



Seymour House and Lock Road Surgeries: An Enter & Review Report

Healthwatch Richmond
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Introduction

Healthwatch Richmond is looking at patients' experiences of General Practice. This follows Healthwatch Richmond's report 'Patient Experiences of General Practice in Richmond',

published in October 2024¹. In April 2025 there were 69,749 GP appointments in Richmond upon Thames. General Practice, or GPs, are often the primary point of contact for NHS patients and represent a significant area of patient experience. 26% of Healthwatch Richmond's patient experience data over the past two years related to GPs.

This report outlines our findings from Enter & View visits to Seymour House and Lock Road Surgeries which is a single GP practice based over two sites;

- Seymour House Surgery: 154 Sheen Road, Richmond TW9 1UU.
- Lock Road Surgery: 55a Lock Road, Richmond TW10 7LJ.

The practice has a list size of 12,688. Data on the appointments in April at Seymour House and Lock Road Surgeries² showed that 48% of appointments were same day appointments and for 12% of appointments patients waited over 14 days. 72% of the appointments were in person and 27% of appointments were telephone appointments. There were 37 home appointments in April.

Methodology

We visited the two sites at the following times:

- Lock Road Surgery on the 10th of June 2025 from 3pm-6pm.
- Seymour House Surgery on the 11th of June 2025 from 3pm-6pm.

Over the two Enter & View visits we spoke to 20 patients and a further 9 patients shared their experiences through our online survey. We spoke to 11 members of staff in the following roles; Practice Manager, Salaried GP, admin and reception staff, medical secretary and pharmacy technician. Patient and staff feedback was collected through semi-structured interviews based on pre-written surveys (found in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). Observations were also taken using an observation checklist (Appendix 3).

The conversations and insights collected from these visits are summarised in this report with direct quotations included in *"this text"*. A series of recommendations were then created from these findings. A draft copy was sent to the practice who was required to respond to these recommendations within a 20 day statutory deadline. The responses to our recommendations are included in this final report.

¹<https://www.healthwatchrichmond.co.uk/report/2024-10-22/general-practice-richmond-patient-experience-report>

²<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/appointments-in-general-practice/april-2025>

Prior to our Enter & View visits we conducted a review of relevant literature about Seymour House and Lock Road Surgeries. This included the 2024 GP Patient Survey (GPPS) data which showed:

- There was a completion rate of 31%.
- 76% of patients described their experience of contacting the practice as good.
- 100% of respondents said that their needs were met during their most recent appointment.
- 79% describe their overall experience of the practice as good.

Seymour House and Lock Road Surgery is currently rated as 'Good' by the CQC and the latest inspection was in March 2020.

Key Findings

The environment

The majority of this report will present our findings from both sites as a collective. However, in this section which highlights our findings from the physical environment and facilities of the practices, the two sites are reported on separately.

Lock Road

The Building Exterior

Lock Road surgery is located off the road and down a side street. It was felt this was not well signposted. On the opposite side of the street there is a road sign stating 'Doctors Surgery', however this was not particularly clear and may be difficult to see for someone unfamiliar with the area. On the exterior of the building there is no signage displaying the practice name, but there are some small posters on the door asking patients to not attend the surgery if they have experienced recent illness or diarrhoea and that only guide dogs are permitted. Although we visited the surgery during daylight hours we questioned if there would be appropriate lighting at night, as there are no street lights on the road.



Accessibility

The road down to the surgery appeared to be appropriately accessible, however there is no parking available at the practice.

"Surgery on a private road, easily accessible"

This was not picked up as an issue by the patients we spoke to, because they were either local and could walk to the practice, or they were able to park on the neighbouring streets.

"There is always somewhere to park and it is free"



There is a ramp up to the entrance of the surgery, however next to this is a bike rack which may run the risk of blocking the entrance should a patient be a wheelchair user. It seemed to be the case that the building was not necessarily built with accessibility in mind, however there are some accommodations in place. For example, the practice does not have a lift but there is a GP consultation room on the ground floor which is used for patients who would be unable to use the stairs. Although we do question if this still allows for these patients to have a choice of clinician. One patient told us that they do not like the stairs, however the reception staff know them and always arrange for their appointments to be with the doctor downstairs.

We also observed a hearing loop facility available at the reception desk.

The waiting area

The interior of the building is small but provides sufficient space for both patients and staff. When patients enter they walk past the reception desk and into the waiting area. The waiting area is bright and well sized with an appropriate amount of chairs available. There were no drinking water facilities.

In the corner of the waiting area there was what appeared to be a 'fenced off' section which contained two chairs. This looked a little odd, and we were unsure of the purpose of this. One patient thought it could have been a play area for children. There were some comments from patients who felt that the practice was in need of updating, indeed we were told that the practice was refurbished in 1999.

