

Lowther Medical Centre

Inspection report

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Whitehaven
CA28 7RG
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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 to people's needs?

Requires Improvement



Overall summary

We carried out a targeted assessment of Lowther Medical Centre in relation to the responsive key question. This assessment was carried out on 11 January 2024 without a site visit. **Overall, the practice is rated as Good.** We rated the key question of responsive as **Requires improvement.**

Safe - Good

Effective – Good

Caring - Good

Responsive – Requires improvement

Well-led – Good

The full reports for previous inspections can be found by selecting the ‘all reports’ link for the

Bridges Medical Practice on our website at www.cqc.org.uk

Why we carried out this review.

We carried out this assessment as part of our work to understand how practices are working to try to meet demand for access and to better understand the experiences of people who use services and providers.

We recognise the work that GP practices have been engaged in to continue to provide safe, quality care to the people they serve. We know colleagues are doing this while demand for general practice remains exceptionally high, with more appointments being provided than ever. In this challenging context, access to general practice remains a concern for people. Our strategy makes a commitment to deliver regulation driven by people’s needs and experiences of care. These assessments of the responsive key question include looking at what practices are doing innovatively to improve patient access to primary care and sharing this information to drive improvement.

How we carried out the assessment

This assessment was carried out remotely.

This included:

- Conducting staff interviews using video conferencing.
- Requesting evidence from the provider.

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 found that:

- During the assessment process the practice highlighted the efforts they are making to improve access, however, this was not yet reflected in the GP patient survey data or some of the other sources of patient feedback.
- The practice had not collected their own patient feedback. Feedback from other sources on access such as NHS choices was poor.
- Most of the complaints received in the last year (114) were in relation to access, in particular the telephone access.

Whilst we found no breaches of regulations, the provider **should**:

- Consider a formal action plan of responding to patient concerns about access to care and treatment.
- Continue with plans to gain more targeted views on patient access to care and treatment with a view to improving this.

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

Dr Sean O’Kelly BSc MB ChB MSc DCH FRCA

Chief Inspector of Health Care

Our inspection team

Our assessment was carried out by a CQC inspector who spoke with staff using video conferencing facilities and reviewed all other sources of information that we have used to form our judgement of the responsive key question.

Background to Lowther Medical Centre

Lowther Medical Centre is located at Castle Meadows, Whitehaven, Cumbria, CA28 7RG.

The provider is registered to deliver the regulated activities of diagnostic and screening procedures; maternity and midwifery services; treatment of disease, disorder or injury; and surgical procedures.

The practice is situated within the NHS Northeast and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) and delivers a General Medical Services contract (GMS) to a patient population around 14,100 patients. This is part of a contract held with NHS England. The practice is part of a wider Primary Care Network (PCN) which is Copeland.

Information published by Office for Health Improvement and Disparities shows that deprivation within the practice population group is in the fourth lowest decile (Four out of 10). The lower the decile, the more deprived the practice population is relative to others.

The practice population is made up of more elderly patients at 22% aged 65plus (England average 17.7%). The practice had higher levels of long-term conditions in their patients.

The practice is open between 7.30am to 6.30pm weekdays.

Out of hours services are provided by 111 and extended access appointments are provided by a local provider, where late evening appointments are available until 8pm and weekend appointments are available on Saturday 9am to 5pm.