



The Family Practice

Barbara Castle Way Health Centre, Blackburn, BB2 1AX

Enter and View Report

13th March 2026

9.30am

healthwatch

Blackburn with Darwen

DISCLAIMER

This report relates to the service viewed at the time of the visit and is only representative of the views of the staff, visitors and residents who met members of the Enter and View team on that date.

Contact Details:

The Family Practice

Barbara Castle Way Health Centre,
Blackburn, BB2 1AX

Staff met during our visit:

Saif Bhojani (Practice Manager)

And the supporting team

Date and time of our visit:

Friday 13th March 2026 9.30am

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen
Representatives

Sarah Johns (Lead Staff)

Liam Kershaw-Calvert (Staff)

Introduction

This was an announced Enter and View visit undertaken by authorised representatives from Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen who have the authority to enter health and social care premises, announced or unannounced, to observe and assess the nature and quality of services and obtain the view of those people using the services. The representatives observe and speak to respondents in communal areas only.

This visit was arranged as part of Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen's Enter and View programme to review Accessibility, Approachability and Responsiveness. The team of trained Enter and View authorised representatives record their observations along with feedback from patients, staff and where possible, carers or family.

A report is sent to the practice manager of the facility for validation of the facts. Any response from the practice manager is included with the final version of the report which is published on the Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen website at www.healthwatchblackburnwithdarwen.co.uk

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen would like to thank Saif Bhojani together with patients staff, and other respondents, for making us feel welcome and taking part in the visit.

General Information

Number of GPs /patients

1 GP/5,500 patients

CQC rating

No rating for this current provider.
Last provider rating is Good in November 2018

Methodology

The Enter and View representatives made an announced visit on

We spoke to 10 patients and 2 staff where possible within the constraints of the GP surgery routine, people's willingness, and ability to engage and access to people in public areas. Discussion was structured around 3 themes

- Accessibility
- Approachability
- Responsiveness.

The team also recorded their own observations of the environment and facilities.

Our role at Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen is to gather the views of service users, especially those that are hard to reach and seldom heard, to give them the opportunity to express how they feel about a service regardless of their perceived ability to be able to do so.

We use templates to assess the environment of a facility and gather information from respondents, to ensure that reports are compiled in a fair and comparative manner.

Summary:

The Family Practice is located within Barbara Castle Way Health Centre which is easily accessible for patients on foot or travelling on local transport and car. However, it was noted that some patients found the car park spaces difficult to park in.

The practice is bright, clean and hygienic and there is good signage within the Centre to direct patients to the practice. There is ample seating available in the waiting room, however there were limited chairs with arms which would be more accessible for patients with mobility issues.

The website is informative however the staff page may require updating and its accessibility may need reviewing.

Patients generally felt that the staff are courteous and polite, however there was mixed feedback from patients as to whether they felt that they had enough time with the doctor.

The Practice Manager informed us that the Practice is working on quality improvement, however one of the main concerns from patient was the lack of ability to book an appointment. Consequently, some patients told us that they would not recommend the practice and either called 111 or attended Emergency Department instead.

The Practice has a wide skillset amongst the team to be able to meet the needs of patients, and they also link with the Primary Care Network and Integrated Neighbourhood Teams to support vulnerable patients.

Enter and View observations

ACCESSIBILITY OBSERVED

Pre Visit

Representatives firstly looked at the practice website to establish contact and found the website to be informative with details about appointments, prescriptions, online services and wider health information. There are no images of staff which may be helpful for new patients and there are 2 GPs named on the website. The opening hours are clear on the website and the information about what to do when the practice is closed is helpful for patients.

Representatives noted the website to be mobile friendly. There is however no option for translation and no facility to change the font size to make the page more accessible, although the accessibility statement states that this is possible.

We called the practice at 11.40am on Tuesday 10th February 2026 and were first in the queue.

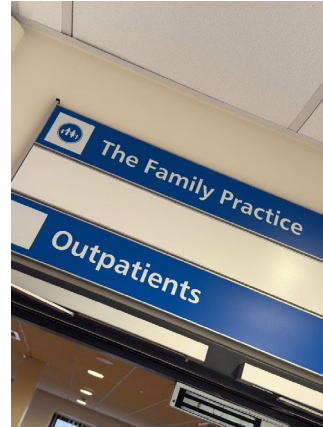
External environment

The surgery is located in Barbara Castle Way Health Centre in the centre of town. The centre is easily accessible by public transport to the town centre although there is no on-site bus stop. There is a carpark for the Health Centre with dedicated disabled parking spaces which are free for up to 3 hours. The entrance to the building both from the main entrance and carpark is wheelchair accessible. There is also a drop off zone outside the Centre.