"A bit outdated"

"Could do with a refurb but it's clean"

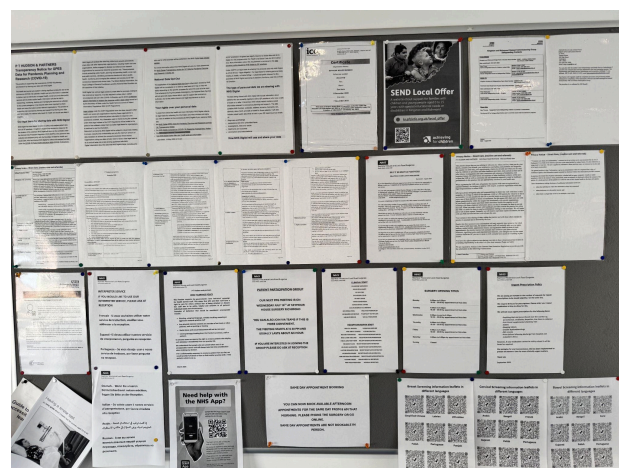


Within the waiting area there were several information display boards. These contained a substantial amount of information, but we were particularly pleased to see the inclusion of;

- Translated information on screening and translation services,
- Information on staff roles (across both sites),
- The dates of the next Patient Participation Group (PPG) meeting.

There was also a wall mounted leaflet display and table of leaflets. In addition, the TV

screen in the waiting area had a rolling display of various information and messaging. The TV screen was also used to display patient names when they were called for their appointments, alongside an audible message. There was a second TV screen but this was not switched on and there were wires hanging down from the screen, though they were appropriately out of the way of any patients in the waiting area. There was certainly a wealth of information for patients and the information provided appeared both relevant and up to date. Considerations should be made, however, to ensure that key messages are not missed amongst the volume.



The reception desk is very close to the waiting area and there are some concerns that this may not allow for patient privacy. We spoke to one of the receptionists who told us that if patients would like more privacy they can take them behind the desk or into the corridor. Patients are normally happy with this.

Cleanliness

We did not identify any significant concerns around cleanliness during our visit. One

patient remarked that the pattern of the waiting room floor made it appear dusty, others had mixed comments on the cleanliness of the practice.

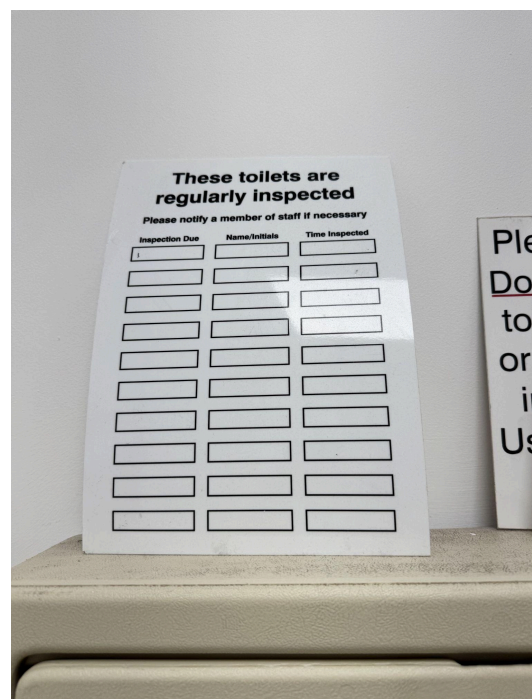
"Clean and functional"

"Waiting area kept clean and tidy"

"Could be cleaner"

"Improved a lot"

We were told that there wasn't a cleaning log but a cleaner visits the practice every morning. Interestingly, in the toilet there was a toilet inspection record where staff can record when the toilet had been checked; this had not been used. There was only one toilet available for patients, which was located on the ground floor. The toilet was small but did contain handles to support patients with mobility needs. There were no concerns of cleanliness, however, there was some water damage to the skirting board near the sink, presumably from the soap dispenser.



There were some hand sanitisation facilities in the practice, with hand sanitisers next to the reception desk. We did not observe any sanitisers in the waiting area.

Staff areas

Although this report is focused on the experiences of patients, we did also observe some of the staff areas at the site. There was air conditioning in staff offices and staff appeared comfortable where they were working. We were also surprised to see a large number of paper patient records, which were stored around the staff offices. Despite a large number of records they did appear to be well organised and, indeed, when we spoke to staff

members they did not describe any issues around the use of paper records. We were told that the paper records were from before 2004 and to digitise them would take significant cost and time.

