

Auckland Medical Group

Inspection report

The Old Firehouse
Watling Road
Bishop Auckland
DL14 6RP
Tel: 01388 602728
www.aucklandmedicalgroup.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?

Requires improvement 

Are services effective?

Good 

Are services caring?

Good 

Are services responsive?

Good 

Are services well-led?

Good 

Overall summary

This practice is rated as Good overall.

The key questions are rated as:

Are services safe? – Requires improvement

Are services effective? – Good

Are services caring? – Good

Are services responsive? – Good

Are services well-led? - Good

We carried out an announced comprehensive inspection at Auckland Medical Group on 19 April 2018 as part of our inspection programme.

At this inspection we found:

- The practice had systems to keep patients safe and safeguarded from abuse.
- The practice routinely reviewed the effectiveness and appropriateness of the care they provided. They ensured that care and treatment was delivered according to evidence-based guidelines.
- Staff involved and treated patients with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect.
- The practice organised and delivered services to meet patients' needs. They took account of patients' needs and preferences.
- Patients were able to access care and treatment from the practice within an acceptable timescale for their needs.

- There was a focus on continuous learning and improvement at all levels of the organisation. The practice proactively used performance information to drive improvement.
- The practice had some systems to manage risk so that safety incidents were less likely to happen. When incidents did happen, the practice learned from them and improved their processes.
- Some of the systems to ensure appropriate and safe handling of medicines required improvements.

The areas where the provider **must** make improvements are:

- Ensure care and treatment is provided in a safe way to patients.

The areas where the provider **should** make improvements are:

- Carry out regular checks to ensure clinical staff remain registered with the appropriate professional bodies.
- Take steps to improve access to the branch surgeries. The external doors did not open automatically and there were no facilities for patients who needed assistance to summon support.
- Review processes around the monitoring of refrigerator temperatures.

Professor Steve Field CBE FRCP FFPH FRCGP
Chief Inspector of General Practice

Population group ratings

Older people	Good 
People with long-term conditions	Good 
Families, children and young people	Good 
Working age people (including those recently retired and students)	Good 
People whose circumstances may make them vulnerable	Good 
People experiencing poor mental health (including people with dementia)	Good 

Our inspection team

Our inspection team was led by a CQC lead inspector. The team included a GP specialist advisor, a medicines inspector and two further CQC inspectors.

Background to Auckland Medical Group

Auckland Medical Group provides care and treatment to around 14,300 patients in Bishop Auckland, County Durham. The practice is part of Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgfield clinical commissioning group (CCG) and operates on a General Medical Services (GMS) contract agreement for general practice.

The practice provides services from the following addresses, which we visited during this inspection:

- The Old Firehouse, Watling Road, Bishop Auckland, DL14 6RP
- St Helens, 16 Manor Road, St Helen Auckland, Bishop Auckland, DL14 9EP
- Toft Hill, 51 Toft Hill, Bishop Auckland, DL14 0JA

The Watling Road surgery is located in a purpose built two storey building. All patient facilities are on the ground floor. There is on-site parking, accessible parking, an accessible WC, wheelchair and step-free access.

The St Helens surgery is located in a purpose built two storey building. All patient facilities are on the ground floor. There is a small on-site car park and on-street parking nearby, an accessible WC, wheelchair and step-free access.

The Toft Hill surgery is located in a two storey building, converted from former residential premises. All patient facilities are on the ground floor. There is on-site parking,

accessible parking, an accessible WC, wheelchair and step-free access. The practice offers dispensing services to those patients on the practice list who live more than one mile (1.6km) from their nearest pharmacy.

Patients can book appointments in person, on-line or by telephone.

The service for patients requiring urgent medical attention out of hours is provided by the NHS 111 service and County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust.

The practice has:

- four GP partners (two female and two male),
- 2 further GPs (one female and one male) who were in the process of registering with CQC as partners.
- two salaried GPs (one female and one male),
- three nurse practitioners and six practice nurses (all female),
- four healthcare assistants,
- a practice manager, and
- 26 staff who carry out reception and administrative duties.

The practice is a teaching and training practice and three of the GPs are accredited GP trainers. At the time of the inspection there were three trainee GPs working at the practice.