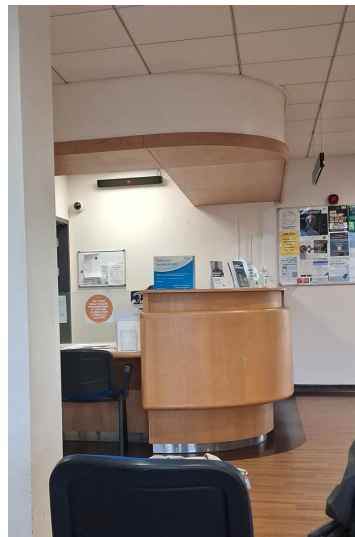


Internal Environment

The practice has bright, clean and airy waiting room which was a welcoming space with the reception directly visible on entering the area. There is clear signage for the practice on each floor of the health centre and as you enter the waiting room.



The reception desk was a large area and at mixed heights to cater for patients in wheelchairs and a hearing loop was available. There were two chairs for patients at the lower desk. There was a digital ticker for patient announcements behind reception, but this did not appear to be in use.



All patients checked in at reception, and we noted that patients were all collected from the waiting room by members of staff to be taken to their appointments.

The chairs in the waiting room were uniform with only two chairs with arms which would be most beneficial for patients with mobility issues and no chair raisers. There was sufficient room for wheelchairs in the waiting room.

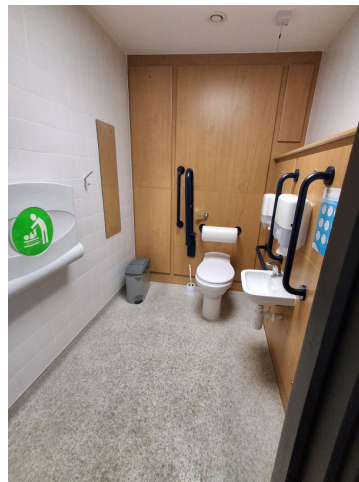


The floor in the waiting room was non-slip and matt therefore suitable for patients with dementia.

There is ample patient information available in the practice which is arranged well on noticeboards by reception. There is more available in the waiting room, but this appeared more cluttered. We noted that our Healthwatch poster announcing our visit had not been put on display.

There was a TV in the waiting room, but this did not appear to be working. There was however some light music playing in the background which contributed to a calm environment.

There are bathroom facilities available in the waiting room including baby changing in the accessible bathroom. Although the toilet did not have a contrasting colour seat, recommended for patients living with dementia, there were contrasting coloured handrails.



Approachability/Flexibility of the Practice

We spoke with the Practice Manager about different approaches the practice takes to meet patient needs, with his feedback detailed below.

The surgery has approximately 5,500 patients and has range of staff roles to support them. There are two partner GPs, a locum GP and GP employed under the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS). The practice also has an advanced nurse practitioner, practice nurse, two clinical pharmacists (one of whom is currently on maternity leave) and an administration and care navigation team.

The practice accesses a social prescriber and an approved mental health professional, both employed by the West Blackburn Primary Care Network.

There is no dedicated Learning Disability nurse, but the practice nurse conducts annual health checks for patients with learning disabilities alongside other health checks for example for patients with diabetes and screening. Screening uptake is good at the practice although vaccination uptake is low, similar to the borough as a whole. The Family Practice is an enhanced practice and offers cervical screening

at weekends to make this more accessible for women. One of the clinical pharmacists has also undertaken respiratory training.

The Practice Manager has conducted his own work on quality improvement at the practice and stated that it is getting easier to get an appointment. Having a GP employed under the ARRS scheme has created additional appointment capacity at the practice. There is a call back option on the phones to save patients from waiting a long time on the phone.

Although there is no DNA policy, the care navigation team contact patients to rebook appointments, and the practice has never had to strike off any patients.

The ICB primary care quality team have recently made a supportive visit to the practice to review frequent attenders at Royal Blackburn Emergency Department, and the Practice Manager attends Integrated Neighbourhood Team meetings to discuss vulnerable patients.

There is a PPG which meets every six months and provided useful feedback to the Practice Manager.

Feedback from Patients

ACCESSIBILITY

- Are the opening hours sufficient?

The majority of patients felt that the practice opening hours were sufficient with only one patient stating that they were not. One patient stated, “When you’re working it can be difficult. I’ve had a 4 week wait”, whilst another commented “I’ve found them ok. I’ve once had an appointment on a Saturday.”

- Is it easy to park outside/travel to the practice?

Patients either walked or drove to the practice, with one patient taking a taxi to get to their appointment. Whilst some patients found the carparking accessible, two patients stated: -

“I parked in another carpark because I find this one difficult to park in with small spaces.”

“I was dropped off. The carpark is horrendous, shocking.”

- How did you book your appointment today? Did you wait long?

“It’s impossible to get through on the phone and there’s no appointments available after 8.45am. I had a long wait for an appointment and then was misdiagnosed by a GP here. I was diagnosed with thrombosis by the hospital.”

