



Ewood Medical Practice

431-433 Bolton Road, Blackburn, BB2 4HY

Enter and View Report

20<sup>th</sup> May 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:

Ewood Medical Practice  
431-433 Bolton Road, Blackburn, BB2 4HY

Staff met during our visit:

Junaid Sidat (Practice Manager)

And the supporting team

Date and time of our visit:

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026 9.30am

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen  
Representatives

Sarah Johns (Lead Staff)  
Liam Kershaw-Calvert (Staff)

Lucy Collier (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](http://www.healthwatchblackburnwithdarwen.co.uk)

## Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen would like to thank Junaid Sidat together with patients and staff for making us feel welcome and taking part in the visit.

## General Information

### Number of GPs /patients

2 GPs/9,200 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 Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

We spoke to ten patients and five 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 three 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:

Ewood Medical Centre is located on Bolton Road, which is the main road connecting Blackburn and Darwen town centres and is accessible via public transport. The main entrance is located at the rear of the building and has ramp access.

Whilst the downstairs waiting room was bright and appealing, there are areas of the building which would benefit from adaptation and redecoration; however, we understand that building work is planned soon. There is sufficient seating available in the waiting rooms, however there were limited chairs with arms which would be more accessible for patients with mobility issues. Parking was considered to be an issue for some patients due to the limited number of spaces available.

There are 2 GPs who cover Primrose Bank and Ewood Medical Centres, operating from Primrose Bank which resulted in feedback from patients that they struggle to see a GP rather than other clinicians. One patient found travel to Primrose Bank problematic and expensive due to having a disabled daughter. Some patients also found the triage process difficult. Consequently, some of the patients we spoke with stated that they would not recommend this surgery.

Feedback about staff was mixed with some patients feeling that 'they are lovely' whilst others felt that 'they can be a bit rude.' However, the majority of patients felt that they had enough time in their appointments.

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. However, some work to raise awareness of social prescribing both amongst patients and staff would be beneficial.

## 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 is one phone line and email address covering both Primrose Bank and Ewood Medical Practices with Primrose Bank being the main contact. There are no images of staff which may be helpful for new patients and there are 2 GP partners 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 an option for translation, however there is 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 9.10am on Wednesday 20th May 2026 and were third in the queue.

#### External environment

The medical practice is located on Bolton Road, the main thoroughfare between Blackburn and Darwen town centres. The centre is easily accessible by public. There are carparking spaces at the rear of the building where the main entrance is located. However, these are limited, being located both next to residential and commercial properties and situated just behind Blackburn Rovers football ground. There are no dedicated disabled parking spaces. The entrance is wheelchair accessible with a ramp to the entrance.



## Internal Environment

The practice has two waiting rooms, one on each floor but patients are greeted first by reception staff on the ground floor. The reception desk currently is very open, thus not allowing for much privacy for patients, however we understand from the Practice Manager that internal building adaptations are planned. The main waiting room downstairs is bright with sufficient seating, and an accessible toilet is available. There is limited seating downstairs with arms for patients with mobility issues. The waiting room upstairs does however have more seats with arms. There were no chair raisers available in the waiting rooms.



The upstairs of the building needs redecoration, and the flooring is not dementia friendly and potentially a trip hazard, particularly with different levels of flooring as you go from the waiting room to either a clinic room or the toilet upstairs. There is also an ill-fitting baby gate at the top of the staircase.



Whilst there is a good amount of patient information available, this was rather cluttered on the walls rather than being contained on noticeboards and may need a review as to how up to date the information is. We noted our Healthwatch poster on display. The TV screens in the waiting room were not in operation which could also provide a source of up-to-date patient information.

There are bathroom facilities available in both waiting rooms including an accessible bathroom on the ground floor. However, the toilet did not have a contrasting colour seat, recommended for patients living with dementia.



We noted that there is an area to the right as you enter the building which is currently being used as a ‘dumping ground’ for unused furniture. We understand from the Practice Manager that these are being removed soon.



