

Devon Ultrasound Limited

# Window To The Womb

## Inspection report

8 Richmond Road  
Exeter  
EX4 4JA  
Tel: 01392758740  
[www.windowtothewomb.co.uk](http://www.windowtothewomb.co.uk)

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This report describes our judgement of the quality of care at this service. It is based on a combination of what we found when we inspected, information from our ongoing monitoring of data about services and information given to us from the provider, patients, the public and other organisations.

### Ratings

#### Overall rating for this location

Good



Are services safe?

Good



Are services effective?

Inspected but not rated



Are services caring?

Good



Are services responsive to people's needs?

Good



Are services well-led?

Good



# Summary of findings

## Overall summary

Our rating of this location stayed the same. We rated it as good because:

- The service had enough staff to care for women and keep them safe. Staff had training in key skills, understood how to protect women from abuse, and managed safety well. The service controlled infection risk well. Staff assessed risks to women, acted on them and kept good care records. The service managed safety incidents well and learned lessons from them. Staff collected safety information and used it to improve the service.
- Staff provided good care and treatment. Managers monitored the effectiveness of the service and made sure staff were competent. Staff worked well together for the benefit of women, advised them on how to lead healthier lives, supported them to make decisions about their care, and had access to good information.
- Staff treated women with compassion and kindness, respected their privacy and dignity, took account of their individual needs, and helped them understand their conditions. They provided emotional support to women, families and carers.
- The service planned care to meet the needs of local people, took account of women's individual needs, and made it easy for people to give feedback. People could access the service when they needed it and did not have to wait too long for their results.
- Leaders ran services well using reliable information systems and supported staff to develop their skills. Staff understood the service's vision and values, and how to apply them in their work. Staff felt respected, supported and valued. They were focused on the needs of women receiving care. Staff were clear about their roles and accountabilities. The service engaged well with women and the community to plan and manage services and all staff were committed to improving services continually.

# Summary of findings

## Our judgements about each of the main services

### Service

#### Community health services for adults

### Rating

Good



### Summary of each main service

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- Staff provided good care and treatment. Managers monitored the effectiveness of the service and made sure staff were competent. Staff worked well together for the benefit of women, advised them on how to lead healthier lives, supported them to make decisions about their care, and had access to good information.
- Staff treated women with compassion and kindness, respected their privacy and dignity, took account of their individual needs, and helped them understand their conditions. They provided emotional support to women, families and carers.
- The service planned care to meet the needs of local people, took account of women's individual needs, and made it easy for people to give feedback. People could access the service when they needed it and did not have to wait too long for their results.
- Leaders ran services well using reliable information systems and supported staff to develop their skills. Staff understood the service's vision and values, and how to apply them in their work. Staff felt respected, supported and valued. They were focused on the needs of women receiving care. Staff were clear about their roles and accountabilities. The service engaged well with women and the community to plan and manage services and all staff were committed to improving services continually.

# Summary of findings

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# Summary of this inspection

## Background to Window To The Womb

Window to the Womb is owned by Devon Ultrasound Limited, and operates under a franchise agreement with Window to the Womb (WTTW) (Franchise) Ltd. The service provides diagnostic pregnancy ultrasound services to self-funding women living in Devon and surrounding areas.

Window to the Womb opened in November 2016 and provides early pregnancy scans from six weeks and diagnostic pregnancy ultrasound services to self-funding women, from 16 to 40 weeks of pregnancy.

The service is available to women aged 18 years and above. However, young women from the age of 16 can also use the service if accompanied by an appropriate adult. All ultrasound scans performed at Window to the Womb are in addition to those provided through the NHS as part of a pregnancy care pathway.

Window To The Womb is registered with the CQC to carry out the following regulated activities:

Diagnostic and screening procedures

## How we carried out this inspection

We carried out a comprehensive inspection of the service under our regulatory duties. The inspection team comprised of a lead CQC inspector and an offsite CQC inspection manager. We gave the service short notice of the inspection because we needed to be sure it would be in operation at the time we planned to visit.

We undertook this inspection as part of a random selection of services rated Good and Outstanding to test the reliability of our new monitoring approach.

You can find information about how we carry out our inspections on our website: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/what-we-do/how-we-do-our-job/what-we-do-inspection>.

# Our findings






## Overview of ratings

Our ratings for this location are:

	Safe	Effective	Caring	Responsive	Well-led	Overall
Community health services for adults	Good	Inspected but not rated	Good	Good	Good	Good
Overall	Good	Inspected but not rated	Good	Good	Good	Good

# Community health services for adults

Good 

Safe	Good 
Effective	Inspected but not rated 
Caring	Good 
Responsive	Good 
Well-led	Good 

## Are Community health services for adults safe?

Good 

Our rating of safe stayed the same. We rated it as good.

### Mandatory training

**The service provided mandatory training in key skills to all staff and made sure everyone completed it.**

Staff received and kept up-to-date with their mandatory training.

The registered manager monitored compliance with mandatory training and alerted staff when they needed to update their training. Staff confirmed they were given time to do training.

The mandatory training was comprehensive and met the needs of women and staff.

The registered manager ensured staff completed a range of mandatory training which included fire safety, infection control, safeguarding, health and safety, mental capacity act, equality and diversity and information governance. The registered manager also provided additional health and safety training to that required by the provider. At the time of our inspection, 100% of staff had completed their mandatory training.

Staff completed fire safety training and they took part in fire drills every quarter.

