



CYNGOR IECHYD CYMUNED
COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCIL

HYWEL DDA

**Preseli Practice
Crymych branch
Visit report
January 2020**

About Hywel Dda Community Health Council (CHC)

We represent independently and without bias the interests of patients and the public in the way that NHS services are planned and provided across the counties of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire.

Our volunteer members who live in the communities we serve are supported by a small team of staff who work together to:

- Carry out regular visits to health services, talking to the people using the service and the people providing the care to influence the changes that can make a big difference;
- Get involved with health service managers when they are planning service developments and larger scale service change to emphasise the patients view right from the start;
- Provide free and confidential support through complaints advocacy if things go wrong and if the health service complaints process isn't working;
- Reach out more widely to patients and their families across communities to provide information, and to gather views and experiences so that we can represent your interests to health service managers and to policy makers.

Contents

	Page No
Introduction	4
Background	5
What we did	6
What people told us	7
Summing up	14
Appendices	16
Contact Us	

Introduction

Preseli Practice in Pembrokeshire is a single practice working over two sites. One site is based in the coastal town of Newport and the other site is at Crymych. The Crymych surgery is located in the Bro Preseli Community Care Resource Centre and this was the site that was visited by the Community Health Council.

The practice consists of 4 General Practitioners (GPs) that are partners, 2 salaried GPs, a team of practice nurses, a phlebotomist and an advanced paramedic practitioner. The doctors and nurses at the health centre are often called the 'clinical team'. A Practice Manager and a range of reception and administrative staff support them in their work to deliver care.

A community health care team employed by the Health Board also works out of the same building. This consists of midwives, district nurses and health visitors.

The opening hours of the surgery are 8:30 am to 6:30 pm Monday to Friday. The receptionists are available by telephone from 8am.

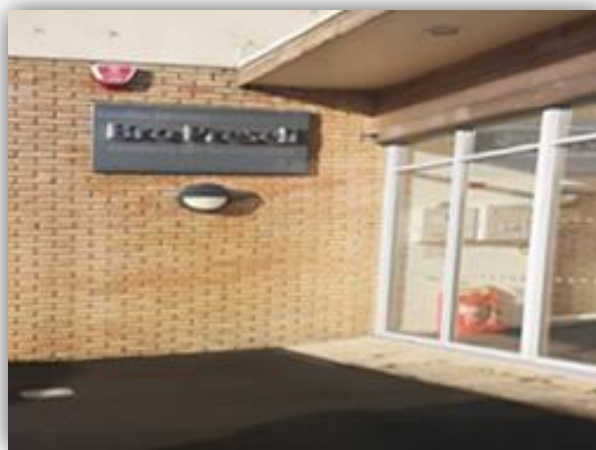
7437 local residents are registered at the practice. There are also patients in 3 local care homes who are registered at the practice.

Often people will go to the health centre to see a GP or nurse and they can also access a range of specialist clinics and other services. These include flu vaccination and chronic condition clinics, e.g. diabetes and asthma, as well as blood testing (phlebotomy) services, baby immunisation clinics and women's health.

The Practice has a quarterly newsletter available in English and Welsh to provide information to patients. The newsletter is available from the reception and waiting areas at both Newport and Crymych sites, or can be downloaded from the practice website. The practice also has a Facebook page to allow patients to have access to information about recent news and practice developments.

The practice has a Patient Participation Group (PPG) that has been running since early 2016. The group currently meets informally at Newport Surgery approximately every 3 months. The PPG aims to work with their practice to offer a patient perspective on the services provided. This helps to improve communication but is not a forum for complaints.

In terms of general accessibility, both sites have disabled parking near to the front of the buildings.



Background

Preseli Practice faced some changes in autumn 2019 when another GP Surgery in nearby Cardigan closed following staff retirement. This meant that patients of the Cardigan surgery now had to be registered elsewhere.

For Preseli Practice, this meant that 200 patients from the closed surgery needed to join Crymych.

Compared to other surgeries in the area this was not a large number of new patients, however the CHC wanted to understand the impact this had on the surgery and on patient experiences. The newly registered patients inevitably had to get used to having medical care in a different place and with different staff. However, the patients already in Crymych may also have experienced some changes due to the additional numbers going to the surgery.

What we did

We asked the GP surgery to encourage people to complete our patient survey (shown at Appendix 1). Over a 4 week period, paper copies of the survey forms were left in the surgery for people to take away with them. 26 people completed the survey and there were also some on-line contributions because we also used social media to promote the survey online.

