

News Release

22 November 2023

New research shows that patients at Oakham Medical Practice feel that the service has improved throughout 2023 but appointment availability and continuity of care remain the biggest issues.

Patients at Oakham Medical Practice (OMP) shared their views and recent experiences of services at the Practice in our latest [Enter and View report](#).

We wanted to explore how patients are experiencing the many changes that have been made at the Practice throughout the last year or so.

Working in collaboration with the [OMP Patient Participation Group](#), we interviewed 82 people across 6 visits to the Practice in August and September this year. In addition, 1055 people completed our survey, which was available both online and in hardcopy.

Our findings included:

- The majority of people interviewed said the quality of medical care is good (82%) compared with 47% of survey respondents giving the same rating.
- Patients are more confident and happier to see health care professionals other than GPs and the practice nurses are valued highly.
- During the visits, almost equal numbers of patients told us they found it easy to make an appointment as found it difficult. This shows a variance against survey responses where just under one third of patients said they find it easy to make appointments and just under two thirds said they find it difficult.
- When asked "what one thing about the Practice would you change?" the biggest proportion of survey respondents (42%) wanted more appointments to be available.

Our recommendations included:

- Simplify the online appointment booking by providing clarity about appointment codes and make more doctors' appointments available to book online throughout the day.
- Provide more face-to-face appointments and offer continuity of care.
- Synchronise prescribing for patients taking multiple medications.
- Continue making improvements. OMP efforts over 2023 have been recognised and appreciated by patients but some doubts and anxieties remain.

Janet Underwood, Chair, Healthwatch Rutland said:

“By engaging with so many people, we can confidently report that many patients have appreciated the efforts made by staff to improve the service. We know, however, that there are some seemingly intractable issues faced by many practices including OMP: how to improve the access to appointments that patients ask for, whilst at the same time offering continuity of care by named professionals.”

“Oakham Medical Practice supported this Enter and View project as an independent, in-depth review of how patients have been experiencing the service during this year. We are delighted that partners and staff have listened to what patients are saying and look forward to continuing to work with them to improve the service.”

Barbara Crellin, Chair, OMP Patient Participation Group said:

“It was a good experience taking part in the Enter and View project at Oakham Medical Practice in conjunction with Healthwatch Rutland. It was a most interesting opportunity to meet patients, explain the role of the Patient Participation Group (PPG) and the purpose of the survey and, above all, to support the patients we met in completing the survey.”

“The results are really interesting and informative and certainly provide some good pointers for OMP to continue making welcome improvements.”

“Thank you to all who took part.”

Sara Kenrick, Practice Manager, Oakham Medical Practice said:

“We would like to thank Healthwatch Rutland and OMP PPG for undertaking this Enter and View project. Patient feedback is of great value to us and so we would like to thank every patient for their open and honest feedback.”

We are pleased our efforts to improve have been recognised but understand we still have areas requiring improvement. We will work with our PPG and Healthwatch to make these improvements.”

[Read the full report](#)

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About Healthwatch Rutland

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We exist to ensure that people are at the heart of care. We listen to what people like about services, and what could be improved, and we share their views with those with the power to make change happen. We also help people find the information they need about services in their area.

We have the power to ensure that people's voices are heard by the government and those running services. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them. Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

The Healthwatch Rutland service is provided by Connected Together Community Interest Company.

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About the Connected Together CIC:

Connected Together Community Interest Company (CIC) is the legal entity and governing body for Healthwatch Rutland. It is a social enterprise and a partnership between the University of Northampton and Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire.

What is "Enter and View"?

Healthwatch Rutland has the statutory right under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to carry out 'Enter and View' visits into NHS health and adult social care services.

Healthwatch staff and volunteers work together to carry out these visits.

The aim of the visits is to listen to the feedback of service users, their families, carers and staff and observe service delivery and the facilities available for patients. The feedback and observations, along with survey data are collated into a report including any suggested recommendations. The service provider then has the opportunity to comment on the report before it is published.