### Safeguarding

**Staff understood how to protect women from abuse and the service worked well with other agencies to do so. Staff had training on how to recognise and report abuse and they knew how to apply it.**

# Community health services for adults

Staff received training specific for their role on how to recognise and report abuse. The clinic had clear safeguarding processes and procedures in place. All clinic staff were trained to at least safeguarding level two for both vulnerable adults and children; for example, scan assistants completed safeguarding level two training and the sonographer completed safeguarding level three training. The registered manager was the safeguarding lead and had completed safeguarding level three training.

Staff knew how to make a safeguarding referral and who to inform if they had concerns. Staff we spoke with were able to clearly articulate signs of different types of abuse, and the types of concerns they would report or escalate to the registered manager. Scan assistants had never had to raise a safeguarding referral but could give examples of when they felt it may be necessary to raise and escalate a concern appropriately.

A separate female genital mutilation (FGM) policy provided staff with clear guidance on how to identify and report FGM. Child sexual exploitation (CSE) and FGM were included in safeguarding training.

The provider had recently improved their national safeguarding policy, which was applicable to all locations. The new policy provided up to date guidance on recognising abuse and escalating concerns in the specific context of the service. The policy included processes for staff to obtain support in the event a child under the age of 16 years attempted to obtain a scan.

## Cleanliness, infection control and hygiene

**The service controlled infection risk well. Staff used equipment and control measures to protect women, themselves and others from infection. They kept equipment and the premises visibly clean.**

Clinical areas were visibly clean and had suitable furnishings which were visibly clean and well-maintained. Clinic rooms, toilets, reception and waiting areas were visibly clean. The service followed the franchise scan room safety and hygiene policy. Cleaning schedules were displayed in the clinic in line with this policy.

Cleaning records were up-to-date and demonstrated that all areas were cleaned regularly.

Staff completed a daily cleaning log and undertook hourly cleanliness visibility checks of toilet areas throughout their shifts. Staff documented and rectified any areas of concern as necessary. The registered manager had introduced more detailed cleaning logs in response to COVID-19 which prompted staff to clean every surface in the room they were cleaning.

Staff followed infection control principles including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). There were appropriate hand washing facilities and sanitising hand gel was available. Staff had their arms bare below their elbows and washed their hands before and after each scan. Personal and protective equipment such as latex-free gloves and antiseptic wipes were readily available for staff to use at the service.

In the twelve months before the inspection, there had been no incidences of healthcare acquired infections at the location.

Staff cleaned equipment and waiting areas after customer contact. For example, the couch in the treatment room used by customers was covered with a disposable cloth which was changed between patients. Staff disinfected the couch with an antibacterial wipe before laying out a new disposable cloth.



# Community health services for adults

The registered manager had updated the COVID-19 policy to provide guidance for staff to help reduce the spread of infection. Staff were following this policy.

The sonographer followed the manufacturer's and infection prevention and control (IPC) guidance for routine disinfection of equipment. The sonographer wore gloves when carrying out scans in line with infection prevention and control (IPC) compliance.

## Environment and equipment

**The design, maintenance and use of facilities, premises and equipment kept people safe. Staff were trained to use them. Staff managed clinical waste well.**

The service had suitable facilities and had enough suitable equipment to meet the needs of women. The clinic's environment was fit for the purpose of service provided. Staff completed regular checks of stock, first aid kit and equipment.

The service did not require a resuscitation trolley. There was a first aid box which was sealed and within expiration date. Staff were up-to-date with adult and children first aid training. Staff told us in case of an emergency they would call 999.

Staff carried out daily safety checks of specialist equipment. The scan equipment was serviced annually and maintained by the manufacturer. The electrical equipment had been safety tested within the last 12 months. This was in line with the provider's safety policy.

Staff disposed of clinical waste safely. Staff carried out waste streaming in line with Department of Health and Social Care Health Technical Memorandum 07-01, which reflected national best practice.

## Assessing and responding to patient risk

**Staff completed and updated risk assessments for each woman and removed or minimised risks. Staff knew what to do and acted quickly when there was an emergency.**

Staff completed assessments for each patient on arrival, using a recognised tool, and reviewed this regularly, including after any incident. Staff knew about and dealt with any specific risk issues. The clinic had a clear pathway staff could follow in the event of anomalies seen by the sonographer on the ultrasound scan. Staff followed the provider's policy, which stated every client would have a diagnostic well-being check. Should any anomalies be found, the client was informed in a caring, honest and professional manner. The client was given a detailed medical report dealing with the findings. Staff followed the referral pathway agreed with the local National Health Service (NHS), Foetal Medicine Unit (FMU) or Early Pregnancy Unit EPU/EPAU.

Staff responded promptly to any immediate risks to women's health. The provider had health and safety policies that included a foetal abnormality policy. This meant that staff knew what to do and acted quickly when there was an emergency.

The sonographer was able to contact the franchise Window To The Womb lead sonographer for advice and support during clinics. The lead sonographer was employed by the provider and was available to review any ultrasound scan remotely. The sonographer confirmed they were able to access support in a timely way.

# Community health services for adults

The registered manager told us they had referred 106 women to NHS services in the past year because of potential concerns found. Dedicated referral forms were available to document any referrals made. These included a description of the scan findings, the reason for referral, who the receiving healthcare professional was and what action they were going to take.

The service provided clear guidance for sonographers to follow when they identified unexpected results during a scan. Staff gave examples of redirecting women who were experiencing pain or bleeding to their local NHS clinical team. Sonographers made rapid referrals when they found concerns about a woman's health and documented their phone calls with NHS services to maintain an audit trail of referrals.

## Staffing

**The service had enough staff with the right qualifications, skills, training and experience to keep women safe from avoidable harm and to provide the right care. Managers regularly reviewed and adjusted staffing levels and skill mix and gave bank and locum staff a full induction.**

The service had enough staff to keep women safe. The registered manager planned staffing levels to meet demand on the service, measured by the number of bookings made in advance. The service employed three sonographers and 12 scan assistants. Scan assistants were responsible for managing enquiries, appointment bookings, supporting the sonographers during ultrasound scan procedures and printing scan images.

