

Enter and View:

Swallownest

Health Centre:



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About us

Healthwatch Rotherham:

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Rotherham. We are here to make sure that those running services put people at the heart of care.

Our sole purpose is to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak out on their behalf. We focus on ensuring that peoples' worries and concerns about current services are addressed and work to get services right for the future.

Details of visit:

Address	Worksop Road Swallownest Rotherham S26 4WD
Service Provider	Swallownest Health Centre
Date and time of visit	3rd June 2024, 2pm - 4pm
Representatives	Kym Gleeson Alison North
Visit status	Announced

Swallownest Health Centre:

Swallownest Health Centre is located at Worksop Road, Swallownest, S26 4WD.

It is registered with the CQC to deliver the Regulated Activities of diagnostic and screening procedures; family planning services; maternity and midwifery services; treatment of disease, disorder or injury; and surgical procedures.

The practice is situated within the South Yorkshire Integrated Care System (ICS) and delivers General Medical Services (GMS) to a patient population of around 16,260. This is part of a contract held with NHS England.

There is a team of 5 GP partners and 7 salaried GP's who provide clinical cover. The practice has nurses and other healthcare assistants who provide clinics for the management of long term conditions. The clinical teams are supported by a team of reception and administration staff. The practice management team provide overall managerial oversight.

The practice was rated as 'Requires Improvement' when it was inspected in June 2023.

[Information taken from the latest CQC inspection dated 27/9/23]

Disclaimer:

Please note that this report is related to findings observed on the date listed above. Our report relates to this specific visit to this service and is not representative of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time. This report is written by Healthwatch Rotherham using the information gathered by the Enter and View Authorised Representatives named above who carried out the visit on behalf of Healthwatch Rotherham.

What is Enter and View?

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 legislation allows Enter and View activity to be undertaken on premises where health and social care is publicly funded, such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. We visit:

- To gather the views of health and social care service users, families and carers.
- To report what we see and hear to providers, regulators, Local Authority and NHS commissioners and quality assurers, the public, Healthwatch England and any other relevant partners to improve the quality of health and social care services.
- To develop insights and recommendations across multiple visits to inform strategic decision making at local and national levels.

Purpose of the visit:

- To collect the views from patients, families, volunteers and staff on services.
- To observe how the facility operates and provides its services.
- To identify 'Best Practice' and highlight any areas of concern.

Methodology:

We follow Healthwatch England guidelines for Enter and View visits. The steps below summarise the process:

- **Plan:**
 - Appoint an Enter and View lead for the visit.
- **Communicate:**
 - Inform the provider of the visit, and relevant details including the purpose, date, time, estimation of how long it will take, how many people will be carrying out the visit, and the name of the lead person.
 - Include information about how members of the public can contact Healthwatch Rotherham if they are not able to when the visit is taking place.
- **Prepare:**
 - Prepare resources such as surveys and questionnaires.
 - Identify any requirements for special support necessary to facilitate the visit such as access or security. This must be done before the visit, as you may be refused entry.
- **Report:**
 - On completion of the visit a draft report is shared with the service provider requesting comments on factual accuracy and responses to any recommendations within 20 working days.
- **Follow up:**
 - The final report is published on Healthwatch Rotherham website and shared with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Healthwatch England and the service provider.

The visit to Swallownest Health Centre took place from 2pm to 4pm on 3rd June 2024 with two trained Enter and View representatives.

During the visit the team were able to spend time observing the daily work of the surgery, noting the general environment such as cleanliness, comfort, and information displays, and to speak to both patients and staff.

Enter and View observations:

External and entrance:

On arrival we noted that the outside of the building was marked as a 'Customer Service Centre' and walking up to the building there was no mention of a health centre being there.

Signage on the ground floor is poor. There are lifts and stairs to take you up to the health centre but you have to look for the signs to know what floor to go to. There are no opening times on display but there was a sign about closing dates due to training.

There are lots of other signs and posters on the wall which are confusing due to the amount on display and the mismatched nature of them.

There was hand sanitiser available at the entrance.

The doors to the building are sometimes locked due to antisocial behaviour. When the doors are locked, patients have to use the intercom system to get buzzed in and out. There was no sign to explain this.

Internal environment and waiting area:

On entering the health centre, we noted that it was uncluttered, clean, bright and inviting. It was nicely decorated, with matching furniture, and was very modern. We did note that there was one chair in the waiting area that needed recovering as adequate cleaning wouldn't be possible in its current condition. There was space between the seating, the flooring was clean and bins were provided. The temperature was good. Air conditioning units were in use on our visit and there were also windows open. The corridors were wide throughout, allowing good access for wheelchairs and pushchairs. In the waiting areas there was equipment that patients could use to measure their height, weight and blood pressure. Cleaning wipes were available for the equipment but there was a sign saying that they must be asked for.

The reception desk is placed near to the lifts and stairwell and conversations held with patients could be heard on all floors as you go up and down the stairs. Some conversations between receptionists and patients could also be heard in the waiting area. This created a lack of privacy for patients. The name of the receptionist on duty was not displayed but we noted they wore name badges. There was an option to check in by computer. There was hand sanitiser available at reception.

There were separate waiting areas for doctors and other health professionals, although there appeared to be some confusion amongst patients as to where to sit. We

observed patients who were sitting in the doctors waiting area, being called for appointments with other healthcare professionals. The areas were quite quiet when we first arrived but it got very busy from 2.30pm when clinics and doctors appointments were running. Patients' names were called by health care professionals when it was time for their appointment. Patients did not appear to wait too long to be called in. There are signs on display telling patients that appointments are for 10 minute slots and also that if they have been waiting more than 20 minutes, to go to reception. The consulting rooms have the name of the member of staff using the room displayed on the outside.

There was an excessive amount of information on display to patients as they waited. There were numerous laminated A4 signs on the reception glass and throughout the health centre, 9 notice boards and an electronic information sign (although this wasn't working on our visit). There was no particular order or organisation to the information displayed making it feel overwhelming. We saw limited information regarding complaints. There was however, a Patients Participation Group (PPG) suggestion box placed prominently in the doctors waiting area, with information about what the PPG does and a Positivity box on reception.

Toilets were clearly marked in the waiting areas, including in Braille. The toilets were unisex and contained baby changing facilities. They were large and clean and had information on the back of the door about how to get help if you are being abused.

Staff:

The majority of the staff we saw during our visit were friendly and smiling. We observed many staff walking in and out of reception, all of whom wore name badges and/or lanyards. Most of the staff wore uniforms where they were bare below the elbow although we saw some with long sleeves and wearing watches. Staff areas are locked with a fob.