## Approachability/Flexibility of the Practice

There are two GP partners however they are based out of Primrose Bank Medical Practice not Ewood. Other clinical practice staff which cover both sites include an advanced clinical practitioner, 1.5 fulltime equivalent nurses, two healthcare assistants, 2.5 full time equivalent pharmacists and a physician associate. A mental health practitioner is shared across Blackburn North Primary Care Network group of GP practices as well as a social prescriber available through the Blackburn North Integrated Neighbourhood Team.

Practice opening hours are 8am-6.30pm however there are extended hours in the mornings with pre-bookable appointments with either GPs or nurses. There are on average 100 appointment requests a day with an on-call doctor screening all requests on the same day to assess whether they are routine, urgent or need referring to either pharmacy or Emergency Department.

Prescriptions are now managed in house as from October 2025, with the Practice Manager upskilling staff to manage these which he believes has helped a lot.

The nurses and pharmacists hold asthma and diabetes clinics. The nurses conduct screening appointments e.g. cervical screening. The practice is currently focusing on increasing uptake of cervical screening amongst 25-50-year-olds and being proactive in booking women in for appointments. However, overall, the practice exceeded their targets for screening uptake and for medications. Vaccination uptake however is low, a common theme across the borough.

More vulnerable patients and patients whose first language is not English are accommodated via double appointments and interpreters are pre-booked at Primrose Bank Medical Practice. Patients with learning disabilities are identified on their patient record and are seen by GPs at Primrose Bank surgery including for their annual health check. Patients with mobility issues are most often invited to Primrose Bank due to the practice being single storey but if patients come to Ewood Medical Practice they can be accommodated on the ground floor for appointments.

The practice also supports patients at Acer Lodge care home with an advanced clinical practitioner visiting the home every Friday.

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.

## Feedback from Patients

### ACCESSIBILITY

- Are the opening hours sufficient?

The majority of patients felt that the practice opening hours were sufficient however feedback from two patients included “It depends - shocking hours. Need later appointments for people who work” and “Yes but it would be better if they were open at the weekend.” Whilst another patient stated, “Yes but it’s a struggle to get an appointment.”

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

Patients drove or got public transport including taxis to the practice for their appointments. Parking was felt to be an issue for half of the patients we spoke with e.g. “I drive but parking is atrocious.” Another commented that it was difficult to access via bus - “Not by bus - it takes 2 buses”. One mother stated “I came here by taxi but because I’ve got a disabled daughter it can be an issue going up to Primrose to see a GP. I need to get a black cab which can accommodate her. That’s expensive.”

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

“I booked it on the app. It can be confusing and get messed around.”

“Needs a more accessible way to make an appointment. Have to go through too many steps. Have to go into the surgery because making an appointment is difficult.”

“It was my annual checkup. I’ve had five appointments in 2 weeks because I have to be seen separately for each issue.”

“Over the desk - can’t get through on the phone.”

“Made the appointment at Primrose Surgery. I tried online for half an hour but decided to shut it down. I’ve been here for 50 years, and it’s got more complicated now.”

“The doctor made the appointment for me.”

“They harassed me! I’ve come in for an asthma check and now they’re saying I’ve got asthma and COPD. They need to sort my inhaler because it doesn’t work for both.”

“I filled out a triage online and was sent a link for the physio. The physio result came back as red/amber so was made an appointment here. It’s not personal any more getting an appointment.”

“Over the phone -it was booked by the pharmacist.”

“I had to push for my appointment today. This surgery is unsafe. There’s no GPs. I get told to go elsewhere nine times out of ten. My son has been in pain for six weeks.”

## APPROACHABILITY

- Are staff courteous and polite?

Feedback about staff was mixed from patients.

“The majority are polite.”

“It’s my first time here.”

“Doesn’t feel like they’re listening to patients. They can be ‘uppity’.”

“Yes mostly. Occasionally a bit rude.”

“They’re ok yes.”

“They’re ok. The doctor is very good.”