The registered manager completed a risk assessment for the location, which was last updated in April 2021. This stated all staff had to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before starting their employment at the location. All staff had an up to date DBS check. We reviewed three personnel files and all staff had proof of identification, residence, and an up-to-date curriculum vitae on file. The service had obtained two references for all staff in line with their policy. We also saw employment offer letters, contracts, and evidence of induction training, qualifications, and professional membership were kept on file.

The service had no vacancies having recently employed two new members of staff and staff described the team as consistent and stable. The service did not use bank or agency staff. The registered manager had service level agreements with other franchises to cover any absenteeism.

## Records

**Staff kept detailed records of women's care and diagnostic procedures. Records were clear, up-to-date, stored securely and easily available to all staff providing care.**

The service had an up to date information governance policy, and a data retention policy. The registered manager was the information governance lead for the service.

Patient notes were comprehensive, and all staff could access them easily. Pre-scan questionnaires and consent forms at the service ensured sufficient information was obtained from women prior to their scans; for example, in relation to number of weeks pregnant, and number of previous pregnancies. Women were also required to declare medical conditions that might affect their scan.

# Community health services for adults

Staff ensured women's confidential personal information (CPI) was maintained and not accessible to others. For example, women's registration forms were kept at reception in a covered clip board prior to the woman being called in to the scanning room.

Records were stored securely. All records electronic and computers were password protected. Only print referrals and then keep hard copy. Email copy to hospital and give woman a copy to take with them.

## Incident reporting, learning and improvement

**The service managed safety incidents well. Staff recognised and reported incidents and near misses. Managers investigated incidents and shared lessons learned with the whole team and the wider service. When things went wrong, staff apologised and gave women honest information and suitable support. Managers ensured that actions from safety alerts were implemented and monitored.**

Staff knew what incidents to report and how to report them. The service had an up-to-date incident reporting policy, which detailed all staff responsibilities to report, manage and monitor incidents. The service used a paper-based reporting system, and an incident log was available in the clinic. The registered manager was responsible for conducting investigations into all incidents at the location and submitted a monthly incident return to the provider.

The service had two incidents in the past year. One incident was the result of correct processes not being followed and was discovered after a complaint had been made. The member of staff was supported with additional training. Additional safety processes were followed to ensure the incident wouldn't happen again. The registered manager apologised to the family and refunded their payment. Learning was shared with staff, so they understood the importance of following processes and empower them to speak out if they felt something had been missed.

Staff told us they were given feedback from investigations of incidents, both internal and external to the service. The registered manager provided feedback and updates by email, the service's social media and a chat group where staff could discuss. The registered manager explained that due to the working patterns of staff it was very difficult to get everyone together for a meeting.

Staff understood the duty of candour. In the past year, there were no duty of candour notifications. The duty of candour is a regulatory duty that relates to openness and transparency and requires providers of health and social care services to notify patients (or other relevant persons) of certain 'notifiable safety incidents' and provide reasonable support to that person, under Regulation 20 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014. The registered manager could explain the process they would undertake if they needed to implement the duty of candour because of an incident, which was in line with the requirements.

## Are Community health services for adults effective?

Inspected but not rated 

We inspected this area but do not rate.

## Evidence-based care and treatment

# Community health services for adults

**The service provided care and procedures based on national guidance and evidence-based practice. Managers checked to make sure staff followed guidance. Staff protected the rights of women subject to the Mental Health Act 1983.**

Staff followed up-to-date policies to plan and deliver high quality care according to best practice and national guidance. Staff were aware of how to access policies, which were stored electronically as well as in paper format. Local policies and protocols were in line with current legislation and national evidence-based guidance from professional organisations, such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the British Medical Ultrasound Society (BMUS). The policies were written centrally by the franchise. However, policies were adapted to provide effective guidelines for each clinic location. Staff were made aware of updates to policies via email and via service's social media messenger. All five policies and protocols we looked at had a next renewal date, which ensured they were reviewed by the service in a timely manner.

The service followed the 'As Low As Reasonably Achievable' (ALARA) principles. This was in line with national guidance (Society and College of Radiographers (SCoR) and British Medical Ultrasound Society (BMUS), Guidelines For Professional Ultrasound Practice (December 2018)). This meant sonographers used minimum frequency levels for a minimum amount of time to achieve the best result.

The service had an effective audit programme that provided assurance about the quality and safety of the service. The registered manager carried out audits where they monitored women's experience, cleanliness, health and safety, ultrasound scan reports, equipment, policies and procedures. The provider conducted an annual clinic audit in May 2021. This included a review of risk assessments, policies and staff training. The provider also completed annual sonographer competency assessments.

The service used technology and equipment to enhance the delivery of effective care and treatment to women. The service utilised up-to-date scanning equipment to provide high-quality ultrasound images. They also had three large wall-mounted screens situated in the scan room which enabled women and their families to view their baby more easily. Women had access to the Window To The Womb mobile phone application (app). The app enabled women to record and share images of their pregnancy 'bump' with their family and friends. They could also create a time-lapse video of their pregnancy journey. Each woman's scan images taken during a Window To The Womb appointment was also saved on the app. This meant women had instant access to their scan images.

The service was inclusive to all pregnant women and supported all women regardless of their age, disability, pregnancy and maternity status, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation to make their own care and treatment decisions.