The age profile of the practice population is in line with the local and national averages, but is made up of a slightly higher than average proportion of patients over the age 65 (20% compared to the national average of 17%). Information taken from Public Health England

placed the area in which the practice is located in the third more deprived decile. In general, people living in more deprived areas tend to have greater need for health services.

Are services safe?

We rated the practice as requires improvement for providing safe services.

Safety systems and processes

The practice had systems to keep people safe and safeguarded from abuse but these could be improved.

- The practice had systems in place to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from abuse. All staff received up-to-date safeguarding and safety training appropriate to their role. They knew how to identify and report concerns. Reports and learning from safeguarding incidents were available to staff. Staff who acted as chaperones were trained for their role and had received a DBS check. (DBS checks identify whether a person has a criminal record or is on an official list of people barred from working in roles where they may have contact with children or adults who may be vulnerable.)
- Dispensary staff sometimes delivered medicines to patients' homes; those staff had not received a DBS check. A risk assessment had been carried out and the practice had decided not to carry out checks on long standing members of the team.
- Staff took steps, including working with other agencies, to protect patients from abuse, neglect, harassment, discrimination and breaches of their dignity and respect.
- The practice carried out appropriate staff checks at the time of recruitment; but did not check clinical staff's professional registrations on a regular basis.
- There was an effective system to manage infection prevention and control.
- The practice had arrangements to ensure that facilities and equipment were safe and in good working order.
- Arrangements for managing waste and clinical specimens kept people safe.

Risks to patients

There were adequate systems to assess, monitor and manage risks to patient safety.

- Arrangements were in place for planning and monitoring the number and mix of staff needed to meet patients' needs, including planning for holidays, sickness, busy periods and epidemics.
- There was an effective induction system for temporary staff tailored to their role.

- The practice was equipped to deal with medical emergencies and staff were suitably trained in emergency procedures.
- Staff understood their responsibilities to manage emergencies on the premises and to recognise those in need of urgent medical attention. Clinicians knew how to identify and manage patients with severe infections including sepsis.

Information to deliver safe care and treatment

Staff had the information they needed to deliver safe care and treatment to patients.

- The care records we saw showed that information needed to deliver safe care and treatment was available to staff. There was a documented and comprehensive approach to managing test results.
- The practice had systems for sharing information with staff and other agencies to enable them to deliver safe care and treatment.
- Clinicians made timely referrals in line with protocols.

Appropriate and safe use of medicines

The practice did not have reliable systems for appropriate and safe handling of medicines.

- Staff prescribed, administered or supplied medicines to patients and gave advice on medicines in line with current national guidance.
- Audits we reviewed showed the practice had reviewed their antibiotic prescribing and taken action to support good antimicrobial stewardship in line with local and national guidance.
- Patients' health was monitored in relation to the use of medicines and followed up on appropriately. Patients were involved in regular reviews of their medicines.
- The practice had emergency medicines kits in place which were easily accessible and all staff knew of their location; however, the kits did not contain all of the medicines as recommended by national guidance.
- The practice had policies in place for the management of medicines which needed to be stored in a refrigerator. However these policies were not always followed by practice staff.
- The practice nurse and health care assistants administered vaccines; however the practice policies which governed this were not in line with legal requirements or national guidance.

Are services safe?

- The practice provided a medicines delivery service for some patients who were housebound. However, they did not maintain an audit trail of any medicines delivered.
- At the main surgery we found that the receipt of blank prescriptions and tracking of them to the branch surgeries was recorded. However, we found no evidence of tracking within the surgery itself. We also found that prescriptions were not stored in line with national guidance.
- At the branch surgeries we found no evidence of receipt or tracking of blank prescriptions.

Track record on safety

The practice had a good track record on safety.

- There were comprehensive risk assessments in relation to safety issues.

- The practice monitored and reviewed activity. This helped managers to understand risks and gave a clear, accurate and current picture of safety that led to safety improvements.

Lessons learned and improvements made

The practice learned and made improvements when things went wrong.

