to make an appropriate appointment was a priority for patients who generally said that appointments could be arranged in around two weeks, however some suggested that this was down to their own requirements (work pattern or preferred doctor for e.g.). Patients valued where doctors had prior knowledge and family history. Where patients had to wait for an appointment it seemed that they weren't aware of support through NHS111. There is some concern that the surrounding geographical, expanding developments will have an impact on the number of available doctors, so this should be monitored and managed.
3. Patients told us how important the location of the surgery was, having everything under one roof was useful. We were told that there had been lots of improvements made and patients valued having the 'Pod' on site. We observed an accessible, comfortable clean surgery, background music playing with well thought out information and notices being displayed. There was mention of the need for materials to keep children occupied whilst waiting. There was no water dispenser available but patients told us water was provided, if requested.
4. There were lots of positive comments about good 'Services' and 'Systems' here-issues such as 'early diagnosis', 'good customer service', 'Don't wait long to be seen', 'Good response time', resulting in confidence in getting care when and where it was needed. There was mention of some problems around prescription procedure. We were informed that patients come with various queries and the surgery manages this as effectively as it can. We witnessed staff dealing with difficult situations on the day which clearly demonstrated their competence and professionalism. There were clear and safe systems in place to manage visitors, as we were asked to sign in, given a visitor fob to wear and shown around the site, prior to starting the visit. The quality of services and systems in place are well managed and are very valued by the users-this should be maintained.

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## Service provider response

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We would like to express our thanks to Healthwatch for the positive experience we received during our 'Enter and View' Visit and would recommend a visit to anyone.

From the onset everything ran smoothly and there was no adverse effect with the day to day running of the practice, therefore we have to give credit to both Claire and Tony for their approach to both staff and patients on the day. The feedback in the report is extremely helpful and informative as it identifies areas for improvement and also where the practice performs well. We aim as always to provide the best service to our patients and value their feedback.

Angela Taylor

Practice Operations Manager

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Letter

**healthwatch**  
County Durham

Healthwatch County Durham  
Whitfield House  
St Johns Road  
Meadowfield Industrial Estate  
Durham DH7 8XL  
Tel: 0191 378 1037

Email: [healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net](mailto:healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net)

14 September 2017

Dear Practice Manager and PRG Chair

### **Enter and View recommendations and opportunity to take part**

As part of the 2016/17 work plan, Healthwatch County Durham carried out two positive Enter and View visits in practices that had scored highly in recent Patient Satisfaction surveys and CQC inspections, to hear from patients what they think their practice does well, and to share that learning throughout Primary Care. Patients told us:

- Being listened to and having a variety of contact opportunities, face to face, phone and letter were important to them, as was the empathy and professionalism of staff
- They valued being consulted on any changes and being told why, if their expectations were not met
- There is positive culture at their practice. A culture of team working that promotes no hierarchy seems very valuable and is evident to patients
- The physical space is important to them. They believe this should be well thought out and users given the opportunity to share their views on the environment
- Access to appointments was a real priority for them and they told us their practice has a system that works for them. They valued knowing they could have a same day appointment, even if this is over the phone
- They valued having choice and flexibility around seeing a particular GP, especially where they had an underlying medical support need, as this gave people confidence around effective diagnosis

*'The Enter & View experience gives an overall independent view of how practices run and highlight areas of improvement across the board'*

**Great Lumley Surgery**

*'In our opinion the Enter and View visits are a great way to break down barriers, give practices an independent view on the success of their service and help them highlight areas for improvement. We would recommend an Enter and View visit to any practice'*

**Silverdale Family Practice**

The full reports are available on our website [www.healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk/enter-view-reports](http://www.healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk/enter-view-reports) and our Board and the Director of Primary Care have now agreed to offer this programme to other practices who would like to use patient voice and independent observations to identify what they are doing well and any areas to improve. To find out more about requesting a visit, please contact Marianne Patterson, Programme Manager at [marianne.patterson@pcp.uk.net](mailto:marianne.patterson@pcp.uk.net) or 0191 3787695.

Yours faithfully,

*BJackson*

Brian Jackson, Chair  
Healthwatch County Durham

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## Appendix B: Questions

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### Enter and View Questions for GP practices in County Durham

Thank you for your time today. Healthwatch are here to speak to patients about the GP practice and to hear the stories behind your views. We will share that learning with other practices, make recommendations about how others could achieve better results.

Please can you tell me about a good experience that you have had at your GP practice? (Prompt questions if needed: What made it a positive experience? Who was involved? How did you feel?)
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What is the best thing about your GP practice? (Prompts: What makes it stand out for you? Why have you chosen this?)

If you could make sure your GP practice kept one thing, what would it be? Why is that? (Prompt if needed: one thing could be a service, facility, process, behavior or person)

If your practice could do one thing to make it even better, what would that be?