## Nutrition and hydration

**Staff took into account women's individual needs where fluids were necessary for the procedure.**

Due to the nature of the service, food and drink was not routinely offered to women. However, bottles of drinking water were available. To improve the quality of the ultrasound image, women were asked to drink extra fluids on the lead up to their appointment. Women who were having a gender scan were encouraged to attend their appointment with a full bladder. This information was given to women when they contacted the clinic to book their appointment. It was also included in the 'frequently asked questions' on the service's website.

## Pain relief

# Community health services for adults

## **Staff assessed and monitored women regularly to see if they were in pain during scans.**

Pain relief was not available at the service. Staff checked women were comfortable during their scan and halted scans if women experienced any discomfort.

## **Patient outcomes**

### **Staff monitored the effectiveness of care. They used the findings to make improvements and achieved good outcomes for women.**

The service used key performance indicators to monitor performance, which were set by the provider. This enabled the service to benchmark themselves against other Window To The Womb clinics. The registered manager collected data and reported to the provider on an on-going basis. This included information about the number of ultrasound scans completed including the number of re-scans, and the number of referrals made to other healthcare services.

Sonographers were part of a peer review process to ensure the accuracy and quality of ultrasound scan images, videos, and reports. The franchise clinical lead sonographer reviewed the service sonographer's scans against internal targets and considered areas for improvement, such as scan times and gender or health inaccuracies. These were shared and discussed and used for improvement.

In the past year, the service had referred 106 women to antenatal (NHS) care providers due to the detection of potential concerns.

The registered manager ensured there were clear criteria for doing scans and repeat scans. This was to ensure women were not persuaded to have multiple scans, which would not have given them any more information than they already had.

## **Competent staff**

### **The service made sure staff were competent for their roles. Managers appraised staff's work performance and held supervision meetings with them to provide support and development.**

Staff were experienced, qualified and had the right skills and knowledge to meet the needs of women. Staff accessed their training through the service's electronic training portal. Training records confirmed staff had completed role-specific training. The provider's lead sonographer conducted an initial competency assessment of sonographers when they had first joined the service. The clinical lead also completed a competency assessment which included checking their registration, indemnity insurance and revalidation status.

The registered manager gave all new staff a full induction tailored to their role before they started work. All staff underwent an induction programme which included providing information about staff roles and responsibilities, and mandatory and role-specific training. Inductions were tailored to each specific role and their experience. For example, sonographers who had trained outside the UK undertook qualification conversion training during their induction.

# Community health services for adults

Managers identified any training needs their staff had and gave them the time and opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge. Staff had the opportunity to discuss training needs with their line manager and were supported to develop their skills and knowledge. Clinical leads managed performance issues of sonographers or scan assistants. The IT system meant clinical leads could securely support sonographers on or off site and identify specific types of scans during which to target support.

Managers made sure staff received any specialist training for their role. The provider produced video training logs (VLOGs) for additional training and continuing professional development tools for sonographers and scan assistants who wanted to learn more about sonography. For example, training had been provided to ensure sonographers could recognise spina bifida. Spina bifida is when a baby's spine and spinal cord does not develop properly in the womb, causing a gap in the spine.

Managers had an appraisal process in place to support staff to develop through yearly, constructive appraisals of their work. All staff who had worked at the service for a year or more had received an appraisal meeting.

Staff were able to learn from any incidents that occurred in other services because the information was shared between services.

## Multidisciplinary working

### **Staff worked together as a team to benefit women. They supported each other to provide good care.**

The team worked well together and communicated effectively for the benefit of the women and their families. This included the registered manager, director, sonographer and scan assistants.

Staff worked across health care disciplines and with other agencies when required to care for women. The service had links with the local NHS trusts to ensure they had effective referral pathways for women when needed. The service had established pathways in place to refer women to their GP, midwife or local NHS trust if any abnormalities or concerns were identified.

We observed positive staff working relationships promoted a relaxed environment and helped put women and their families at ease.

## Seven-day services

Window To The Womb was not an acute service and did not offer emergency tests or treatment, although they reminded women to call emergency services if necessary and gave women contact details of other NHS services available to them. This meant services did not need to be delivered seven days a week to be effective.

Services were supplied according to patient demand. This meant the location was not always open all day, seven days a week. Services at the location were typically provided on Tuesday to Sunday, a six-day week. Most days the service offered both clinics, although on Saturdays the only the Window To The Womb clinic was run. The times of opening varied each day and there was always at least an hour between clinics. This offered flexible service provision for women and their companions to attend around work and family commitments.

# Community health services for adults

Booking for appointments was available seven days a week, 24 hours a day using the provider's online booking system available to their website. Booking forms allowed customers to select their preferred language. Telephone lines were open between 8am – 8pm every day.

## Health promotion

### **Staff gave women practical support and advice to lead healthier lives.**

The service had relevant information promoting healthy lifestyles and support in patient areas. The service's website contained health and wellbeing in pregnancy advice, such as keeping healthy during pregnancy, foods to avoid, things to ask your midwife and when to seek medical advice. Women were advised to contact their maternity unit immediately if they thought their baby's movements had changed and/or reduced. This was in line with national recommendations (NHS England, Saving Babies' Lives: A care bundle for reducing stillbirth (February 2016)).

The service provided clear written information that the scanning services they provided were not a substitute for the antenatal care pathway provided by the NHS.

## Consent, Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

### **Staff supported women to make informed decisions about their care. They followed national guidance to gain women's consent. They knew how to support women who lacked capacity to make their own decisions or were experiencing mental ill health.**

Staff completed training in relation to consent and the Mental Capacity Act (2005), as part of their induction and mandatory training programme. There was a Mental Capacity Act (2005) policy for staff to follow, which clearly outlined the service's expectations and processes. Staff understood the relevant consent and decision-making requirements of legislation and guidance. The service followed the franchise policy relating to individuals who suffered from any condition covered under the mental capacity act (MCA). This detailed how staff should support women and ensure they acted in their best interests.