- Staff understood their duty to raise concerns and report incidents and near misses. Leaders and managers supported them when they did so.
- There were adequate systems for reviewing and investigating when things went wrong. The practice learned and shared lessons, identified themes and took action to improve safety in the practice.
- The practice acted on and learned from external safety events as well as patient and medicine safety alerts.

Please refer to the Evidence Tables for further information.

Are services effective?

We rated the practice, and all of the population groups as good for providing effective services.

(Please note: Any Quality Outcomes (QOF) data relates to 2016/17. QOF is a system intended to improve the quality of general practice and reward good practice.)

Effective needs assessment, care and treatment

The practice had systems to keep clinicians up to date with current evidence-based practice. We saw that clinicians assessed needs and delivered care and treatment in line with current legislation, standards and guidance, supported by clear clinical pathways and protocols.

- Patients' immediate and ongoing needs were fully assessed. This included their clinical needs and their mental and physical wellbeing.
- We saw no evidence of discrimination when making care and treatment decisions.
- Staff advised patients what to do if their condition got worse and where to seek further help and support.

Older people:

- Older patients who were frail or may have been vulnerable received a full assessment of their physical, mental and social needs.
- The practice followed up on older patients discharged from hospital and ensured that their care plans and prescriptions were updated to reflect any extra or changed needs.
- Staff had appropriate knowledge of treating older people including their psychological, mental and communication needs.

People with long-term conditions:

- Patients with long-term conditions had a structured annual review to check their health and medicines needs were being met. For patients with the most complex needs, the GP worked with other health and care professionals to deliver a coordinated package of care.
- Staff who were responsible for reviews of patients with long term conditions had received specific training.
- The practice had arrangements for adults with newly diagnosed cardiovascular disease including the offer of high-intensity statins for secondary prevention. People

with suspected hypertension were offered ambulatory blood pressure monitoring and patients with atrial fibrillation were assessed for stroke risk and treated as appropriate.

- A diabetic clinic was held twice a month with the GP, nurse, dietician and chiropodist.
- A six week pre-diabetic group session was available for patients.

Families, children and young people:

- Childhood immunisations were carried out in line with the national childhood vaccination programme. Uptake rates were above the target of 90%.
- The practice had arrangements to identify and review the treatment of newly pregnant women on long-term medicines. These patients were provided with advice and post-natal support in accordance with best practice guidance.
- The practice had arrangements for following up failed attendance of children's appointments following an appointment in secondary care or for immunisation.

Working age people (including those recently retired and students):

- The practice's uptake for cervical screening was 82.6%, which was above the 80% coverage target for the national screening programme.
- The practice's uptake for breast and bowel cancer screening was above the national average.
- The practice had systems to inform eligible patients to have the meningitis vaccine, for example before attending university for the first time.
- Patients had access to appropriate health assessments and checks including NHS checks for patients aged 40-74. There was appropriate follow-up on the outcome of health assessments and checks where abnormalities or risk factors were identified.

People whose circumstances make them vulnerable:

- End of life care was delivered in a coordinated way which took into account the needs of those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- The practice held a register of patients living in vulnerable circumstances including homeless people, travellers and those with a learning disability.

People experiencing poor mental health (including people with dementia):

Are services effective?

- The practice assessed and monitored the physical health of people with mental illness, severe mental illness, and personality disorder by providing access to health checks, interventions for physical activity, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, cancer and access to 'stop smoking' services. There was a system for following up patients who failed to attend for administration of long term medication.
- When patients were assessed to be at risk of suicide or self-harm the practice had arrangements in place to help them to remain safe.
- The practice's performance on the mental health indicators was above national averages.
- Patients at risk of dementia were identified and offered an assessment to detect possible signs of dementia. When dementia was suspected there was an appropriate referral for diagnosis.
- The practice offered annual health checks to patients with a learning disability.
- Staff had appropriate knowledge for their role, for example, to carry out reviews for people with long term conditions, older people and people requiring contraceptive reviews.
- Staff whose role included immunisation and taking samples for the cervical screening programme had received specific training and could demonstrate how they stayed up to date.
- The practice understood the learning needs of staff and provided protected time and training to meet them. Up to date records of skills, qualifications and training were maintained. Staff were encouraged and given opportunities to develop.
- The practice provided staff with ongoing support. This included an induction process, one-to-one meetings, appraisals, coaching and mentoring, clinical supervision and support for revalidation.
- There was a clear approach for supporting and managing staff when their performance was poor or variable.
- Dispensary staff were appropriately qualified and their competence was assessed regularly. They could demonstrate how they kept up to date.