We noted that some receptionists were louder than others, making privacy impossible in both the waiting areas and in the stairwell. We clearly heard a conversation between a patient and the receptionist where the reason for the appointment was discussed loudly. We also considered the receptionist to be non-empathetic to that particular patient.

Additionally, we observed another incident with a member of staff. The member of staff, having shouted the patient's name, made no effort to see if the patient had heard their name be called, made no eye contact with the patient and didn't wait to see if the patient needed extra time to walk across the room before they disappeared down a corridor. There appeared to be a lack of consideration for the needs of the patient.

Survey Responses:

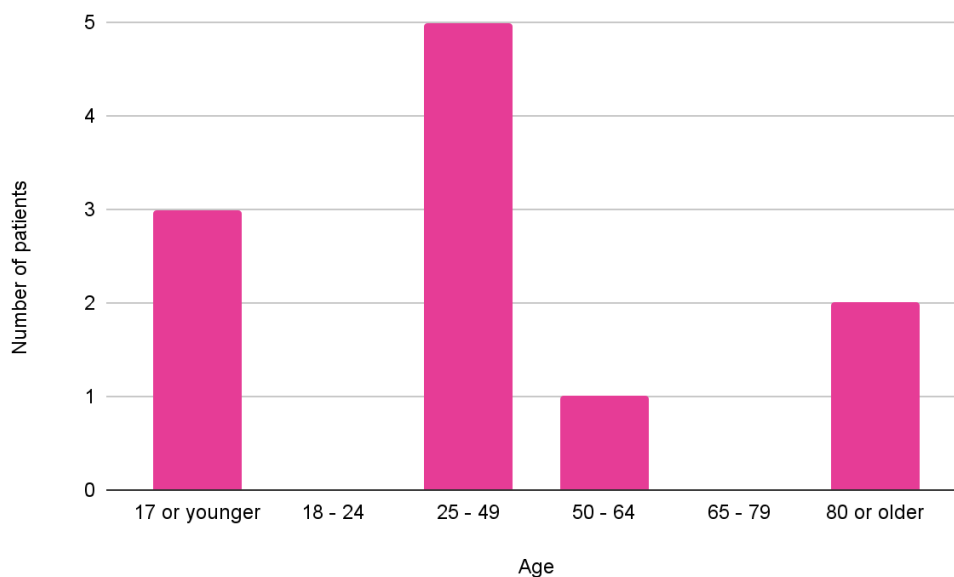
As well as conducting our own observations, we handed out some surveys whilst we visited the health centre to both patients and staff. We also provided access to an online version of the surveys to allow for the surveys to be completed outside of the visit. We did this to get true and honest feedback from people who use and work at the health centre. We will use this data combined with our own observations to form a summary and any recommendations.

During our visit at the health centre, we spoke to 8 patients and gave them surveys to complete. 3 patients also completed our survey online.

Patients feedback:

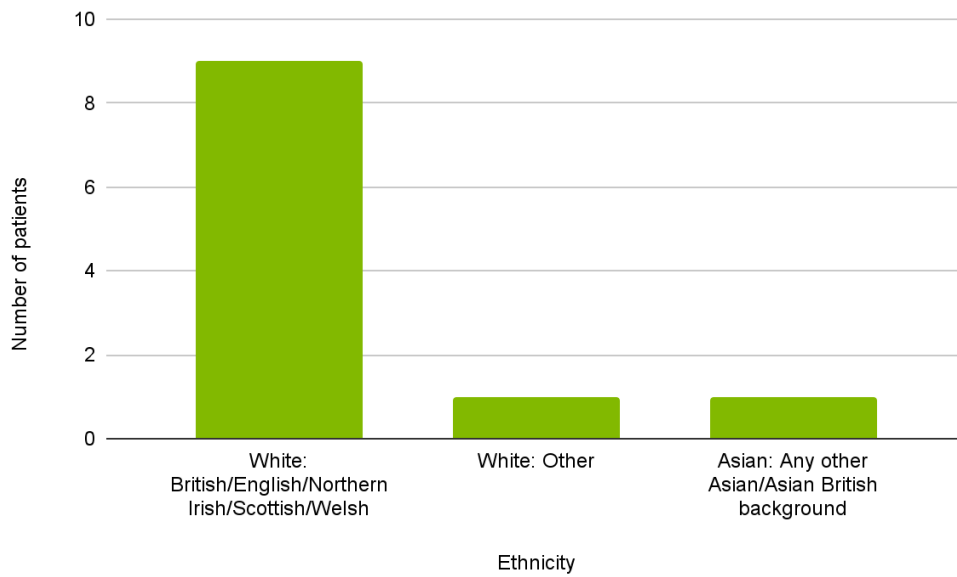
Demographic data:

Age:



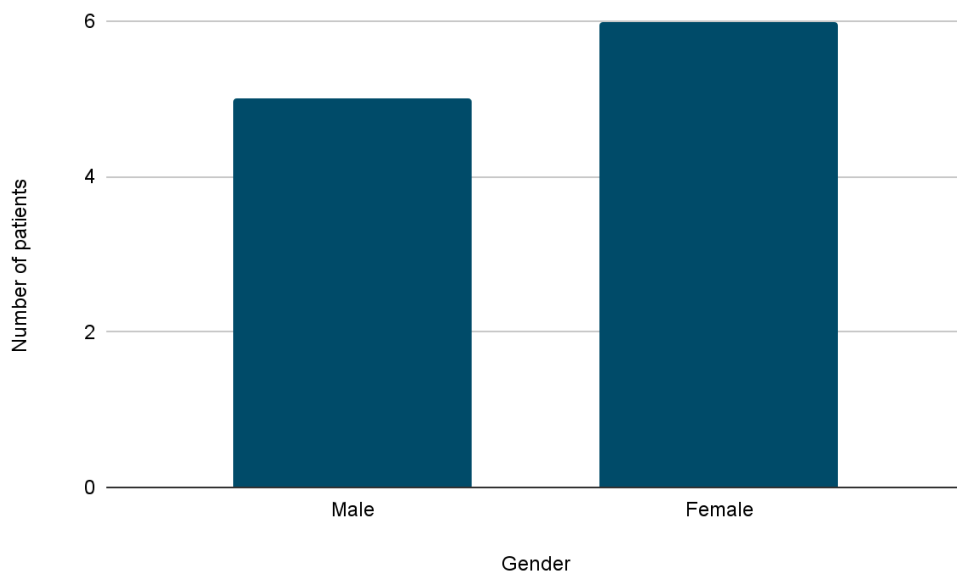
The age distribution of the practice largely mirrors local and national averages, however the practice has a larger percentage of older people [CQC inspection dated 27/9/23]. Our survey doesn't particularly mirror those averages but we did manage to get responses from a good range of ages.