Staff gained consent from women for their care and treatment in line with legislation and guidance. Before their scan all women received written information to read and sign. This included information about ultrasound scanning and safety information, a pre-scan questionnaire and declaration form which included the franchise terms and conditions, such as scan limitations, referral consent, and use of data.

Staff made sure patients consented to treatment based on all the information available.

Staff clearly recorded consent in women's records. Sonographers were responsible for obtaining the informed consent of women and completing ultrasound (paper) reports during the woman's appointment, with the support of the scan assistant. A copy was provided to the woman to take away.

Staff understood the relevant consent and decision-making requirements of legislation and guidance, including the Mental Health Act, Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and they knew who to contact for advice. Staff received and kept up-to-date with mandatory training on the Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. Staff were aware of the providers policies for Mental Health. They understood how and when to assess whether a woman had the capacity to make decisions about their care.

# Community health services for adults

Staff were aware of consent procedures for those aged under 18 years of age; for example, the use of the Gillick competency test. Gillick competence is when children under the age of 16 years can consent to their own treatment if they're believed to have enough intelligence, competence and understanding to fully appreciate what's involved in their treatment. Women under the age of 18 years who wanted to use the service had to attend with a responsible adult (for example, someone with parental responsibility); and the responsible adult was required to countersign their consent form.

## Are Community health services for adults caring?

Good 

Our rating of caring stayed the same. We rated it as good.

### Compassionate care

#### **Staff treated women with compassion and kindness, respected their privacy and dignity, and took account of their individual needs.**

Staff were discreet and responsive when caring for women. Staff took time to interact with women and those close to them in a respectful and considerate way. Staff were very passionate about their roles and were committed to providing personalised care.

Women consistently and emphatically said staff treated them well and with kindness. Staff were very warm, kind and welcoming when they interacted with women and their companions. Staff took time to interact with women and those close to them in a respectful and considerate way. For example, staff asked the woman's name upon arrival and would support them throughout their appointment. The scan assistants acted as chaperones during ultrasound scans to ensure women felt comfortable and received enough emotional support. Feedback from women included, "Everyone was so helpful each time we went, the staff were so lovely and welcoming" and "Had the best experience today with my scan. All the staff made us feel incredibly welcome and comfortable. We are so grateful for the beautiful images the team were able to capture for us. Everything is done with you and baby in mind. I loved my experience! Highly recommend. Thank you, Window to the Womb team!"

Women and their companions were also able to leave feedback on open social media platforms, which the registered manager frequently monitored. We reviewed a selection of reviews (from the hundreds available) and found the service was very highly rated (five stars), and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. For example, responses included statements such as, "Great clinic and fantastic professional staff. We were very happy with the service and would definitely recommend to friends and family. Thank you so much Window to the Womb Exeter."

Staff followed policy to keep women's care and treatment confidential. Staff ensured scans were conducted in a way that protected women's privacy and dignity. Staff kept the door to the scanning room locked during the scan to ensure women's privacy was maintained and women were covered throughout.

Staff understood and respected the personal, cultural, social and religious needs of women and how they may relate to care needs. For example, the registered manager explained that if women wanted a female sonographer, they were given an appointment for a different clinic when a female sonographer would be available.



# Community health services for adults

## Emotional support

**Staff provided emotional support to women, families and carers to minimise their distress. They understood women's personal, cultural and religious needs.**

Staff gave women and those close to them help, emotional support and advice when they needed it. The service held separate clinics for early pregnancy and over 16-week scans. Staff were mindful early scans held a higher risk of complications being identified. The sonographer initially started scans without the other screens in the room being turned on. This meant if any anomalies were identified the sonographer could make their diagnosis and share the information in an informed, compassionate manner. Staff were calm and reassuring throughout the scan. The sonographer provided reassurance about the scan images and clearly explained what they observed.

Staff undertook training on breaking bad news and demonstrated empathy when having difficult conversations. Staff supported women who received upsetting news. The sonographer delivered initial feedback to women. Sonographers used discreet code with scan assistants to inform them to give women more time and emotional support, for example, in the event of a scan revealing an anomaly or the lack of a heartbeat. Staff gave women aftercare and offered them a drink. Staff could offer women an early scan leaflet with information referring to their next medical steps or signpost women to the miscarriage trust.

Staff understood the emotional and social impact that a woman's care, treatment or condition had on their wellbeing and on those close to them. Bereavement counselling was available to women by the provider. The service had access to written patient information to give to women who had received difficult news. Staff would arrange appropriate follow-up care where appropriate.

## Understanding and involvement of women and those close to them

**Staff supported women, families and carers to understand their condition and make decisions about their care and treatment.**

Staff made sure women and those close to them understood their care and procedures. communicated with women and those accompanying them in a way they could understand. Staff adapted the language and terminology they used when performing the scan. They took the time to explain the procedure to ensure women understood. Family and friends were welcome in the scan room and there were three screens positioned in the scan room to ensure everyone could see the scan images. The registered manager told us during the COVID-19 pandemic they had restricted women to one visitor accompanying each woman, although these restrictions had been lifted and at the time of our inspection and five people could accompany the woman. Children were welcomed in the waiting area and the scan room.

Women and their families could give feedback on the service and their treatment and staff supported them to do this. Women and their partners felt they were fully involved in their care and had been given the opportunity to ask questions throughout their appointment. Staff took time explaining procedures to women before and during ultrasound scans and left adequate time for women and their companions to ask questions.