Monitoring care and treatment

The practice had a comprehensive programme of quality improvement activity and routinely reviewed the effectiveness and appropriateness of the care provided.

- The practice had achieved 99.3% of the total number of QOF points available, compared to the clinical commissioning group (CCG) average of 98.7% and the national average of 95.5%. The practice exception reporting rate was slightly lower than the local and national averages at 9.5% (CCG average 9.8%, national average 10%).
- The practice used information about care and treatment to make improvements.
- The practice was actively involved in quality improvement activity. Where appropriate, clinicians took part in local and national improvement initiatives.
- A member of the administration team had been trained to carry out monthly searches of patients who had been prescribed certain medicines which required regular monitoring checks. They then highlighted any patients and passed to the reception team to contact the patient to make an appointment.

Effective staffing

Staff had the skills, knowledge and experience to carry out their roles.

Coordinating care and treatment

Staff worked together and with other health and social care professionals to deliver effective care and treatment.

- We saw records that showed that all appropriate staff, including those in different teams and organisations, were involved in assessing, planning and delivering care and treatment.
- The practice shared clear and accurate information with relevant professionals when deciding care delivery for people with long term conditions and when coordinating healthcare for care home residents. They shared information with, and liaised, with community services, social services, health visitors and community services as necessary.
- Patients received coordinated and person-centred care. This included when they moved between services, when they were referred, or after they were discharged from hospital. The practice worked with patients to develop personal care plans that were shared with relevant agencies.

Are services effective?

- The practice ensured that end of life care was delivered in a coordinated way which took into account the needs of different patients, including those who may be vulnerable because of their circumstances.

Helping patients to live healthier lives

Staff were consistent and proactive in helping patients to live healthier lives.

- The practice identified patients who may be in need of extra support and directed them to relevant services. This included patients in the last 12 months of their lives, patients at risk of developing a long-term condition and carers.
- Staff encouraged and supported patients to be involved in monitoring and managing their own health, for example through social prescribing schemes.
- Staff discussed changes to care or treatment with patients and their carers as necessary.

- The practice supported national priorities and initiatives to improve the population's health, for example, stop smoking and tackling obesity campaigns.

Consent to care and treatment

The practice obtained consent to care and treatment in line with legislation and guidance.

- Clinicians understood the requirements of legislation and guidance when considering consent and decision making.
- Clinicians supported patients to make decisions. Where appropriate, they assessed and recorded a patient's mental capacity to make a decision.

Please refer to the Evidence Tables for further information.

Are services caring?

We rated the practice as good for caring.

Kindness, respect and compassion

Staff treated patients with kindness, respect and compassion.

- Feedback from patients about the way staff treat people was positive.
- Staff understood patients' personal, cultural, social and religious needs.
- The practice gave patients timely support and information.

Involvement in decisions about care and treatment

Staff helped patients to be involved in decisions about care and treatment. They were aware of the Accessible Information Standard (a requirement to make sure that patients and their carers can access and understand the information that they are given.)

- Staff communicated with people in a way that they could understand, for example, communication aids and easy read materials were available.
- Staff helped patients and their carers find further information and access community and advocacy services. They helped them ask questions about their care and treatment.
- The practice proactively identified carers and supported them.

Privacy and dignity

The practice respected patients' privacy and dignity.

- Reception staff knew that if patients wanted to discuss sensitive issues or appeared distressed they could offer them a private room to discuss their needs.
- Staff recognised the importance of people's dignity and respect. They challenged behaviour that fell short of this.

Please refer to the Evidence Tables for further information.

Are services responsive to people's needs?

We rated the practice, and all of the population groups, as good for providing responsive services.

Responding to and meeting people's needs

The practice organised and delivered services to meet patients' needs and took account of their needs and preferences.