Ethnicity:



The ethnic make-up of the practice areas is approximately 97.4% White, 1.0% Asian, 0.9% Mixed, 0.6% Black and 0.2% Other [CQC inspection dated 27/9/23]. This is reflected in the ethnicities of those who completed our survey.

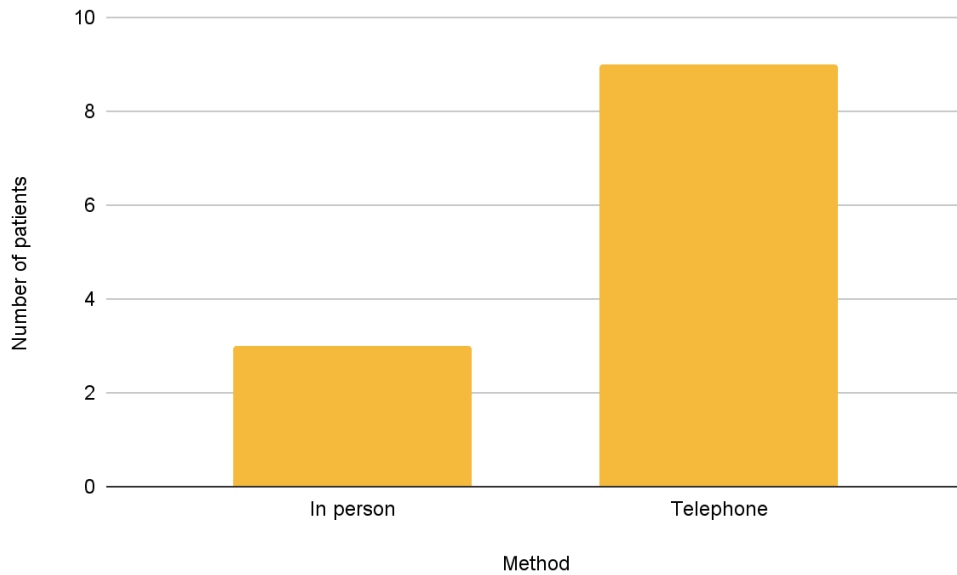
Gender:



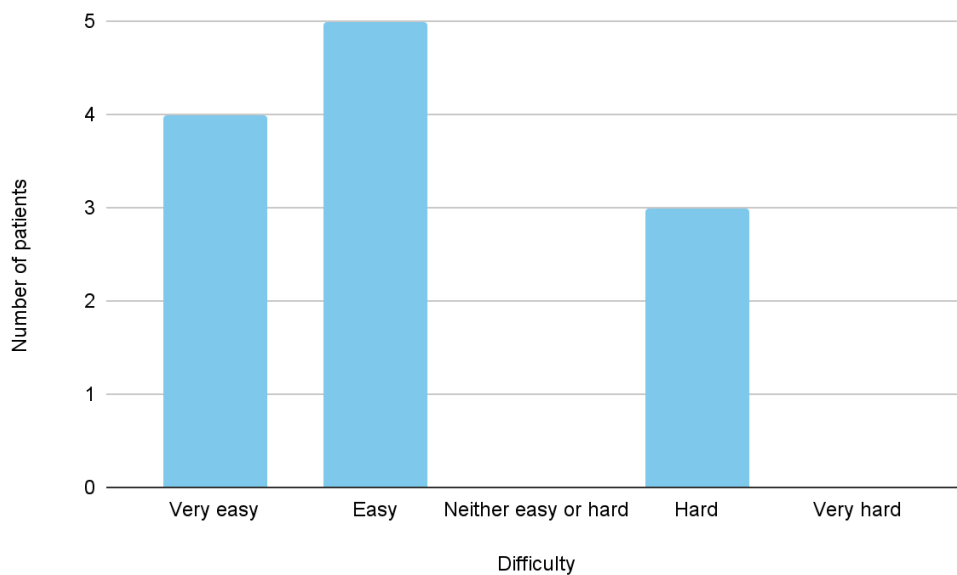
We received completed surveys from a fairly equal split of male and female patients which will give us more rounded information regarding patient experience.

We asked:

1. How did you book today's appointment?

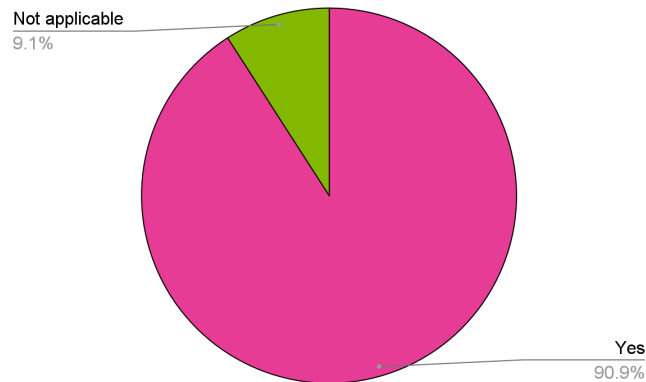


2. How easy was it to make the appointment?

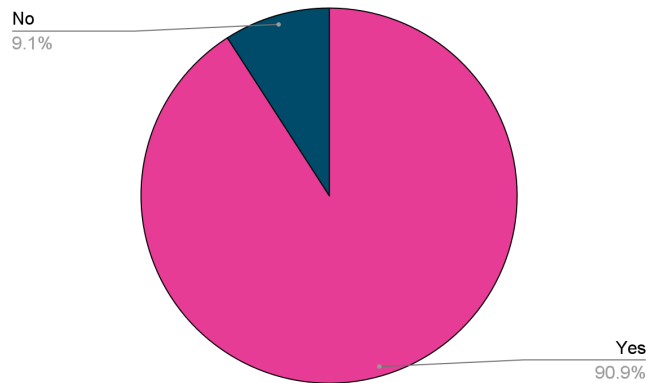


- "It was easy today but it isn't always"
- "Phoned at 8am, 40 mins on hold"
- "Today yes, not always the case"

3. Were you asked the reason why you wanted to see a doctor/clinician?

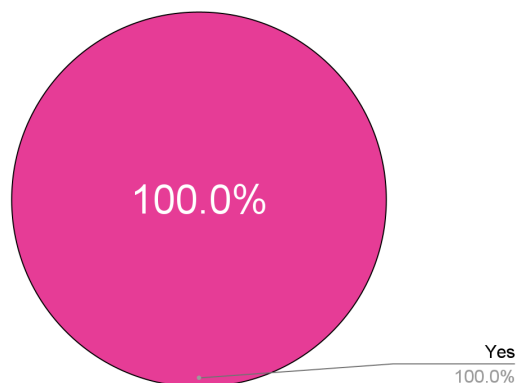


4. Were you comfortable giving the reason?



- “Not really as sometimes I feel they don’t understand me and there has been times that instead of booking me with a doc they told me “Just go to a pharmacy!”