The clinic offered women apps available on smartphones and tablets through 4G available locally. Women were given a unique code to a maternity mobile phone application which gave them access to their scan images and videos. Women could choose when to share these with their wider families, friends and support network if they wished to.

# Community health services for adults

Staff supported patients to make informed decisions about their care. Staff made sure women were told about the different scans available and the costs associated with them. Staff provided women with various leaflets signposting them to other care providers and reminded women they should attend their NHS appointments.

## Are Community health services for adults responsive?

Good 

Our rating of responsive stayed the same. We rated it as good.

### Service delivery to meet the needs of local people

**Women's individual needs and preferences were central to the delivery of tailored services and were delivered in a way to ensure flexibility and choice. The service also worked with others in the wider system and local organisations to plan care.**

Women we spoke with were delighted with the service they received. Women told us they felt the service they received was 'really good' and praised the staff highly. They told us staff were very friendly and kind and this made them feel very comfortable.

Staff planned and organised services, so they met the changing needs of people who used the service. People could access services and appointments in a way and at a time that suited them. The registered manager explained they had changed the scans that were available during the COVID-19 pandemic and had stopped doing 4D and gender scans during this time. At the time of our inspection, all scans were available. The service had varied their opening hours depending on the availability of sonographer and operated clinics six days a week including weekends. Women were also able to book appointments during school hours if they preferred or if they had difficulties with childcare arrangements. Women were provided with an information leaflet giving them details of early pregnancy units in the area.

There was a proactive approach to understanding the needs and preferences of different groups of people and to delivering care in a way that meets these needs, which was accessible and promoted equality. This included people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act, and people who were in vulnerable circumstances or who have complex needs.

Information about services offered at the location were accessible online. The service offered a range of ultrasound scans for pregnant women; such as wellbeing, viability, growth, presentation, and gender and 4D scans. Staff gave women relevant information about their ultrasound scan when they booked their appointment. This included whether they needed a full bladder and when was the best gestation for their scan. Ultrasound scan prices were detailed on the service's website, and we observed staff clearly explaining costs and payment options to women during their appointments.

Technology was used innovatively to ensure people had timely access to treatment, support and care. Women were given free access to an application (app) developed by the provider. The app enabled women to have instant access to their scan images via their personal computer, smart phone or tablet. The application enabled women to share their images and video to social media sites, or other individuals, as they so wished.

# Community health services for adults

Facilities and premises were appropriate for the services being delivered. The environment was appropriate for the service being delivered and was customer centred. The scan room was large with ample seating and additional standing room for several guests, and children of all ages were welcome to attend. The scanning room had three large wall-mounted screens which projected the scan images from the ultrasound machine. These screens enabled women and their families to view their baby scan more easily and from anywhere in the room. This was in line with recommendations (Royal College of Radiologists, Standards for the provision of an ultrasound service (December 2014)).

The service did not formally monitor rates of patient non-attendance. However, the registered manager said there was a very low rate of non-attendance because the service requested a non-refundable deposit payment on appointment booking. If a woman suffered a miscarriage before their appointment, staff would refund the deposit payment immediately.

## Meeting people's individual needs

**The service was inclusive and took account of women's individual needs and preferences. Staff made reasonable adjustments to help women access services. They directed women to other services where necessary.**

Managers and staff worked to make sure women did not stay longer than they needed to. The registered manager had responded to customers' requests for their appointments not to take longer than necessary by arranging for people to select the prints they wanted after their scans, then the clinic would print them and post them.

Window To The Womb separated their services into two clinics: the 'Firstscan' clinic, which specialised in early pregnancy scans; and the 'Window To The Womb' clinic, which offered later pregnancy scans. There was at least an hour between the two clinics, so women who may be given bad news would not be in the clinic with women who were further along in their pregnancy. This meant that women who may have experienced a miscarriage did not share the same area with women who were much later in their pregnancy.

All scans started with a wellbeing check. The sonographer looked at the baby's movements, heartbeat, position, and placental position. Early scans included the wellbeing check, but also included presentation of the baby, head and abdominal circumference measurements; femur length measurements and estimated foetal weight were done on growth and presentation scans. The service had systems to help care for women in need of additional support or specialist intervention.

The service also specialised in providing antenatal scans for women from 16 to 40 weeks of pregnancy. Gender confirmation and growth scans were also available. Women who mostly wanted a scan for souvenir purposes had a well-being scan as well and could view their baby in 4D as well as 2D. NHS pregnancy scans show a two-dimensional image. A 4D scan enables women to see their baby moving as a 3D image. Women with a history of ectopic or failed pregnancy had a range of scans they could access. The service only provided private pregnancy ultrasound scans. They did not undertake any ultrasound imaging on behalf of the NHS or other private providers.

Women who wanted to find out the gender of their baby outside of their appointment, such as at a gender reveal party with their family and friends, were given a sealed envelope with a note telling them whether they were expecting a boy or a girl.

# Community health services for adults

The service offered women a range of baby keepsake and souvenir options which could be purchased. This included heartbeat bears, a selection of photo frames, fridge magnets and gender reveal products such as scratch cards and shooting cannons. Heartbeat bears contained a recording of the unborn baby's heartbeat. The registered manager told us they had not offered the full range of products during the COVID-19 pandemic so they wouldn't encourage families to have large gatherings.

The service had access to a web-based spoken interpreting service for non-English speaking women when needed. The service provided easy to read and large print information leaflets for women with sight impairment. The service also used an online 'read aloud' function.

## Access and flow

**People could access the service when they needed it. They received the right care and their results promptly.**

All women self-referred to the service. The service recognised women often preferred to use the internet, or a mobile phone application so offered different booking methods. Women could book their scan appointments in person, by phone, or through the service's website. During our inspection, clinics ran on time. The provider had also developed a secure smart device application; which had an appointment booking facility. Women were given a written report if there was a referral and an email otherwise and access to the Window To The Womb app at the end of their appointment.