“They can be rude. They’ve been obnoxious since Primrose took over. Ewood wasn’t a problem at all before.”

“Mixed - sometimes cold.”

“They’re lovely.”

“Some are ok some are ignorant. There’s one who is ok here and one at Primrose.”

- Would you recommend this GP surgery?

“Yes and no - wouldn’t because their hands are tied.”

“N/a - first time here”

“No not really - you only get to see nurses here and it just feels like you go round in circles. I’ve seen the doctors’ names but never seen them.”

“Yes”

“Yes, they’re ok. But it’s a problem trying to get through on the phone.”

“Yes, and Primrose.”

“No but I’m stuck here. This has been my surgery for 20 years. I don’t want to go to Primrose it’s too far.”

“No.”

“Yes”

“No, I’m looking to change surgery.”

## RESPONSIVENESS

- Do you get enough time with the doctor?

“Yes”

“N/A first time here.”

“I last saw a doctor in 2015 after I had a heart attack.”

“It’s difficult to get an appointment.”

“Yes”

“Yes”

“Yes, I make sure I get enough time. I’m a full-time carer so I need to make the most of the time I can get with the doctor because it’s hard to take time out.”

“Not sure don’t really get to see a GP.”

“Yes, I think so - I make sure I ask as many questions as I can.”

“I’ve been with the practice 8 years, but it’s gone worse. It’s hard to be able to see a doctor.”

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

The majority of patients stated that they had not been referred on to other services. Two patients commented, “I’m consistently referred on rather than being seen here” and “I’m registered here as a carer but not really had any other support.”

- 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”

“Never had a GP.”

“Possibly a while ago.”

“No.”

“No.”

“No”

“Yes, for my last episode.”

“No.”

“Yes constantly. They tell me to go to A and E and when I get there, they say please say you’re not at Primrose.”

- Any Other Comments

“I am happy enough with it. The doctors always recommend things but there’s been a huge turnover of doctors.”

“I don’t know who my GP is anymore.”

“I came here because I’ve been having issues with my lungs. Had an appointment but it’s been cancelled on the day when I’ve taken time out from work. It’s now been rearranged for the 9<sup>th</sup> of June. My blood pressure has been high, and I never get a face-to-face appointment and just get told to see the pharmacy. It’s always the advanced nurse practitioners not a GP. I asked about how to make a complaint, but they’ve told me to do so by email. That’s not what it says on the website and isn’t fair on people whose language isn’t English or struggle with email.”

## Staff views

### ACCESSIBILITY

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

“To get an appointment patients have to complete an online triage which isn’t straightforward. I’m not keen on the triage. GP appointments have to go through an online triage process and that’s decided by the on-call doctor, it’s easier for patients to be booked in with a nurse.”

“Relatively easy. The triage system isn’t for everyone, but patients can call the reception.”

“Average.”

“With triage online, appointments are not as accessible as patients would like.”

Do people get to see the GP on time?

“They do get it on time. It’s a first come first served basis.”

“Yes. There can be a wait for more specialist areas such as spirometry screening due to only having one person trained but training is available. It is a large practice. I’d say it is the same wait as the majority of practices.”

“Yes, most people can see a GP. There are no GPs at Ewood only clinicians which may lead to some patients being unhappy with the service.”

“Yes.”

### APPROACHABILITY

How do you identify and support more vulnerable patients?

“It’s on the system and they often are supported by carers. Some patients can’t access triage, so their carers have to do it for them.”

“Ensure they are correctly coded on record. Allow extra time in appointments. Ensure the patients and carers are aware of services, given easy to read materials, reasonable adjustments are made.”

“Yes”

“Yes - help with triage and translation.”

### RESPONSIVENESS

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

“We have a pharmacy team.”

“Pharmacy team.”

“Pharmacy team.”

### How do you manage DNA appointments and why do you think some people access A and E rather than primary care?

“They think that they’ll get seen sooner and frustration with the GP wait time. It depends on their situation and if they don’t like the GP’s advice on triage they will go there anyway even though they don’t want to go to A and E.”