5. Were you happy with the appointment you were given?



6. When visiting the practice, how helpful were the following in relation to your individual needs?

Reception staff:



Out of everyone who dealt with a member of reception staff, all said that they were helpful, very helpful or extremely helpful.

- “Today, very good; courteous, polite, friendly and listened to needs. Sadly this is not the case at all times with some very rude senior members of staff”

Doctor:



Out of everyone who saw a doctor, all said that they were helpful or very helpful.

Nurse:

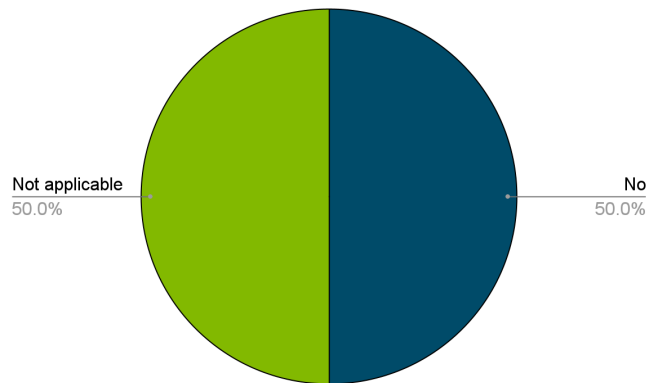


Out of everyone who saw a nurse, all said that they were helpful or very helpful.

Other medical professional:

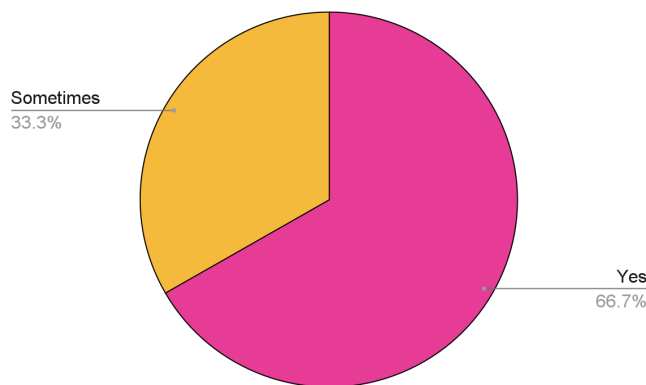
- No one who completed our survey saw another medical professional.

7. If you need an interpreter, do you know how to arrange this with the practice?



*although half of the responses to this question were 'no', this is not knowledge that is needed by the public unless they require this service so this isn't of concern.

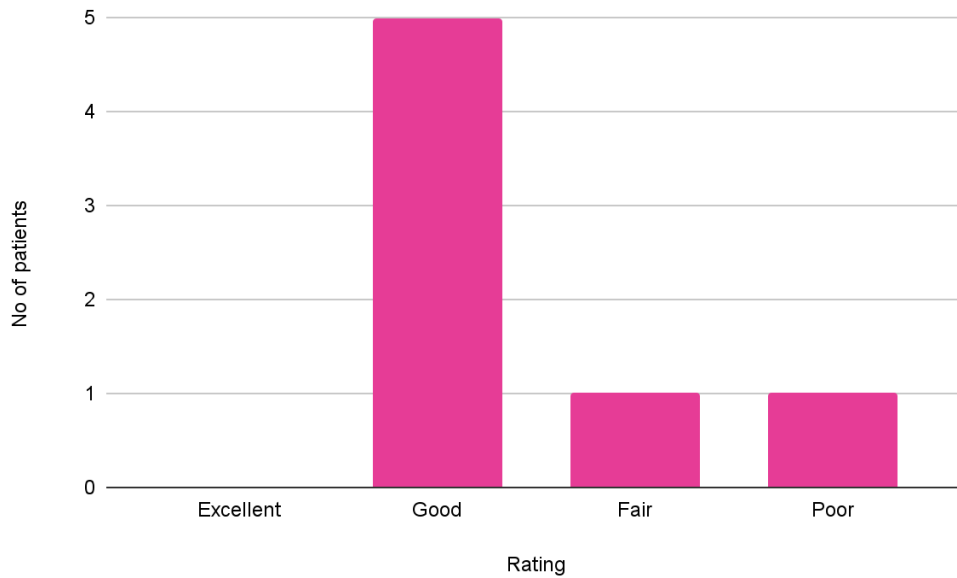
8. When you're seeing a doctor/nurse/other medical professional, do you feel you are listened to and do you think your concerns are taken seriously?



- "This time for my son, yes. But I've been a few weeks ago and got rushed"
- "I've never had any problems "
- "Not really sometimes"
- "Yes, I have no concerns"
- "Sometimes very well, other times very poorly indeed. [I] have experienced some very insensitive and rude medical professionals"