In January 2020 we also visited the practice. We undertake visits so we can hear directly from patients, family members and carers whilst they are in the surgery itself. On the day of our visit, we heard from 21 people. Generally people had an appointment to see a GP and these were mostly emergency appointments. Some people did have pre-booked appointments or had arranged to see the nurse.

We wanted to talk to people to see what their experience was like. We wanted to understand how easy it was to get an appointment and what it was like to be a patient at the surgery. We asked people what they thought was good and what could be better.

What People Told Us

Change and upheaval

Generally, whilst people acknowledged there had been changes, they had not been affected too much. Patients told us:

"Did not know that the practice had taken on any extra patients".

"No difference at all".

"Possibly a little longer to see a GP".

"The way you order your prescriptions is different".

"No change really but there is a need for a post-box so we can drop off prescriptions as we as some people work and are not able to drop off to the receptionist, we are unable to phone the prescriptions through".

"No change, the staff are fantastic".

"Not taking on new patients".

Access to the surgery

We asked people about getting to the surgery. People tended to say that that accessing the practice was straightforward.

A few people said that parking could be difficult although there is a free car park 100 meters away which they can use.

"Parking can be difficult".

"Parking is fine and we have the free car park across the road".

"Happy with the parking".

Opening Times

People tell us that it is important for them to be able to speak to a health care professional when they need one. We asked people on what they thought of the opening times. Everyone we spoke to said that they thought the opening times of the surgery was good.

"Very happy with the opening times".

"Opening times are good".

"Yes, happy with the opening times".

Telephone System

We frequently hear that getting through to a GP surgery by telephone can be a problem. Usually this is because many people are trying to get a 'same day' appointment at the same time when the surgery is opening for the day.

In Crymych surgery we asked people to give us their views on the phone system and what it was like when they were trying to make an appointment.

Most people said that the phone was answered within 2 minutes"

"Good. Fairly Speedy".

"Happy with the phone system".

"Fairly speedy in answering the phone".

"Very, very good. Staff could not be more helpful. Can usually get appointment when needed".

"Ok if you ring early - answers quickly".

"Not waited long, very good".

The Appointment System

Once people have got through to their GP practice on the telephone, a common concern we hear is that it can be difficult to get an appointment. We wanted to see if patients in Crymych could get appointments easily.

The practice has two types of appointment. Emergency appointments are available when people need to be seen the same day that they telephone the surgery. This usually involves phoning up first thing in the morning and being given an appointment slot with a doctor. Not all people need to be seen the same day however, sometimes they can comfortably wait longer or it may suit them to plan ahead for a pre-bookable appointments with a specific doctor.

"Happy with the appointment system. I can always get an appointment".

"Happy with the appointment system".

"Very easy to get an appointment".

"Appointment system ok".

"Happy with the appointment system".

"Difficult in getting a routine appointment".

Most patients were happy with the appointments system and did not find it difficult to book a pre-bookable appointment. Patients could also be seen in the main surgery (in Newport) for an emergency appointment if all the appointments had already been allocated in Crymych. Provided people could travel there was often another option available for them.

The CHC members visiting the practice noted that the it did not use "My health online" for booking appointments although it was possible to order prescriptions through this system.

Learning from what people told us

- The surgery may wish to consider using "My Health Online" as a system that people can use to book appointments without having to phone up.
- The practice may want to consider a "patient calling system", (currently doctors come out of their room to call patients)

Waiting to be Seen

Most people stated that the reception area was clean and uncluttered.

We noticed that the nurses and GPs were coming into the reception area to call patients because there was no intercom or call system in place.

When we first looked at reception and the waiting room, there was no obvious private area for people to have confidential discussions with staff, although we learned that patients can ask to discuss their matters privately and an office behind the reception area is available. This was helpful but when we spoke to people, not everyone was aware.

When patients came into the surgery they had to speak to a receptionist to 'book in', so that staff knew that they had arrived. There was a 'booking-in' screen although this was not working when we visited and was out of sight of patients.

Learning from what people told us

- The surgery needs to inform patients that they can speak to a member of staff in private. A clear sign or notice could allow this information to be widely shared.
- The surgery should consider some kind of call system for clinical staff to use rather than having clinical staff coming into the waiting area.
- The surgery should make sure that the self-booking-in system is working and that it placed in a prominent place. Not all patients will use this but it may mean that not all people will need to speak to a member of staff.

