

Stockton Heath Medical Centre

Inspection report

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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 responsive?

Good 

Overall summary

We previously carried out an announced focused inspection at Stockton Heath Medical Centre 16 February 2017. The inspection was to check if the provider had carried out their plan to meet the legal requirements in relation to the breaches made during the announced comprehensive inspection on 24 February 2016.

The overall rating for the practice was good with a rating of requires improvement for the key question of responsive. The focused inspection report on the 16 February 2017 and the full comprehensive report on 24 February 2016 inspection can be found by selecting the 'all reports' link for Stockton Heath Medical Centre on our website at www.cqc.org.uk.

This announced, focused inspection was carried out on 26 July 2018 was to confirm that action had been taken to improve capacity for the provision of clinical appointments and to improve patient experience of access to the service as identified at our previous inspection on 16 February 2017. This report covers our findings in relation to these shortfalls found at our last inspection.

The practice is still rated as good overall and following this inspection rated as good for providing a responsive service.

Our key findings were as follows:

The practice had made improvements and addressed the issues identified in the previous inspection. Improvements included:

- Action had been taken to improve capacity for the provision of clinical appointments and improve patient experience of access to the service.
- The practice had recruited four new GPs and had used locum GPs to cover maternity leave.

- Extended access appointments with the nurse practitioner are available from 7.15am Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.
- Two new trainee assistant practitioners have been employed and the assistant practitioner has commenced training for GP assistant role.
- The practice employs an administration assistant who manage clinical correspondence to assist the GPs.
- There had been an increase of online appointments available and patients have been recommended to sign up for on-line access.
- The appointment system has been weighted to manage daily urgent care demand during morning sessions and pre-bookable appointments in the afternoon.
- Reception staff have received training in Care Navigation so they are now trained patient advisors.

At our previous inspection on 24 February 2017, we rated the practice as requires improvement for providing responsive services because although we found action had been taken to improve access to the service further improvement was needed.

At the 24 February 2017 inspection we found the practice should improve capacity for the provision of clinical appointments and improve the patient experience of access to the service.

At this focused inspection we found that improvements had been made to patient access and the number of available appointments had increased. The practice is now rated as good for providing responsive services.

Professor Steve Field CBE FRCP FFPH FRCGP

Chief Inspector of General Practice

Our inspection team

Our inspection team for this focused inspection was led by a CQC lead inspector.

Background to Stockton Heath Medical Centre

Stockton Heath Medical Centre is located on The Forge, London Road, Stockton Heath, Warrington, Cheshire. The practice is registered with CQC to provide primary care services. The practice has a General Medical Services (GMS) contract with a registered list size of approximately 16,269 patients.

The practice is run by three GP partners and there are an additional eight salaried GPs (2 male and 6 female), six regular locums and one GP retainer. There is a nursing team of six which includes three nurse practitioners and three practice nurses, four health care assistants, two assistant practitioners, one trainee assistant practitioner, a practice manager, an executive lead nurse practitioner and a team of reception and administration staff. The practice is a training practice.

The practice is open from 8am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday and appointments are available from 8.30am to 6pm except for Thursdays when the last appointment is 5pm and one Thursday a month closes at 12.30 for

training and educational purposes. An "Extended Hours Service" with the nurse practitioner is available from 7.15am Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. In addition to weekly GP appointments being available on alternate Tuesday/Thursday from 7.30am.

Telephone consultations and online access are available. Appointments at the practice can be booked over the telephone, online or in person at the practice.

When the practice is closed out of hours GP Extended Access service appointments are available from 6.30pm to 8.30pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 8pm Saturdays.

Patients requiring a GP urgently are advised to contact the NHS 111 GP out of hours service.

The practice is part of Warrington Group Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The practice offers a range of enhanced services including, cervical smear tests, family planning/women's health, minor surgery, flu vaccinations and learning disability health checks.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

At our previous inspection on 16 February 2017, we rated the practice as requires improvement for providing responsive services. At that inspection we found improvements had been made since the inspection on 24 February 2016 and they were no longer in breach of the regulation. However, we found further improvements were required and due to that the practice continued to be rated as 'requires improvement' for being responsive.

At the last inspection we found that although a review of staffing and roles had been carried out the practice had not reached sufficient capacity to meet appointment demand in correlation to the size of the practice population.

The appointment system was still not flexible enough to be fully responsive to patient needs. This was particularly the case for more vulnerable patients who may have additional difficulty navigating the system.

At this inspection we found significant improvements had been made.

The practice is now rated as good for providing services responsive to people's needs.