The service was flexible. The service held separate clinics for early pregnancy scans (6-15+6 weeks) and window scans (16 + weeks). Window scans was the term the service used for later pregnancy and wellbeing scans. As there was a higher likelihood of abnormalities being detected in early stages of pregnancy the service held separate clinics which meant if a woman was given bad news, had experienced pregnancy loss or were anxious about their pregnancy they did not have to share the same waiting area with women who were much later in their pregnancy.

The service followed the franchise foetal abnormality policy which detailed the process to follow if these were identified.

There was a comfortable waiting area, a scan room and toilet downstairs. Upstairs there was another waiting room, a room where women accessed their scans on a computer and a toilet with baby changing facilities. The registered manager acknowledged not all rooms were suitable for people with a disability. Information on the service's website informed people they could access a scan but not the toilet. The registered manager had set up a computer downstairs which could be used for viewing scans. The upstairs waiting area also contained a selection of children's toys, all made of plastic which were easily cleaned.

Staff supported women when they were referred or transferred between services. The registered manager explained how they supported one family when the woman needed to be transferred to hospital urgently and the wait time for an ambulance exceeded two hours. They maintained contact throughout the transfer to ensure the family was supported at this difficult time.

## Learning from complaints and concerns

**It was easy for people to give feedback and raise concerns about care received. The service treated concerns and complaints seriously, investigated them and shared lessons learned with all staff. The service included women in the investigation of their complaint.**

# Community health services for adults

Women, relatives and carers knew how to complain or raise concerns. The service had an up-to-date complaints policy, which outlined procedures for accepting, investigating, recording and responding to local, informal, and formal complaints about the service. The policy confirmed that all complaints should be acknowledged within three working days and resolved within 21 working days.

The service clearly displayed information about how to raise a concern in patient areas. Staff understood the policy on complaints and knew how to handle them. The registered manager investigated any complaint received through the service's comments cards, website or social media. The registered manager attempted to deal with concerns at the time to resolve women's concerns. Staff asked women if they were happy with the service, they received at the end of their appointments this helped identify any potential dissatisfaction whilst still on-site.

Staff could give examples of how they used patient feedback to improve daily practice. The service actively encouraged feedback, through comments cards available in clinics, and via open platform social media sites. The service had acted on feedback. For example, the service had introduced early pregnancy scans (Firstscan clinics) and had extended opening times to meet patient demand.

The registered manager investigated complaints and identified themes. In the past year, there had been eight complaints. All complaints were investigated and closed in a timely manner in line with the complaints policy. Action was taken in response to complaints received to help improve customers' experience and service provision. For example, when a baby's gender was incorrectly identified staff refunded the cost of the scan and apologised.

Window To The Womb's induction programme included a course on customer care and dealing with complaints which all staff had completed.

## Are Community health services for adults well-led?

Good 

Our rating of well-led stayed the same. We rated it as good.

### Leadership

**Leaders had the skills and abilities to run the service. They understood and managed the priorities and issues the service faced. They were visible and approachable in the service for women and staff. They supported staff to develop their skills and take on more senior roles.**

The registered manager led the service. They were supported by the nominated individual, who was also a director of the business. They both demonstrated an awareness of the service's performance, limitations and the challenges it faced. They were also aware of the actions needed to address those challenges.

Staff informed us that the registered manager and director were very friendly, approachable, and effective in their roles. Staff felt confident to discuss any concerns they had with them; and were able to approach the registered manager directly, should the need arise.

# Community health services for adults

There were twice-yearly national provider meetings for all Window To The Womb services which registered managers were encouraged to attend. The provider gave leadership and support and were approachable and responsive when staff contacted them. The provider offered on-going training to registered managers including clinic visits and training events. The registered manager found these events and meetings very informative and enabled them to share their knowledge, learning and improvement ideas.

## Vision and Strategy

**The service had a vision for what it wanted to achieve and a strategy to turn it into action, developed with all relevant stakeholders. The vision and strategy were focused on sustainability of services. Leaders and staff understood and knew how to apply them and monitor progress.**

The service had a clear vision and values which were focused on providing safe, high-quality care and consistent with the Window To The Womb vision and values. The vision was to provide, “High quality, efficient and compassionate care to our customers and their families, through the safe and efficient use of obstetric ultrasound imaging technology”. The registered manager told us the ethos for the service was to provide the highest possible standards of service and care every time.

The Window To The Womb’s statement of purpose, which included the vision, aims and objectives and values for the service, was publicly displayed in the clinic. The values included treated everyone with respect, working with integrity, ensuring everyone’s privacy, valuing diversity and working safely.

The registered manager had a detailed business strategy which outlined what they wanted to achieve over the upcoming year; for example, business areas they wanted to develop in line with their plans for a new clinic. The registered manager explained how they hoped to find premises which would be suitable for them to have two scan rooms.

## Culture

**Staff felt respected, supported and valued. They were focused on the needs of women receiving care. The service promoted equality and diversity in daily work and provided opportunities for career development. The service had an open culture where women, their families and staff could raise concerns without fear.**

Staff we met were friendly, welcoming and confident. Staff told us they felt supported, respected, and valued. They enjoyed coming to work and were proud to work for the service. Staff were aware of the whistleblowing policy.

Staff completed equality and diversity training. Staff were encouraged to raise concerns openly and without fear of recrimination. We saw examples of this in the implementation of the accident, incident, safeguarding and complaints procedures.