Staff at the Surgery Including Doctors and Nurses

We asked people to tell us about the staff at the surgery which included reception staff, doctors and nurses. Everyone told us that the staff were helpful and polite and they were very happy with the staff working at Crymych:

"The reception staff are very helpful and pleasant"

"Staff are always polite helpful and reassuring"

"Staff are good and helpful they can't do enough"

"Very happy with all the staff. Nurses are brilliant"

"The reception staff are brilliant"

The Environment

The environment was clean and tidy. The waiting area was large. It was possible to hear conversations that the receptionists were having with colleagues, other patients and on incoming telephone calls. Some patients noted this too.

People were waiting to be seen by the receptionist for up to 3/4 minutes at times. This was usually because staff were taking telephone calls. For people booking in for appointments, there was no alternative way to 'book in' and this could contribute to some delays.

The practice did have a hearing aid loop system in place for people with suitable hearing aids to use.

Learning from what people told us

- Surgery staff need to bear in mind that conversations in reception can be overheard by people sitting in the waiting area. If an alternative approach to taking calls can be considered, this will enable confidential or sensitive matters to be dealt with in a more appropriate way.

Information and involvement

We did not see any posters/leaflets in the surgery explaining how people could provide feedback or raise a concern about their NHS experience. It is important that people have access to this information in their GP Surgery so that any issues can be dealt with quickly, through the right route.

We did not see any information on making an appointment. This again may be important for people who do not use the surgery frequently and who may not be aware of how they can do this.

The practice leaflet was available and did provide some information that helped them identify services.

Some information on noticeboards was out of date and untidy, there were also posters stuck on in front of the reception desk this gave a cluttered picture of what the practice was aiming to show people.

Learning from what people told us

- The surgery needs to have a suggestion box on display at the reception area so that people can bring ideas to the surgery.
- The surgery may also want to develop a system to make sure that a range of relevant information is readily available to people coming to the surgery.
- The surgery needs to consider discussing the presentation of information and use of noticeboards with the Patient Participation Group.

Summing up

We'd like to thank everyone who took the time to share their experiences with us.

We are also grateful to the surgery and their staff who made us feel welcome and helped us on the day we visited their busy place of work.

The people who shared their views and experiences with us were positive about the care and treatment provided by the healthcare staff in their GP practice.

The people who shared their views and experiences with us clearly appreciated the services provided in their GP surgery and valued the staff that care for them.

When we visit a surgery to speak to people, we hope that our findings are representative of the all people who use the surgery. Nevertheless, we realise that this is only a snapshot of what we found on the day and other people may have different views and experiences.

If patients have more to add to our findings we always pleased to hear from them. Our contact details are included at the end of this report.

Hywel Dda Community Health Council

January 2020



PATIENT INTERVIEWS

CRYMYCH GP PRACTICE

Hywel Dda Community Health Council is talking to patients to find out what it is like to access services at your surgery. We are entirely independent of your surgery and do not need your name or contact details.

How happy are you with the following:	Very happy	Happy	It's ok	Unhappy	Very unhappy
Surgery opening times					
The waiting area					
Reception staff					
Access to the building					
Parking					

If you want to make any comments on any of the above, what are they?

How long have you been registered with the surgery and if you have only recently registered here, in the past 2 years, why did you change?

Tell us what it is like when you phone your surgery for any reason.

Tell us about the appointment system in the surgery

Tell us about the staff in the surgery – this can include doctors, nurses, receptionists or any other staff that you have seen here?

Have you noticed any changes in your GP surgery in the past year and if so how has this affected you? This may involve things which are good or bad from your viewpoint

Have you got any comments that you want to share with us about your local NHS in general eg hospitals, dentists, community care etc?



**CRYMYCH
PATIENT SURVEY**

Hywel Dda Community Health Council is using a survey to find out what it is like to access services at your surgery. We are entirely independent of your surgery and do not need your name or contact details.

How happy are you with the following:	Very happy	Happy	It's ok	Unhappy	Very unhappy
Surgery opening times					
The waiting area					
Reception staff					
Access to the building					
Parking					

1. How long have you been registered with the surgery

- Less than 3 months
 3 - 12 months
 1-2 years
 2-5 years
 5 years +

If you have been registered less than 2 years, where were you registered before and why did you change?