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## Appendix C: Programme

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### Murton Medical Centre - Enter and View Programme - 16.7.19

2.00-2.05pm	Photographs/Brief/Programme	
2.05-3.00pm	Survey/Observe	Claire
	Survey/Observe	Tony
3.00-3.10pm	10 minutes 'out' - thoughts/issues Survey	
3.10-4.00pm	Survey/Observe	Claire
	Survey/Observe	Tony
4.00-4.30pm	Findings/Debrief Staff	

**healthwatch**  
County Durham

# Tell us about your Surgery!

Tuesday 16th July 2019

2.00pm - 4.00pm

**Murton Medical Centre**

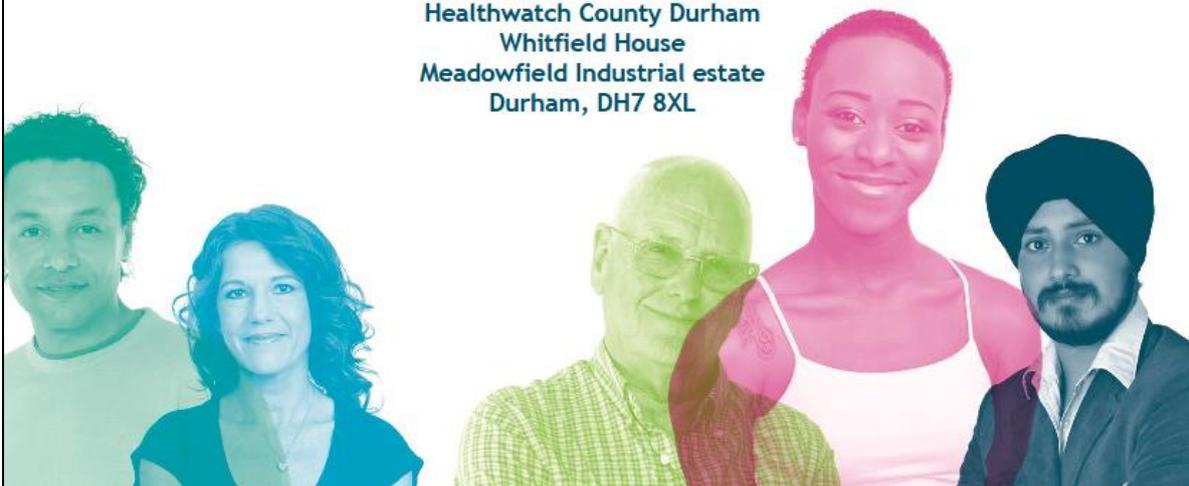
*Healthwatch County Durham is your local, independent health and social care champion. We are visiting your Surgery to find out what you think about the services it offers and would like to hear from residents, visitors and staff about your experiences.*

**Come and tell us what you think is so good about Murton Medical Centre**

[www.healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk)

Tel: 0191 3787695, Text: 07756 654218

Healthwatch County Durham  
Whitfield House  
Meadowfield Industrial estate  
Durham, DH7 8XL



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# Appendix E: Notes

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## Enter and View Notes (Murton Medical Centre) - 16.7.19

### Preparation/before the day

- Survey used was carefully put together beforehand to reflect the 'positive approach' to be taken. This was circulated to staff, volunteer reps and lead receptionist for comment.
- Surveys were left one week before the visit in the waiting area with a box for completed surveys to be deposited in. We realised that there might be people who would like to make a comment about the services who were not going to be around on the day of the visit.
- Posters were displayed in the doctors surgery two weeks before the visit
- The Practice Operations Manager (Angela Taylor) briefed the staff before the day
- Volunteer Support Lead (Claire Cowell) visited the surgery one week before, to consider areas such as layout, Introductions, venue space and safety procedures (CC carried out Risk Assessment), procedures for taking photographs and agreed use of a private space.

### Information gathering

- How we collected information, comments and observed!
- 2 Surveying/2 Observing/offering general info about HW

### Numbers/Data

- 10 written Surveys were completed on the day (9 patients and 1 member of staff)
- 3 written surveys were completed prior to us arriving
- Observation notes were taken by all reps.
- Only Photographs of the building were taken

### On the day

#### Volunteers were briefed on:

- The physical/available space
- How to introduce what we were doing
- The programme for the day
- Refreshments and toilets
- The use of photographs
- Introduced to staff
- Sensitivity on when and when not to approach a person/user

## Results/what people said/what we saw

### Survey

#### Good Experience:

- “Had an early diagnosis, now being treated so very happy”
- “Everything being under one roof. Had an appointment and needed referral and came out with an appointment to see a consultant”
- “Staff go over and beyond their job role to help”
- “Good customer service from receptionist”
- “All good!”
- “Couldn’t comment”
- “Don’t wait too long to see the doctor”
- “Doctors are lovely-friendly-family doctors who know my whole family. The doctor asked how one of my family members were during my appointment- this is really lovely!”
- “Nurses are quick and fast”
- “Getting an appointment-normally 2 weeks but I prefer a particular named doctor”
- “Really good staff-response time is really, really good”
- “Manage to get an appointment-but sometimes have to wait-but that’s to do with my own shifts at work”
- “Patients come with a variety of queries-not just for a medical appointment- we will often book taxis and liaise with other services. We know people personally”
- “Open until 8.30pm on a Monday night”