- The practice understood the needs of its population and tailored services in response to those needs.
- Telephone consultations were available which supported patients who were unable to attend the practice during normal working hours.
- The facilities and most of the premises were appropriate for the services delivered. The doors at the branch surgeries were not automatic and there was no way for patients to summon support should they need it. The corridor at the Toft Hill surgery leading from the entrance with ramp access was narrow and would have been difficult for patients in a wheelchair to use. Managers told us they would install doorbells at both sites to allow patients to summon help when necessary.
- The practice made reasonable adjustments when patients found it hard to access services.
- The practice provided effective care coordination for patients who were more vulnerable or who had complex needs. They supported them to access services both within and outside the practice.
- Care and treatment for patients with multiple long-term conditions and patients approaching the end of life was coordinated with other services.
- The practice provided dispensary services for people who needed additional support with their medicines, for example a home delivery service.

Older people:

- Patients had access to a local service 'vulnerable adults wrap around service (VAWAS); this team visited housebound, older and/or frail and patients living in residential homes.
- All patients had a named GP who supported them in whatever setting they lived, whether it was at home or in a care home or supported living scheme.
- The practice was responsive to the needs of older patients, and offered home visits and urgent appointments for those with enhanced needs. The GP and practice nurse also accommodated home visits for those who had difficulties getting to the practice.

- There was a local TAPS (Team around the Patient Service); monthly meetings were held to discuss how to support patients to remain living in their own homes. GPs from the practice attended those meetings, along with district nurses, social services and VAWAS staff.

People with long-term conditions:

- Patients with a long-term condition received an annual review to check their health and medicines needs were being appropriately met. Multiple conditions were reviewed at one appointment, and consultation times were flexible to meet each patient's specific needs.
- The practice held regular meetings with the local district nursing team to discuss and manage the needs of patients with complex medical issues.

Families, children and young people:

- We found there were systems to identify and follow up children living in disadvantaged circumstances and who were at risk, for example, children and young people who had a high number of accident and emergency (A&E) attendances. Records we looked at confirmed this.
- Parents or guardians calling with concerns about a child were offered a same day appointment when necessary.

Working age people (including those recently retired and students):

- The needs of this population group had been identified and the practice had adjusted the services it offered to ensure these were accessible, flexible and offered continuity of care. For example, extended opening hours and weekend appointments.

People whose circumstances make them vulnerable:

- People in vulnerable circumstances were easily able to register with the practice, including those with no fixed abode.
- The practice offered annual health checks for patients with learning disabilities; these were either held at the practice or at the patient's home if they preferred.
- The practice was a designated 'safe place' (safe places help vulnerable people if they feel scared or at risk while they are out and about in the community and need support right away).

People experiencing poor mental health (including people with dementia):

Are services responsive to people's needs?

- Staff interviewed had a good understanding of how to support patients with mental health needs and those patients living with dementia.
- Patients could access the in house counselling service.
- Reception staff were trained as dementia friends.

Timely access to care and treatment

Patients were able to access care and treatment from the practice within an acceptable timescale for their needs.

- Patients had timely access to initial assessment, test results, diagnosis and treatment.
- Waiting times, delays and cancellations were minimal and managed appropriately.
- Patients with the most urgent needs had their care and treatment prioritised.
- Patients reported that the appointment system was easy to use.

Listening and learning from concerns and complaints

The practice took complaints and concerns seriously and responded to them appropriately.

- Information about how to make a complaint or raise concerns was available. Staff treated patients who made complaints compassionately.
- The complaint policy and procedures were in line with recognised guidance. The practice learned lessons from individual concerns and complaints and acted as a result to improve the quality of care. For example, following one complaint a training session on referring patients following radiotherapy treatment was arranged for the GPs.

Please refer to the Evidence Tables for further information.

Are services well-led?

We rated the practice as good for providing a well-led service.

Leadership capacity and capability

Leaders had the capacity and skills to deliver high-quality, sustainable care.

- Leaders were knowledgeable about issues and priorities relating to the quality and future of services. They understood the challenges and were addressing them.
- Leaders at all levels were visible and approachable. They worked closely with staff and others to make sure they prioritised compassionate and inclusive leadership.
- The practice had effective processes to develop leadership capacity and skills, including planning for the future leadership of the practice.