.....

2. When you phone your surgery for any reason, how long do you have to wait before you get through to a person?

- Less than 2 mins 2-5 mins 5-10 mins 10 mins +

3. If you phone for an appointment, do you go through a telephone triage system before getting an appointment? (*Telephone triage is a system where someone asks you for your reason for calling before giving you an appointment or arranges for someone to call you back?*)

- Yes No I'm unsure

4. How easy is it to make a routine appointment?

- Very easy Easy It's ok Difficult Very difficult I don't know

5. How long do you have to wait to see a doctor for a routine appointment?

- Less than 48 hours Under a week 1-2 weeks 2-3 weeks More than 3 weeks

6. When booking a routine appointment have you been offered an appointment with someone instead of a doctor?

- Yes, this often happens Yes this sometimes No this has not happened I would like to be given this option when booking

7. When you book a routine appointment how easy is it to get an appointment on a particular day of the week/time of the day e.g. mornings/evenings?

- Very easy Easy It's ok Difficult Very difficult I don't know

8. How easy is it to access an emergency/same day appointment?

- Very easy Easy It's ok Difficult Very difficult I don't know

9. Have you ever failed to get an emergency/same day appointment?

- Yes No

If Yes what did you do instead?

- Tried again the next day Went to the A&E instead Saw a pharmacist Other

10. How easy is it to speak to a health care professional (doctor or nurse) by telephone?

- Very easy Easy It's ok Difficult Very difficult I don't know

11. How easy is it to have a home visit if you needed one?

- Very difficult Easy It's ok Difficult Very easy I don't know

12. How easy is it to order a repeat prescription?

- Very difficult Easy It's ok Difficult Very easy I don't know

13. Do you have any difficulties with getting to the surgery?

Yes

No

14. Do you use My Health Online? (tick all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, to make appointments	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, to order prescriptions	<input type="checkbox"/> I don't know what this is	<input type="checkbox"/> I've heard of it but don't use it	<input type="checkbox"/> I don't think my surgery has this
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Have you noticed any changes in your GP surgery in the past year and if so how has this affected you? This may involve things which are good or bad from your viewpoint

Please tell us about your experience with any other NHS Service (e.g. Hospitals, Outpatient Clinics, Dentist etc.)

Good Morning Tracey,

Thanks again for your report which I am pleased was mostly positive. I wish to comment on the "Learning from what people told us" as follows:-

- We had introduced booking appointments on My Health Online just prior to COVID19. However, due to current restrictions and the essential need to triage patients we had no choice but to cease this facility for the time being. Once it is safe to do so we will be introducing this opportunity once again although it is still possible to order repeat prescriptions on My Health Online
- We did have a patient calling system alongside a patient booking in system but unfortunately this stopped working and we ceased using it because the company who provided and maintained the facility went bankrupt. It was not ideal, however, as confidentiality was still an issue and it struggled with Welsh names which meant we lost that personal touch
- We have now put a notice up advising patients that there is a private area where they can have a confidential conversation with staff if they so wish
- As in point 2. We have tried the call system and it was not ideal and stopped working.
- As in point 2. The company who provided and maintained the system went bankrupt
- Staff are advised that when having discussions over the telephone at reception that they should not use patient identifiable information in their conversations. This will be re-iterated to staff. There is the option to have telephone discussions away from reception but this can be difficult sometimes when staff are running a busy surgery and are having to meet and greet patients.

- We have put a suggestion box on display in reception
- We would very much like improve our communication with patients in ensuring that relevant/useful/helpful information is readily available and how we present this information (to all our patients and PPG). Once it is safe to do we will be look at ways to improve this.
- We are considering putting a "post box" outside for repeat prescription requests when we are closed but we have to consider the location and the security due to the confidential nature of the requests

Finally, we did publicise that we were taking on more patients from Ashleigh Surgery. We were allocated 200 patients on 1st March 2019. You may be interested to learn that we actually took on a total of 683 patients during the whole of 2019.

Thank you once again for your report and it interesting to find out patients views and do we welcome feedback both good and bad and there is always room for improvement.

You will appreciate that at the moment the COVD19 pandemic has taken over things and the safety of our staff and patients is our priority but we are doing all that we can to deal with the every-day challenges of general practice also

I hope that you and yours are keeping safe.

Kind Regards.

Julie Evans
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Preseli Practice (Newport/Crymych)
Based at Newport Surgery

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