#### Best thing about the practice:

- “Helpful staff and good doctors”
- “Very efficient service”
- “GP always listens”
- “Nurses seem competent”
- “Friendly and efficient”
- “The staff-receptionists very helpful. Nurses very good”
- “There have been a lot of improvements: reception/receptionist so easy to know what to do., new furniture and more of it”
- “Don’t get rushed out of appointment when running late. The surgery is local for me and I think the ‘pod’ is really good “Pill checks and blood pressure” that then updates my record and is sent through to doctors and nurses”

- “Their friendliness is important to me and they are also helpful on the telephone”
- “The locality and the staff are great”
- “Reception staff and doctors are really nice-when having a procedure I am more comfortable because of this. I feel I can be honest if I don’t understand what I’m being told”
- “We are one big family, we work around familiar terms, its friendly and staff are all approachable and accommodating. I feel supported as a member of staff, great set up”

### If you could make sure your GP practice kept one thing, what would it be?

- “Having Male doctors”
- “The same facilities available”
- “The good facilities and services”
- “Keep the music playing in the background”
- “Continue with their helpfulness”
- “The nurses”
- “Keep real doctors availability if not there will be a problem-not everything can be sorted in phone call/text message/face time etc.”
- “Staff friendly-plus get appointment reminders through text”
- “Staff”
- “Good service”
- “Being personable and approachable-would be not so good if this was lost”
- “Tele dermatology-use of camera with consultant as a backup for expert opinion”

### One thing to make it better:

- “Appointments run on time”
- “Nothing-happy with my experiences here”
- “Length of time to get an appointment”
- “Time it takes to get an appointment”
- “Not to have to wait so long to get an appointment”
- “Wait 2 weeks for an appointment, they need more doctors (the village is expanding rapidly) and also they can’t do as many home visits because of this”
- “Sometimes there is a queue at reception-have to wait, Mondays are hectic”
- “Problem getting my prescriptions-glitch with this either not ready or incomplete and I need them on time and in time”
- “Appointment system-old system was better, you can’t book ahead for non-urgent issues”
- “Nothing to improve”
- “The appointments system is a difficult issue as we have tried a system which allowed bookings of 7 days in advance, and then we tried 1 month in advance

but the 'did not attend' (DNA's) increased. However, 'Care Navigation' has helped guide people to the most relevant service-freeing up GP/Nurse appointments for others"

- "Given some bad clinical news but with no explanation or discussion"

### Observations:

- We observed a nice easy access, warm/welcoming open space that was clean, tidy and there were monitors running at various points, on the wall, giving health and wellbeing advice
- There was music playing in the background, which was of a comfortable level
- We saw people being greeted in a friendly manner-reception staff were very polite to people.
- There was comfortable and tidy seating area (seats had specific leaflets around current advice on them for patients to be aware of).
- Notices and very well managed information -clear and set out well, up to date and in themed areas for users to easily differentiate and utilizing all available wall space well
- Reception seem to have enough space to communicate with the patients without being overheard when not too busy
- There was no patient/staff screen, as in some other GP's, which leads to a much more sociable interaction
- At the time of the visit it was fairly warm, we informed by patient that water would be provided if asked for
- We noted a self-booking in monitor screen, out of action at reception
- We were asked to sign in and were given a visitor ID badge, after which we were shown around (toilets, fire escapes waiting areas etc.) and were offered tea and coffee
- Patients did not wait long to be seen long at all
- We witnessed information about patients having a chaperone for support if they wished
- There was an overhead monitor screen calling patients to their appointment which expressed a Beep sound also, to draw attention to this
- Except for one person, Patients were happy to share their experiences here with the Healthwatch County Durham representatives.
- We observed good communication between reception staff and patients, professional but friendly (every patient was greeted with a smile)-this was pleasant and there was even an odd joke passed back and forth.
- We observed the setup of a 'Pod'-where patients can monitor their own blood pressure which immediately updates their personal records
- We could not see anything for children or young people to play or interact with when waiting

- Patients that complained about length of time to get an appointment did not seem to be aware of the help NHS111 could provide in this respect-although there were explanatory leaflets on the wall
- At the reception we witnessed a lady start to cough uncontrollably and was clearly in distress. Receptionist and practice manager responded immediately and enabled the lady to recover quickly and calm down

### Photographs

- We took 12 photographs of the building (Inside and out)

### After the event

- We spoke to Practice Operations Manager (Angela Taylor) and Patient Services Manager (Julie Metters) to give an informal de-brief around what we'd generally heard and seen.
- Staff were happy to hear that patients had said nice things about the staff and the services.