9. What are your views on the waiting room and your experience of waiting for your appointment?

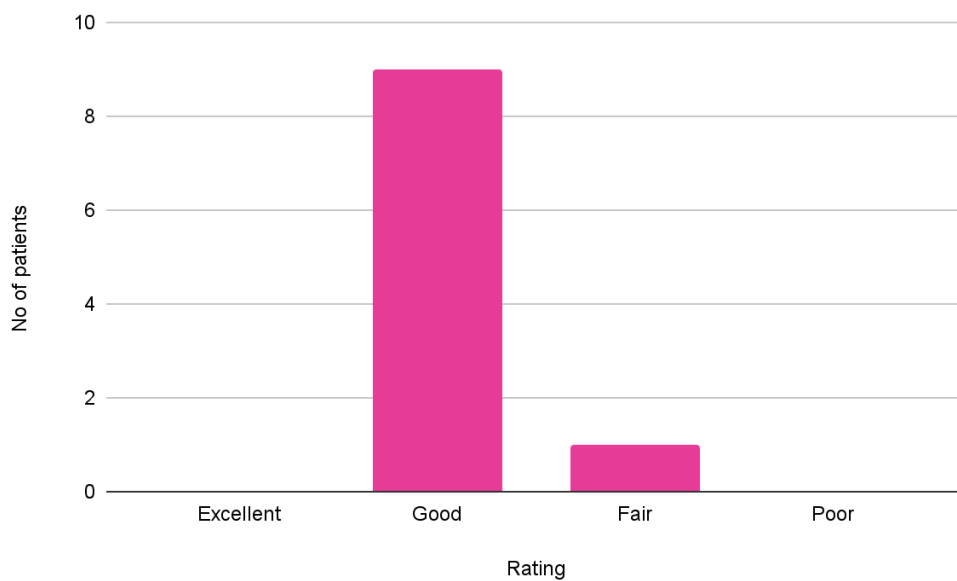
Privacy



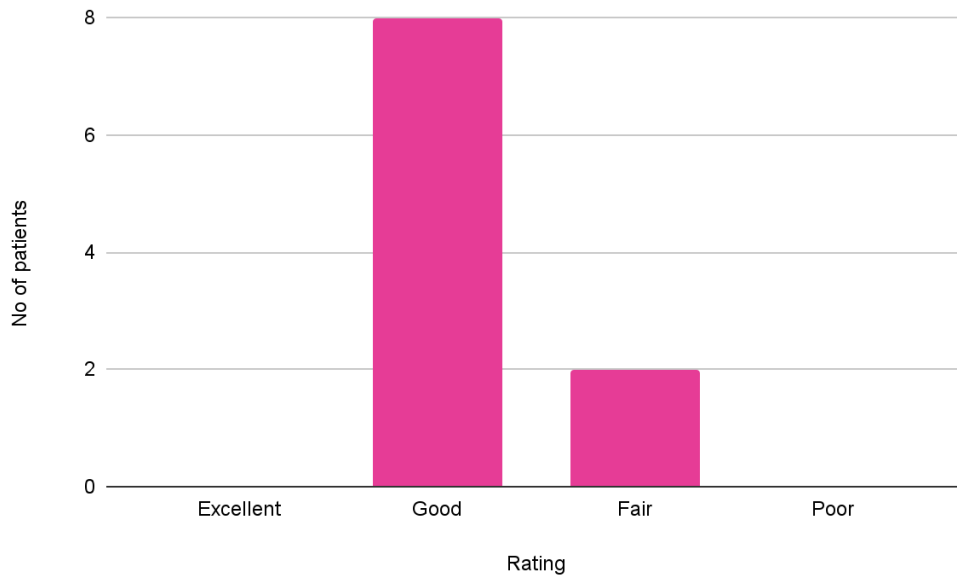
- "No privacy, especially talking to reception"
- "It's very open"

Comfort:

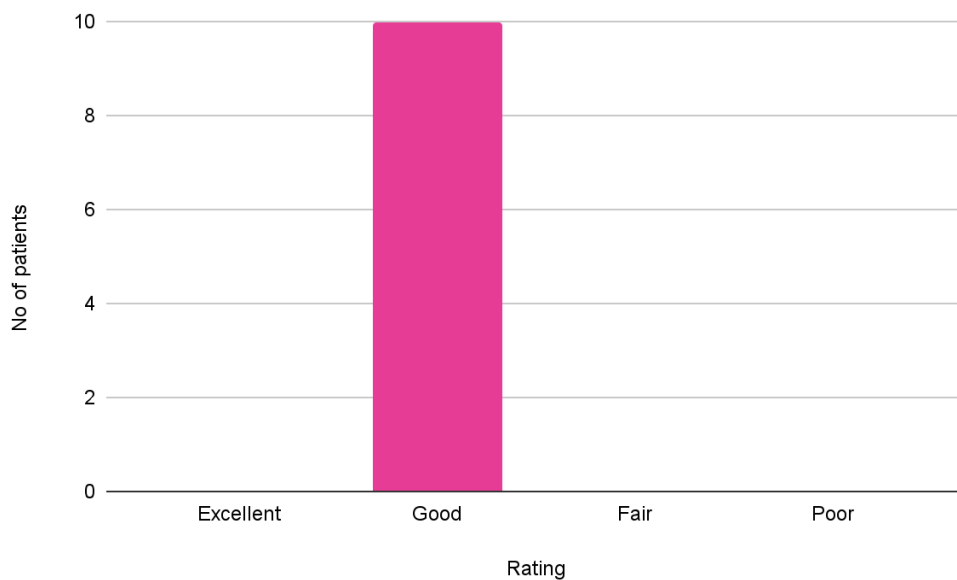
Chairs



Temperature

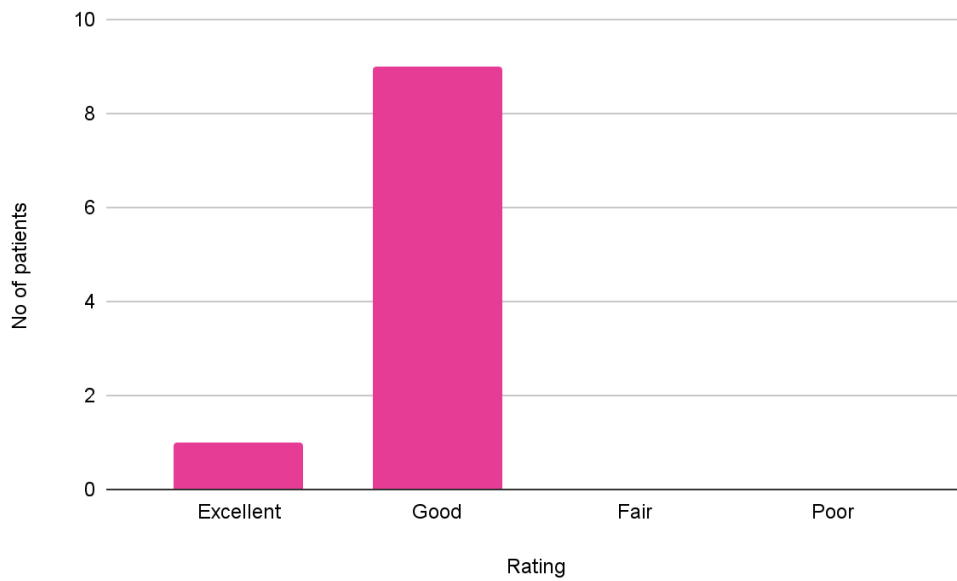


Cleanliness

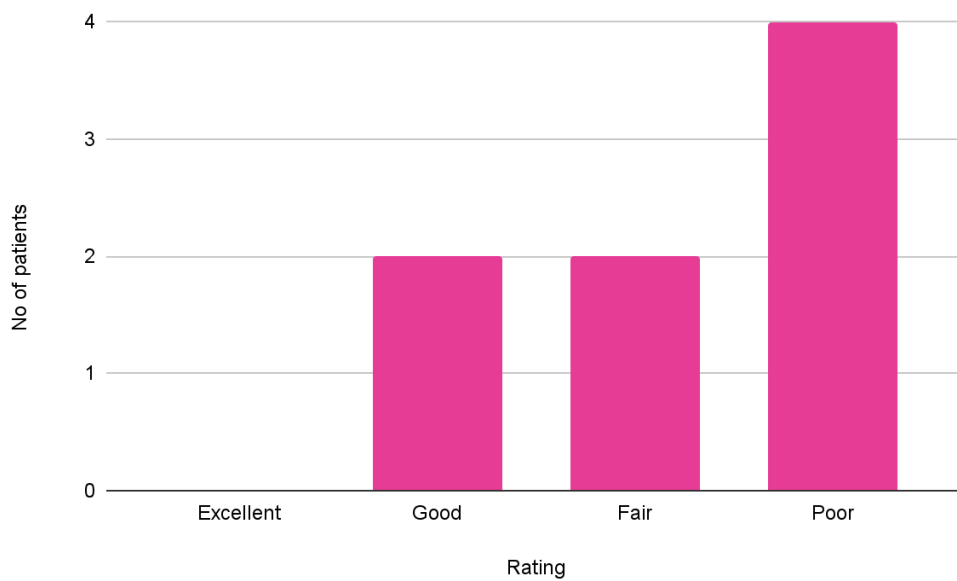


- "Waiting room area clean"
- "Very clean"

Lighting

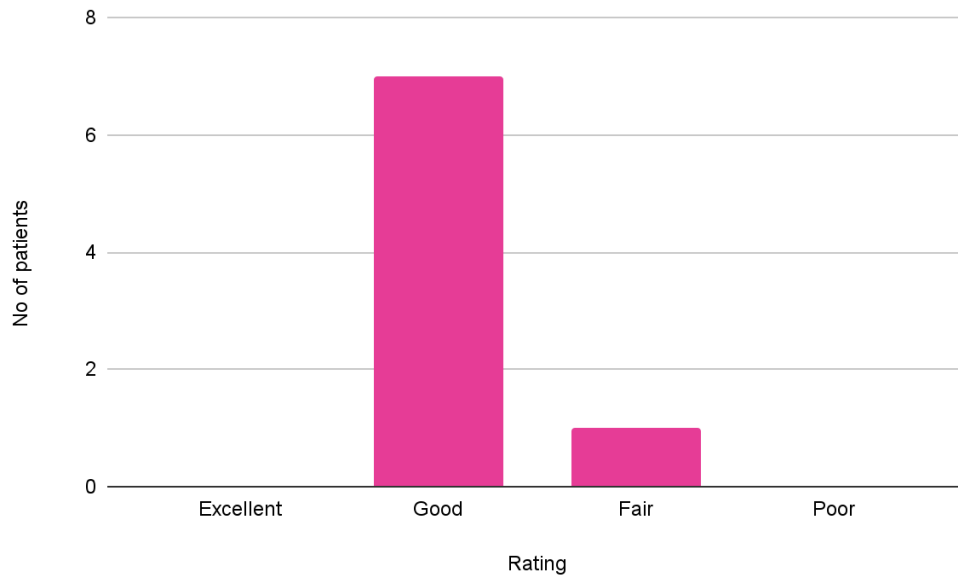


Being updated on your appointment ie delays



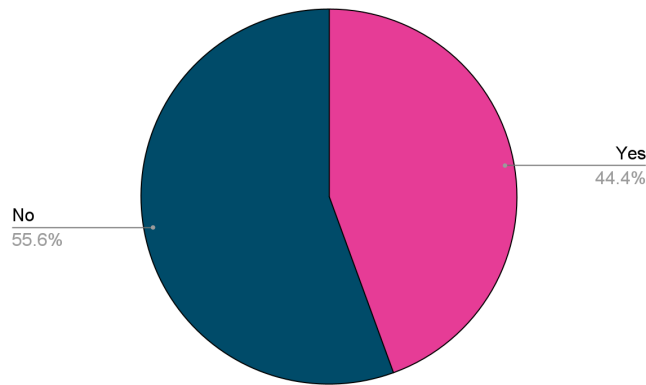
- “Never been told for delay. I am always waiting more than I should. I have never been seen on the time booked”
- “Not always great communication, often long delays with no advice as to why”

Practice information - is it up to date and relevant to you?

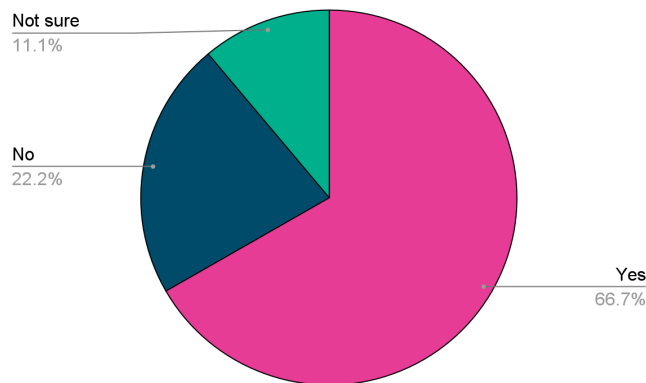


10. Are you always clear on what to do next? For example how to get:

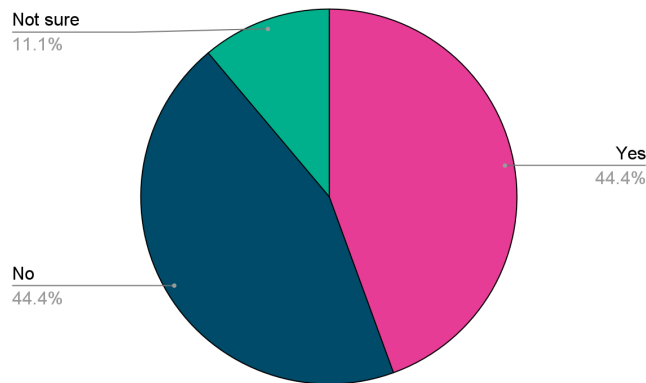
A repeat prescription



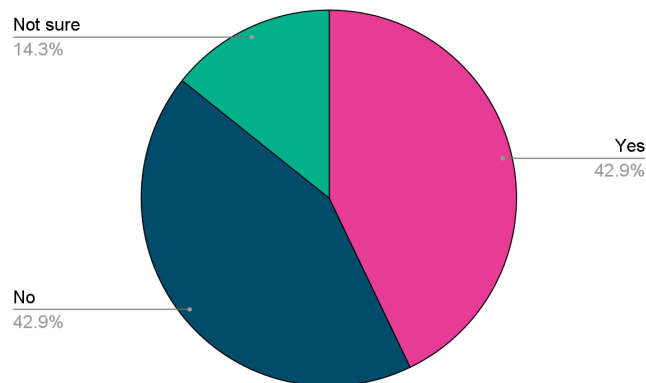
Your test results



A follow up appointment (with a doctor/nurse/other medical professional)