“Reminder texts are sent to try and reduce DNA appointments. I think people feel like they should be seen sooner for something that is non-urgent however again NHS waiting times are long and is an ongoing issue. Patients are offered cancellations where possible but a lot of them do also decline appointments.”

“We manage DNA appointments by sending reminder text messages to patients. Some patients may choose to access A and E rather than primary care due to concerns about the urgency of their condition.”

“We make them aware by sending a text message. After 3rd DNA a letter is sent. A and E - no appointments available at GP or given at a later date.”

### Any other comments

“Triage process can go back and forth a lot. Sometimes errors occur and messages don’t go through.”

“The practice overall is a pleasant practice with friendly staff. It is located in a poor socio-economic area and therefore I think the patients registered would benefit from education - health/IT etc to reduce friction that can sometimes occur.”

“With having as many patients we need to offer more appointments. Patients are frustrated - lack of app or care. As reception staff we have to follow protocol so always feel stuck between patients and clinicians.”

## Response from provider

Ewood Medical Practice would like to thank Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen for undertaking the Enter and View visit and for providing valuable feedback from patients, staff and the observations made during the visit. We welcome opportunities to reflect on our services and continually improve the experience we provide for our patients.

Whilst the report references two GP Partners, the practice also employs three additional part-time GPs, alongside a multidisciplinary team consisting of Advanced Clinical Practitioners, Practice Nurses, Healthcare Assistants, Clinical Pharmacists, a Physician Associate, Mental Health Practitioner and Social Prescriber. This wide range of healthcare professionals enables us to ensure patients are seen by the most appropriate clinician for their clinical needs and reflects the national NHS model of multidisciplinary primary care.

We are pleased to advise that significant improvement works have since been completed within the reception area, enhancing both the environment and patient experience. Photographs demonstrating these improvements have been provided alongside this response.

The report noted an area within reception containing unused furniture. This area had been temporarily coned off while awaiting collection by removal contractors due to limited storage space within the building. This was a short-term measure and has since been resolved.

The practice is also progressing plans to install a digital television information screen within the waiting area. This will provide patients with up-to-date health promotion information, practice news and details of available NHS services, improving communication within the practice.

Access to the practice remains a priority. We have a minimum of four reception team members answering telephone calls on any given day, ensuring patients can access the practice by telephone as well as in person. In addition, our online triage system remains open throughout normal practice opening hours, providing patients with convenient access to submit requests electronically.

Every online triage request is reviewed and clinically triaged by the on-call GP on the same day it is received, with no requests routinely carried forward to the following day. This ensures timely clinical assessment and prioritisation of patient need.

The report includes comments regarding difficulties obtaining appointments. We would note that every patient interviewed on the day had successfully obtained an appointment and attended the practice, which demonstrates that access was available. We recognise that demand across general practice remains exceptionally

high and continue to review our appointment capacity to improve patient access further.

Our appointment system is not operated on a first-come, first-served basis. In line with NHS Modern General Practice guidance, appointments are allocated according to clinical urgency, ensuring patients with acute or urgent medical needs are prioritised appropriately.

Where appropriate, patients may be signposted to other NHS services, including Community Pharmacy, Urgent Treatment Centres or other specialist services. This is undertaken in accordance with national NHS care navigation guidance, ensuring patients receive care from the most appropriate service for their condition while maintaining GP capacity for those requiring medical assessment.

Patients are only advised to attend the Emergency Department where this is clinically appropriate, or where an urgent condition cannot safely be managed within primary care. This occurs infrequently and only following clinical assessment.

To further strengthen local access, we are currently recruiting two additional part-time Salaried GPs who will be based at Ewood Medical Practice. This investment will increase GP availability for patients living locally and further enhance continuity of care.

We remain committed to listening to patient feedback, working collaboratively with Healthwatch and continually developing our services to ensure patients receive safe, responsive and high-quality care.

Supporting evidence: Photographs of the completed reception improvements are attached with this response.

Regards

Junaid



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