## Governance

**Leaders operated effective governance processes, throughout the service and with partner organisations. Staff at all levels were clear about their roles and accountabilities and had regular opportunities to meet, discuss and learn from the performance of the service.**

# Community health services for adults

Staff were clear about their roles and understood what they were accountable for and to whom. Staff reported any governance matters such as complaints or incidents to the registered manager, who would in turn inform the provider.

The service used key performance indicators to monitor performance, with key quality measures set by the provider. This enabled the service to benchmark themselves against other clinics in the peer group.

Staff had feedback from clinical governance and national franchise meetings. The registered manager also covered any complaints, incidents, women's feedback, performance, compliance with policies and procedures, any clinic issues, audit results, staffing and rotas in the weekly updates to staff. The registered manager had introduced a form for staff to use at the start of clinics which provided information for them about what was planned and any issues which needed to be resolved. This form was used to brief staff about aspects of their upcoming shift and provided a daily staff meeting record.

Staff could describe the governance processes for incidents and complaints and how they were investigated.

## Management of risk, issues and performance

**Leaders and teams used systems to manage performance effectively. They identified and escalated relevant risks and issues and identified actions to reduce their impact. They had plans to cope with unexpected events. Staff contributed to decision-making to help avoid financial pressures compromising the quality of care.**

The registered manager had an effective audit programme to provide assurance of the quality and safety of the service. Local audits, such as clinical and compliance audits were undertaken regularly; data was collected and reported to the franchisor on an on-going basis to monitor performance. Where issues were identified, we saw these were addressed quickly and openly. Additional assurance was provided by external audits undertaken by the franchisor.

Sonographer peer review audits were undertaken in accordance with recommendations made by the British Medical Ultrasound Society, and the franchisor completed annual sonographer competency assessments.

The registered manager had completed risk assessments for identified risks such as COVID-19, fire, health and safety and Legionella. Legionella is a bacterium that causes illnesses such as Legionnaires' disease or a fly-like illness. A standard template was used to ensure consistent information was captured. The risk assessments identified who or what was at risk, the hazards and their potential effects, existing control measures in place, the risk rating, whether the risk was adequately controlled, and additional control measures needed. Most of the risks were graded low and had adequate controls in place to minimise each risk. Staff were aware of the risk assessments because they had been circulated to all employees and the management team. All risk assessments were reviewed annually or sooner if indicated.

The service had a clinic contingency plan in place to identify actions to be taken in the event of an incident that would impact the service. For example, extended power loss, severe weather events, short notice staff sickness and equipment failure. The contingency plan included contact details of relevant individuals or services for staff to contact.

## Information Management



# Community health services for adults

**The service collected reliable data and analysed it. Staff could find the data they needed, in easily accessible formats, to understand performance, make decisions and improvements. The information systems were integrated and secure. Data or notifications were consistently submitted to external organisations as required.**

The service was up-to-date with information governance, and had data retention policies. These stipulated the requirements of managing patients' personal information in line with current data protection laws. The service was registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), which is in line with 'The Data Protection (Charges and Information) Regulations' (2018). The ICO is the UK's independent authority set up to uphold information rights.

Scan reports were retained for a period of 30 days in order that any issues following the scan could be rectified. This information was clearly detailed in the terms and conditions of the service. Scan reports could be reviewed remotely by the lead sonographer to enable timely advice and interpretation of results when needed, to inform patient care.

We saw that appropriate and accurate information was effectively processed, challenged and acted upon. Key performance, audit, and patient feedback data was frequently collated and reviewed to improve service delivery.

## Engagement

**Leaders and staff actively and openly engaged with women, staff, the public and local organisations to plan and manage services. They collaborated with partner organisations to help improve services for women.**

The service used social media and google reviews to obtain feedback from women and their families. Feedback included, "Couldn't recommend them enough. You're shown everything in the scan and get to sit down and see the pictures afterwards to choose which ones you want to take home to treasure" and, "Calm atmosphere. Staff were very polite and helpful."

The registered manager and sonographers had developed working relationships with local hospitals, which meant staff were able to refer women to the appropriate service if any anomalies were detected.

There was transparency and openness with the provider about performance. The registered manager submitted performance data to them every month, such as clinic activity and complaints received. The provider reviewed this information during their visits.

## Learning, continuous improvement and innovation

**All staff were committed to continually learning and improving services. They had a good understanding of quality improvement methods and the skills to use them. Leaders encouraged innovation.**

The registered manager explained the service will be moving into different premises in 2022. They explained how the time they've spent in their current location has given them an insight into what to look for in their new premises, to enable a better layout of facilities. The service demonstrated a strong commitment to professional development. This included on-line and site based continuous professional development training for personal and professional growth.

Window To The Womb had developed a mobile phone application (app) to support and engage with women. The app had been designed following feedback from women who wanted to be able to share their scan images with friends and family. The app enabled women to document and share week-by-week images of their pregnancy bump with their



# Community health services for adults

family and friends. They could also create a time-lapse video of their pregnancy journey. Any scan image taken during a Window To The Womb appointment was saved on the app. This enabled women instant access to their scan images. Women could also book scan appointments through the app. Women were also able to have questions answered via Instant Midwife. Instant Midwife is a 24-hour service where women could get answers to all pregnancy and maternity questions and concerns from trying to conceive right through to having a new-born.

The provider produced video training logs (VLOGs), these were used as additional training and continuing professional development tools for sonographers, and scan assistants who wanted to learn more about sonography.

Learning from concerns raised at other Window To The Womb services were addressed by the provider and shared all of the locations. Examples included the introduction of hand hygiene audits and interpretation services. The service used patient feedback, complaints, and audit results to help identify any necessary improvements and ensure they provided an effective service.