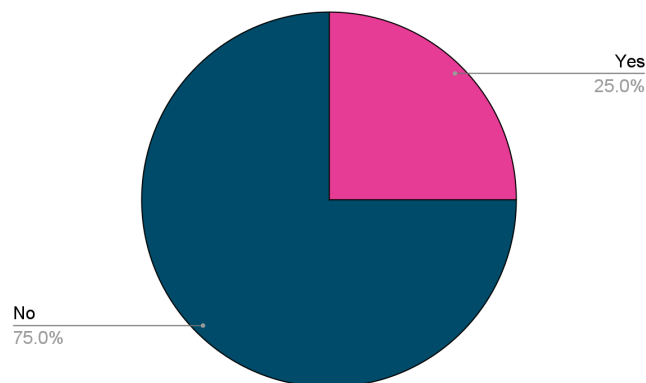
Referrals for other treatment or advice (for example physiotherapy, hospital specialist or clinic)



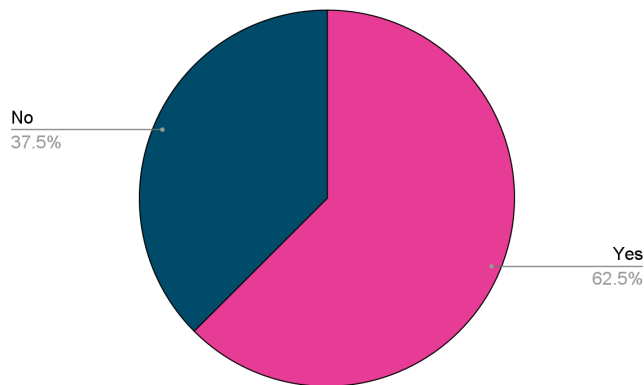
- "Had wrong information on more than one occasion"

11. Do you know how to give feedback to the practice? For example through:

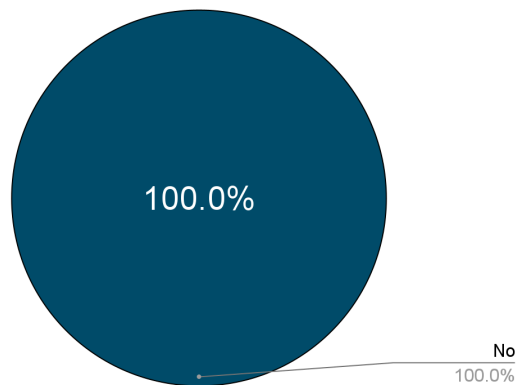
The Patient Participation Group (PPG)



Complaints procedure



Friends and family test



12. a) If you have left feedback or made a complaint, what was the outcome (if relevant)?

Only one person responded to this question

- "Dealt with very defensively and did not address concerns well"

b) Were you satisfied with the way your feedback/complaint was dealt with (if relevant)?

- "No"

13. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

- "I found my visit today very pleasant. The only problem I had was trying to make an appointment"
- "I don't have any issues with the surgery"
- "The situation varies depending on the staff/medical staff. Sometimes the experience is good, other times very unsatisfactory"
- "What has happened to the appointment system and seeing the practice in general since COVID? I can't get a test result consultation for almost 3 months, if one is available then"

Staff feedback:

As well as patients, we also spoke to 3 staff members employed by the health centre and asked them to complete our survey. A further 8 members of staff completed our survey online. Those who completed the survey were employed in a variety of positions in both medical and non medical support functions. All answers were anonymous.

1. What's the best thing about your job?

The overriding response to this question was that the staff loved helping people and felt that their friendly and supportive colleagues made it a good place to work.

- "The camaraderie, all the staff are very nice and we get along well"
- "I love getting to know patients. I also love feeling like I have helped somebody"

2. What's the most frustrating thing about your job?

The biggest frustration appears to be the need for more staff which would ease pressures on other colleagues, particularly around work loads and appointment availability for patients. The verbal abuse which some staff face from patients was also mentioned as a frustration.

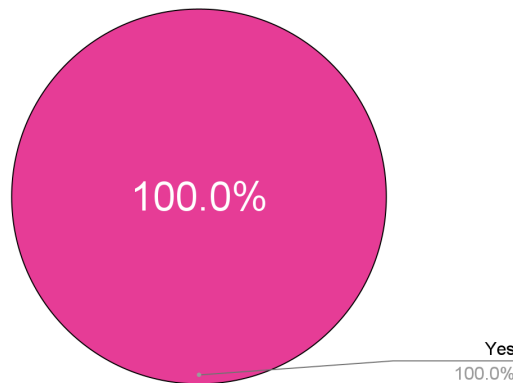
- "Not having the ability to suit everyone and patients being rude to staff members"
- "Not having enough staff/appointments to book patients into"

3. What are the main challenges you face?

The answers to this very much linked into the frustrations – heavy workloads, not being able to get appointments for patients and managing patient expectations, were all mentioned as challenges that staff face.

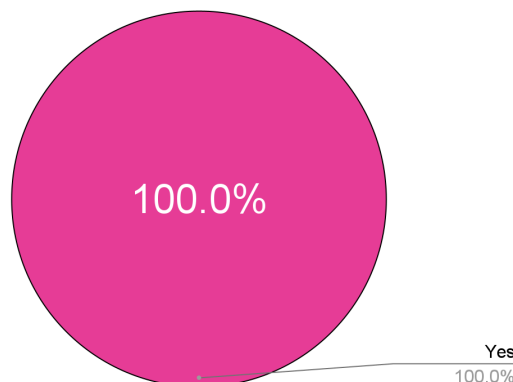
- “Doing the work in the hours you have”
- “Patient’s expectations, we can’t always give them what they want”

4. Do you have the right equipment to support you to do your role?



Although everyone said that they had the right equipment to support them in their role, there was a comment that some extra or newer equipment would help.

5. Do you have a break?



The number of breaks depends on the number of hours worked, with a full day entitling staff to 3 breaks. Although everyone stated that they had a break, one person did say that they don't tend to always take them.

6. a) Are you given the support and training you need to do your job?

9 out of 11 said they were given the support and training they needed to do their job.

b) Is there any additional training you would like to have?

6 out of 11 said that there wasn't any additional training that they would like.