Vision and strategy

The practice had a clear vision and credible strategy to deliver high quality, sustainable care.

- There was a clear vision and set of values. The practice had a realistic strategy and supporting business plans to achieve priorities.
- Staff were aware of and understood the vision, values and strategy and their role in achieving them.
- The practice planned their services to meet the needs of the practice population.

Culture

The practice had a culture of high-quality sustainable care.

- Staff stated they felt respected, supported and valued. There were positive relationships between staff and teams.
- The practice focused on the needs of patients.
- Leaders and managers acted on behaviour and performance that was inconsistent with the vision and values.
- Openness, honesty and transparency were demonstrated when responding to incidents and complaints. The provider was aware of and had systems to ensure compliance with the requirements of the duty of candour.
- Staff we spoke with told us they were able to raise concerns and were encouraged to do so. They had confidence that these would be addressed.
- There were processes for providing all staff with the development they needed. This included appraisal and

career development conversations. All staff received regular annual appraisals. Staff were supported to meet the requirements of professional revalidation where necessary.

- Clinical staff were given protected time for professional development and evaluation of their clinical work.
- There was a strong emphasis on the safety and well-being of all staff.
- The practice actively promoted equality and diversity.

Governance arrangements

There were clear responsibilities, roles and systems of accountability to support good governance and management.

- Structures, processes and systems to support good governance and management were clearly set out, understood and effective. The governance and management of partnerships, joint working arrangements and shared services promoted interactive and co-ordinated person-centred care.
- Staff were clear on their roles and accountabilities including in respect of safeguarding and infection prevention and control
- Practice leaders had established policies, procedures and activities to ensure safety although these did not always operate as intended. For example, those in relation to medicines management.

Managing risks, issues and performance

There were clear and effective processes for managing risks, issues and performance.

- There was an effective, process to identify, understand, monitor and address current and future risks including risks to patient safety.
- The practice had processes to manage current and future performance. Practice leaders had oversight of national and local safety alerts, incidents, and complaints.
- Clinical audit had a positive impact on quality of care and outcomes for patients. There was clear evidence of action to change practice to improve quality.
- The practice had plans in place and had trained staff for major incidents.

Appropriate and accurate information

The practice acted on appropriate and accurate information.

Are services well-led?

- Quality and operational information was used to ensure and improve performance. Performance information was combined with the views of patients.
- The information used to monitor performance and the delivery of quality care was accurate and useful. There were plans to address any identified weaknesses.
- The practice used information technology systems to monitor and improve the quality of care.
- The practice submitted data or notifications to external organisations as required.
- There were robust arrangements in line with data security standards for the availability, integrity and confidentiality of patient identifiable data, records and data management systems.

Engagement with patients, the public, staff and external partners

The practice involved patients, the public, staff and external partners to support high-quality sustainable services.

- A full and diverse range of patients', staff and external partners' views and concerns were encouraged, heard and acted on to shape services and culture. There was an active patient participation group.
- The service was transparent, collaborative and open with stakeholders about performance.

Continuous improvement and innovation

There were systems and processes for learning, continuous improvement and innovation.

- There was a focus on continuous learning and improvement.
- The practice made use of internal and external reviews of incidents and complaints. Learning was shared and used to make improvements.
- Leaders and managers encouraged staff to take time out to review individual and team objectives, processes and performance.

Please refer to the Evidence Tables for further information.

This section is primarily information for the provider

Requirement notices

Action we have told the provider to take

The table below shows the legal requirements that the service provider was not meeting. The provider must send CQC a report that says what action it is going to take to meet these requirements.

Regulated activity	Regulation
Diagnostic and screening procedures Family planning services Maternity and midwifery services Surgical procedures Treatment of diseases	<p>Regulation 12 HSCA (RA) Regulations 2014 Safe care and treatment</p> <p>There was no proper and safe management of medicines. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Patient Specific Directions were not in line with legal requirements and national guidance•Storage and tracking of prescriptions were not in line with national guidance.•A risk assessment to determine which emergency medicines to hold had not been carried out. <p>This was in breach of Regulation 12 (1) the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 Safe care and treatment.</p>