“I called and was 30th in the queue at 8am.”

“It’s hard to get an appointment if you ring up. This was pre-booked.”

“I rang at 8am, it’s a challenge to get through.”

“I got my appointment through my support worker at Cherry Lodge.”

“By phone. It’s hard to get an appointment and if you’re not early all the appointments are booked.”

“Got appointment yesterday when I saw the nurse. She booked in the appointment for me.”

“Normally have to fight for an appointment.”

“I called at 8am but I was clock watching to make sure I was on the phone right on 8am!”

“By phone was fine. I asked if Katherine could call us, so she called me back and made the appointment for me.”

APPROACHABILITY

- Are staff courteous and polite?

“Yes. Katherine looks after us. She goes above and beyond.”

“They’re good.”

“They’re ok.”

“They’re lovely.”

“They’re ok. Though I have had a doctor ask me what I thought was wrong with my child and I thought you’re the doctor.”

“The doctors are ok. I don’t know if I’ve met with my own doctor.”

“They’re fine.”

“They’re ok.”

“Sometimes ok sometimes not.”

“They’re ok.”

- Would you recommend this GP surgery?

“No. I’m thinking of changing.”

“No”

“No.”

“It’s the only GP surgery I know.”

“They’re good with me.”

“Not really.”

“Yes.”

“Overall, yes I would recommend but it could run better around getting an appointment.”

“Probably.”

“Yes definitely.”

RESPONSIVENESS

- Do you get enough time with the doctor?

“Yes, they tend not to rush us. Dr Yusuf is good, but another doctor is always clock watching and says that they can’t deal with things.”

“Yes”

“I never get to see a doctor, I always see an ANP. But she’s fine.”

“No, I feel rushed in the slot.”

“Yes”

“I’m hoping I’ve got a double appointment. I’d be rushed otherwise.”

“Sometimes I’ve been rushed because they’ve overrun with other patients.”

“No”

“Varies.”

“Yes.”

- Have you been referred other services that may be able to help you?
(e.g. Social Prescribing)

“No”

“They made a referral for support after I had a stroke.”

“No”

“No”

“I access other services via the Phoenix Hub”

“No”

“Referred to the COPD nurse”

“Waiting for physio, supposedly a referral was a month ago.”

“Never needed one.”

“I’m under a lot of other departments.”

- Has there been an occasion when you have felt you had to attend A and E rather than get a GP appointment? Can you tell me about that?

“No”

“No but some people do.”

“Yes quite a few years ago. They’ve improved since then.”

“I’ve got a COPD nurse, so I ring her so that I’m not waiting for an appointment to come through. She checks me over and can prescribe antibiotics.”

“Mainly for my kids yes.”

“I’ve ended up at A and E quite a lot because of fits with my drinking.”

“For my children yes and I’ve felt like I’ve had no other choice.”

“I regularly go through 111 and get a same day appointment for my children and myself.”

“I very rarely come here because it’s a bit of a waste of time.”

“Once when I was desperate to be seen and was diagnosed with thrombosis by the hospital.”

- Any Other Comments

“They’re a good practice but struggling to get people in to see the doctor.”

Healthwatch BwD received an anonymous feedback webform the day after our visit from a patient stating,

“Nothing went well, Dr Farah Bhojani has no knowledge, been given antibiotics 3 times made no different in the end sent me to A&E, ghost management when I asked to speak to a manager sent pillar to post. How are they operating.”

This may have been from one patient we saw on our visit who stated, “I’ve already had 2 lots of antibiotics, and they want me to have a third lot, so the nurse has arranged for me to have a GP appointment. Only she picked up on it.”

Staff views

ACCESSIBILITY

How easy/difficult do you think it is to get an appointment with the GP?

It varies on the day. We do try to accommodate for patients. Once appointments are gone, we do try to offer out of hours appointments.

This varies depending on how many doctors are working that day.

Do people get to see the GP on time?

Again, it varies but depends on availability. Just recently we have had more pre-bookable appointments to offer.

Yes and no, again this depends on the day and how many doctors.

APPROACHABILITY

How do you identify and support more vulnerable patients?

Coding on their record.

RESPONSIVENESS

Do you have a social prescriber attached to the practice and do you refer to them?

No

No

How do you manage DNA appointments?

We call and code them. This is done by admin using their own initiative and offering for patients to rebook. We have patients who do not live in Blackburn and are most likely to DNA due to travel issues. The Practice Manager is not involved in the review of DNAs.

Call to rebook and code it. All admin do this. Patients outside of Blackburn do not attend due to travel.

Why do you think some people access A and E rather than primary care?

Unable to accommodate them due to lack of appointments.

Because they have more urgent symptoms and can't wait for an appointment.

Any other comments

There's only one receptionist on most days. All family related mistakes are covered by the admin team.

Response from provider

We did not receive a response from the provider.

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen

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