

# Lowther Medical Centre

## Inspection report

1 Castle Meadows  
Whitehaven  
CA28 7RG  
Tel: 019460692241  
[www.lowthermedical.co.uk](http://www.lowthermedical.co.uk)

Date of inspection visit: 13 April 2022  
Date of publication: 16/05/2022

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?		Good	
Are services caring?		Good	
Are services responsive to people's needs?		Good	
Are services well-led?		Good	

# Overall summary

We carried out an announced inspection at Lowther Medical Centre on 11 and 13 April 2022. Overall, the practice is rated as Good.

The ratings for each key question are:

Safe - Good

Effective - Good

Caring - Good

Responsive - Good

Well-led - Good

The full reports for previous inspections can be found by selecting the 'all reports' link for Lowther Medical Centre on our website at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

## Why we carried out this inspection

This inspection was a comprehensive inspection to rate the practice following a change to their registration with CQC. This was therefore the first rated inspection of the service under this provider.

## How we carried out the inspection

Throughout the pandemic CQC has continued to regulate and respond to risk. However, taking into account the circumstances arising as a result of the pandemic, and in order to reduce risk, we have conducted our inspections differently.

This inspection was carried out in a way which enabled us to spend a minimum amount of time on site. This was with consent from the provider and in line with all data protection and information governance requirements.

This included:

- Conducting staff interviews using video conferencing.
- Completing clinical searches on the practice's patient records system and discussing findings with the provider.
- Reviewing patient records to identify issues and clarify actions taken by the provider.
- Requesting evidence from the provider.
- A short site visit.

## Our findings

We based our judgement of the quality of care at this service on a combination of:

- what we found when we inspected
- information from our ongoing monitoring of data about services and
- information from the provider, patients, the public and other organisations.

# Overall summary

## **We have rated this practice as Good overall**

We found that:

- The practice provided care in a way that kept patients safe and protected them from avoidable harm.
- Patients received effective care and treatment that met their needs.
- Staff dealt with patients with kindness and respect and involved them in decisions about their care.
- The practice adjusted how it delivered services to meet the needs of patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The way the practice was led and managed promoted the delivery of high-quality, person-centre care.

Whilst we found the practice was not in breach of regulations, the provider **should:**

- Continue to develop and improve access to the service for their patients.
- Make sure staff are up to date with training relevant to their role.
- To review and improve the analysis and sharing of learning from significant events in an attempt to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

## **We saw several areas of outstanding practice.**

- The provider understood the importance of gathering and analysing data in order to ensure that patients received optimal care. They believed they could have a direct effect on the lifespan and health of patients living in the area served by Lowther Medical Centre. We saw several examples of the impact this was beginning to have, which can be found within the Evidence Table. In addition, their not-for-profit business model allowed them to invest in the health and well-being of the community.
- During lockdown the practice set up “Operation Alec”, a programme to support vulnerable and socially isolated patients who lived alone. Staff delivered resources to over 100 patients to support their mental good health. Social prescribers at the practice worked with the patient participation group (PPG) and local schools to contact isolated patients and keep them company. During the inspection we saw moving examples of the highly positive impact this had had on these patients’ wellbeing.
- A GP from the practice led the response to the initial Covid-19 outbreak in local care homes. Working with the provider, they initiated testing for all staff and patients at a care home where an outbreak had led to 11 deaths, identifying 17 positive cases out of 29 asymptomatic residents, and 20 positive cases out of 60 staff. Staff and residents who tested positive could be isolated, halting the continued spread of infection in the care home and preventing further deaths. This approach was then replicated across all care homes in the county.

**Details of our findings and the evidence supporting our ratings are set out in the evidence tables.**

**Dr Rosie Benneyworth** BM BS BMedSci MRCGP

Chief Inspector of Primary Medical Services and Integrated Care

## Our inspection team

Our inspection team was led by a CQC lead inspector who spoke with staff using video conferencing facilities and undertook a site visit. The team included a GP specialist advisor who spoke with staff using video conferencing facilities and completed clinical searches and records reviews without visiting the location.

## Background to Lowther Medical Centre

Lowther Medical Centre is registered with CQC to provide Primary Medical Services to patients from one location:

- Lowther Medical Centre, 1 Castle Meadows, Whitehaven, Cumbria, CA28 7RG.

We visited this location as part of this inspection.

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

The practice is situated within the NHS North Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and delivers General Medical Services (GMS) to about 10,000 registered patients. This is part of a contract held with NHS England.

Lowther Medical Centre is based in the centre of Whitehaven, Cumbria, in purpose-built premises and provides services to patients at ground and first-floor levels. They offer on-site parking including disabled parking, accessible WC's, and step-free access. A passenger lift is available for patients to use to access the consulting rooms on the first floor.

Opening times are 7.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday.

Information taken from Public Health England places the area in which the practice is located in the fourth most deprived decile. In general, people living in more deprived areas tend to have greater need for health services. The practice's age distribution profile is weighted towards a slightly older population than national averages. There are more patients registered with the practice over the age of 65 years than the national average. 98.2% of the practice population is white.

The practice is part of a wider network of GP practices and is a member of the Copeland Primary Care Network (PCN), which includes GP practices in the Copeland district of West Cumbria, including the towns of Whitehaven, Seascale, and Egremont. Extended access is provided locally by Cumbria Health Extended Access (CHEA), where late evening and weekend appointments are available. Out of hours services are provided by NHS 111 and Cumbria Health on Call (CHoC).