Of the 5 who said there was, some of the training was connected to personal interests whereas some was linked to training that they felt would help them do their job better.

c) Are there any barriers to your training?

8 out of 11 said that there were no barriers to their training. However we had 3 responses where staff considered there were barriers:

- "Not always happy to pay for training"
- "Alternative days for mandatory training" (so that part time workers can all access the training)
- "Sometimes staff shortages have an impact on training new members of staff"

7. How do you think the practice could be improved? What suggestions would you make?

The most common response to this question was to recruit more staff, particularly nursing staff. There was also a specific suggestion of recruiting a Business manager to deal with the finances and holidays, freeing up the Practice manager to deal with staff and patients. Other suggestions were:

- "Better communication"
- "Being able to offer more appointments"
- "More understanding of each others jobs"

Some staff also suggested that patient education could help improve things as well as tackling repeat non-attenders.

8. Do you feel able to make suggestions and/or raise concerns and if so, do you feel they are taken seriously by the practice?

Although **10 out of 11** said that they felt able to do this, 5 of those said this was only true some of the time, depending on the member of staff who was spoken to. Those who felt able to all of the time, commented on how comfortable and approachable they found partners and managers.

9. Are you up to date with your organisation's policies and procedures on the following?

Whistleblowing policy:

10 out of 11 are up to date.

Complaints policy:

11 out of 11 are up to date.

How to access interpreters procedure:

9 out of 11 are aware but one respondent did say that they would ask if they needed this information.

10. Are you supported with:

Stress management:

8 out of 11 said yes.

Mental health:

8 out of 11 said yes.

Physical health:

7 out of 11 said yes.

It was noted that one person did say that they didn't feel they needed this support but one other felt that calling in sick was difficult and didn't feel fully supported in doing so.

11. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

- “Lovely place to work with lovely people”
- “Rewarding and interesting. So much to do”

Summary and Recommendations:

Overall, Swallownest Health Centre is a place where patients are generally happy with the service they receive and the staff enjoy working there.

The health centre is bright, modern and welcoming. The levels of hygiene both from our observations and patient opinions is excellent and the patients are able to wait in comfortable surroundings. Patients mainly make their appointments in person or on the phone. Although most reported that they found it easy to make their appointment on the day of our visit, some acknowledged that this wasn't always the case. One patient told us they had a 40 minute wait on hold when they called for their appointment at 8am. Overall, all the patients were happy with the appointments they got although we noted that one patient had concerns over giving the reason for their appointment to reception staff as they felt they weren't always given the appointment they felt they needed.

The patients consider all the staff who work at the centre to be helpful, although there appears to be some issues regarding individual members of staff, both clinical and reception, who may come across as rude or insensitive. This is something we also observed on our visit. The biggest issues for the patients at Swallownest Health Centre appear to be the lack of privacy due to the open nature of the reception area and not being kept informed if there were delays to their appointments.

Patients at the health centre have a mixed awareness of some of the processes following appointments such as getting repeat prescriptions, referrals for other treatment or follow up appointments. There are also varying degrees of knowledge about how to give feedback to the health centre. None of the patients we heard from had heard of the Friends and Family test, and few had heard of the Patient Participation Group (PPG) - although we noted in our observations that information about this group was prominently displayed. We only heard from one patient who had fed anything back to the health centre and they were unsatisfied with the outcome of their complaint.

Staff members we observed on our visit were generally friendly and happy, although we noted a couple of incidents where staff could have been more considerate and

empathetic towards their patients. Overall, staff are happy working at the health centre. They feel supported, have the training and equipment to do their job, appreciate the camaraderie amongst the staff and enjoy feeling like they've helped people. Most feel comfortable raising any concerns they may have but feel some staff may be more approachable than others in this area. The biggest challenge staff face is down to staff shortages and the impact this has on workloads and the ability to offer patients enough appointments. Some staff receive verbal abuse from patients which is a concern. Most staff feel that the recruitment of more staff, particularly nursing staff, would help address these challenges.

Recommendations:

- Improve signage outside the building and in the entrance area so that patients can easily see that the health centre is located in the building and which floor to go to to access it.
- Provide signs on the doors and around the intercom to advise patients and other visitors how to enter and exit the building during opening hours if the doors are locked.
- Provide opening times at the entrance in addition to training closure dates.
- Replace or recover the damaged chair in the reception/waiting area.
- Evaluate the value and purpose of the information displayed on notice boards, walls and on reception windows. Organise the information that remains so that it is arranged into logical groups i.e. boards for service information, boards for conditions and advice etc to make it easier for patients to access the information.
- Ensure that the complaints procedure is clearly displayed.
- Consider moving the reception desk or an alternative solution to improve the privacy of patients when talking to staff. Ensure staff are aware of how much their voice can travel both in the waiting/reception area and in the stairwell.
- Regular reminders or further training to be given to staff in regards to empathy and consideration for each patient as an individual.
- Use the electronic board to inform patients of approximate waiting times to improve communication surrounding any delays.

Response:

Response from Swallownest Health Centre:

Thank you for your recent report on Swallownest surgery. The Partners have discussed this report today and would like to feedback on the following;

Due to the layout of the building and the fact that it is council-owned, it would not be feasible to alter the reception area as this would be structural, and not covered in our lease or insurance. However, we have agreed to increase signage at the reception desk and ensure that the main focal point of any materials is a private room for privacy sign, the complaints policy and the chaperone sign on display. We shall remove other posters to accommodate this change.

Noise does carry due to the layout of the building in general, upon reviewing the 2022-2023 complaints audit not one complaint received mentioned this to be an issue. However, the practice shall remind staff with a laminated sign behind reception to be aware.

We think the signage at the bottom is good - although we have agreed that having the practice opening times could be beneficial- this will be completed.

The waiting area display advice is to be passed to the PPG and to gain their thoughts on how this could be improved.

The PPG also does an annual survey around patient satisfaction and that includes the attitudes of staff. This is deemed a fairer reflection of patient response, as the quantity of data captured is much larger than Healthwatch's visit. We shall continue to encourage this survey and encourage feedback. Staff are also to complete annual training modules on dealing with conflict and challenge and customer service.

Staff routinely apologise to patients if there is a delay, admin and reception, and we are unaware of any way the call board could provide individual appointment/clinician delay times. We feel that the personal approach benefits the patient best.

We thank you for the feedback and appreciate the praise and constructive criticism provided.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to Swallownest Health Centre for being friendly, welcoming and allowing us to look around the premises. We would also like to thank them for taking time to respond to our recommendations.

Thank you also to everyone who took the time to speak to us and complete our surveys.

References:

CQC inspection summary:

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/location/1-545452796/inspection-summary>