Timely access to care and treatment

- At the previous inspection we found the results from the national GP patient survey showed that 23% of patients gave a positive answer to 'Generally, how easy is it to get through to someone at your GP surgery on the phone?' (CCG average 60%, national average 72%). At this inspection we saw that the figure had increased to 40% which was comparable to the CCG average of 60% and the national average of 71%.
- At the previous inspection we found the results from the national GP patient survey showed that 58% said the last time they wanted to see or speak to a GP or nurse from their GP surgery they were able to get an appointment (CCG average 70%, national average 75%). At this inspection we found that the figure had increased to 70% which was comparable to the CCG average of 73% and the national average of 75%.
- At the previous inspection we found the results from the national GP patient survey showed that 41% described their experience of making an appointment as good (CCG average 68%, national average 73%). At this inspection we found that the figure had increased to 68% which was comparable to the CCG average 71% and the national average of 72%
- At the previous inspection we found the results from the national GP patient survey showed that 49% of patients responded that they were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with their GP practice's opening hours was 49% compared to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) average of 69% and a national average of 75%. At this inspection we found that figure had increased to 75% which was comparable to the CCG average of 77% and the national average of 80%.
- At the previous inspection we found the provider had analysed data between 2015 and 2017 which showed a significant increase in the number of clinical appointments provided over those two years. The practice had calculated they were running eleven GP sessions below what was required. To address this we found, since the last inspection, the practice had employed four more GPs and implemented a strategy plan to increase patient access.
- At this inspection we found improvements had been made to make patient access easier.
- Since the last inspection four new GPs had been recruited and regular locum GPs are used when necessary.
- At this inspection we saw the nurse practitioner provided extended access by providing appointments from 7.15am Tuesday to Thursday.
- Since the last inspection the practice has recruited two trainee assistant practitioners who worked alongside the assistant practitioner to provide a clinical assistant role. In addition, the assistant practitioner had commenced training as a GP assistant.
- The Practice has introduced on-line appointments with the Practice Nurse for smear tests and asthma checks.
- Since the last inspection the practice had employed an additional GP administration assistant. This helped manage the workload of clinical correspondence ensuring GPs saw the relevant paperwork from secondary care, adding codes to clinical system and working with the practice clinical pharmacist to ensure the patients were compliant with new medicines following discharge from hospital or seeing secondary care consultants.
- We saw in an attempt to reduce demand on telephone access patients had been encouraged to sign up for on-line access. We saw that 22% of patients had registered for this.
- At the last inspection we found that patients we spoke with said they found it difficult to get through to the

Are services responsive to people's needs?

practice by phone and were frustrated at having to start the process again the following day if they had not been successful in getting an appointment. At this follow up inspection the patients we spoke told us they still found it difficult to get through on the phones first thing in the morning to make an appointment. This was discussed with the practice manager and the executive lead nurse practitioner who were aware of this issue. In an attempt to address the issue, we saw that the provider had applied for a resilience bid to NHS England for an upgraded telephone system. The bid had been rejected but a meeting had been arranged the week following the inspection with a company to discuss the implementation of a new, upgraded telephone system. In addition, the GPs and nurses had mobile phones that they used so that the landlines were free for incoming patient calls.

- The appointment system had been weighted to help manage daily urgent care demand during the morning sessions with the ability to pre-book appointments in the afternoon. This had helped to accommodate patient's needing routine reviews. GPs could pre-book patients who require a face to face review and pre-book telephone consultations for those patients who do not require a face to face review.
- Medication review appointments were now pre-bookable and on-line appointments were available throughout the day including early morning.
- Alerts had been added to patients' records when they have been identified as being vulnerable and who had carers to allow for more flexible booking.
- Since the last inspection the reception team had undertaken training in Care Navigation and were now trained 'Patient Advisors'. This meant they were able to help patients access the appropriate service for their particular need.

- The practice had almost 200 patient's living in local Nursing/Care Homes so in attempt to reduce demand and work more proactively to provide care dedicated GP time had been allocated to some of the larger homes.
- The patient advisor team used READ codes when a patient has been asked to call back or been directed to another provider so the practice could monitor if the patient's phoned a second time and were able to accommodate them.
- During this inspection we spoke with members of the Patient Participant Group (PPG) who said since the last inspection the practice had worked hard at improving access and were continuing to make improvements.
- At the previous inspection we found issues around access to the practice had been cited in three complaints. At this follow up inspection we found one complaint had been made since the last inspection in March 2017 in relation to access. We saw that the complaint had been appropriately dealt with the complainant received a written response which they were satisfied with.
- Since the last inspection the practice had undertaken a patient satisfaction survey relating to access to a clinician. We saw the results demonstrated that 48% of patients were very satisfied with the appointment booking process, 31% were satisfied, 11% were not satisfied and 7% were not at all satisfied. Comments from patients indicated that they satisfied with the appointment system.

Please refer to the Evidence Tables for further information.