Seymour House

The Building Exterior

Seymour House is located in a large building in Richmond and is the main site of the practice. The entrance is accessible from the street and is easily visible. At the end of the road there is a large sign which displays the practice name, telephone numbers and entrance location. The entrance to the surgery also has a sign which displays the phone number and opening times, including the opening times for the Primary Care Network (PCN) Hub which is open on a Saturday. The PCN Hub offers additional appointments to all practices within the Richmond PCN. We did not observe an advertisement of PCN Hub opening times at Lock Road.



Similarly to Lock Road there is no parking available at the practice for patients. There is a car park adjacent to the building, but a sign states this is for 'medical staff only'. One patient told us that it is *"very difficult to park here"*. However, patients are able to park on neighbouring streets and many patients are able to walk to the practice as they live nearby.

The waiting areas

Upon entry, patients walk past the reception desks and into the downstairs waiting area. This is a large, bright and open space with high ceilings. The patients we spoke to clearly had an appreciation for the space.

"Nice airy premises [...] good light from the atrium"



It was felt that there was sufficient seating for patients and the chairs were comfortable and in good condition. During our visit there were a large number of drinking water jugs in the downstairs waiting area, it appeared that these had recently been delivered. This was slightly strange as there was no drinking water dispenser available for patients. Upon asking we found that patients could request water from the receptionists, but they were not able to get this themselves.

The downstairs waiting area was partially separated from the reception desk by a wall, which helped to provide some privacy for patients at reception. The reception desk also had a hearing loop facility.

There is a second waiting area upstairs. This is much smaller than the ground floor waiting area but still contained appropriate seating and a selection of information displays and leaflets. There is a lift available for patients to access the upper floor.



Similarly to Lock Road the waiting areas contained a large volume of information for patients in the form of display boards, leaflets and a TV screen. Again, there were several posters with translated information, such as breast cancer screening guidance translated into six languages and domestic abuse support information in ten languages. There was also a 'suggestions' box, but there were no forms or pens.

Cleanliness

A high level of cleanliness was also maintained at the Seymour House site, including in the toilet facilities. There are two toilets available for patients; this included a large accessible toilet on the ground floor and a smaller toilet near the upstairs waiting area. Both toilets were clean and contained sufficient toilet paper and soap.

This downstairs accessible toilet opened onto the waiting area and there was some concern from our Enter & View representatives that this did not allow for privacy, particularly if patients needed to give a sample.



There were also wall mounted hand sanitisers in the waiting area downstairs, but we did not see any upstairs.

Checking in

At both sites patients check in for their appointments using a digital check in screen. These are well visible upon entering and are a responsive and simple system. However, the screens appear to suggest that other languages are available, but on closer inspection the only language is English. Though not an issue for any of the patients we spoke to, this may prove challenging for a patient who speaks English as an additional language.



Appointments and communication

Appointment booking routes

Patients can book appointments at either practice through three main routes; via phone, online or in person. Appointments are scheduled on a first-come first-served basis, rather than based on priority. However, an emergency doctor is always on call for urgent cases. The Practice Manager told us that they try to maintain a mix of digital and non-digital routes as some patients struggle using online systems. Most of the patients we spoke to had booked their appointments via phone and described this as a straightforward and quick process.

"able to get appointment quickly"

"No problem. Phone or pre book appointment. Seen regularly."

"Every time I have called I have same day appointments (except for once)"

However, we did hear from patients who felt that they sometimes struggled calling the practice, often facing long queues or the '8am rush'.

"you have to start ringing at 8am to get into the queue."

"Not a great system calling at 8am"

"Ring and wait at 8am is frustrating. Too busy to use online."

"Long wait for calls to be answered in the morning. Holding for 30 mins plus"

We were told by a receptionist that most appointments are made via phone, and they find that mornings, particularly on a Monday, can be quite busy for those working on the reception desk.

"Mornings can be difficult with all the phones ringing and patients waiting at reception."

Across both sites three patients expressed a preference for booking appointments in person, this was described as being easier or more convenient.

"easy to make appointments for the same day by coming into the surgery."

"[prefer] to have direct contact in person or by phone because staff are helpful and the process is easy."

One patient told us they preferred to make appointments in person as it is *“easier to explore date availability than through the online system”*. We were pleased to see this preference accommodated by the practice and feel this is testament to the high regard in which patients held the reception staff.

The online booking route is operated by an Accurx system. Very few patients spoke of using the website to make appointments. Indeed, the practice manager told us this is not something they ‘push’ patients to use and we did not see this strongly advertised at either site. One patient told us they were not aware of the practice website. Although we were told that patients at Lock Road tended to use the online booking the most. Interestingly one patient, when asked if there was anything to improve at the practice, suggested that they should allow online booking of non urgent appointments. We believe this is already the case but this suggestion may be representative of a lack of promotion of the online system.

Two patients told us that they felt the process of booking appointments has improved.

“Booking system changed recently for the better”

“Has improved greatly over the years – booking was very poor some time ago.”

One of the receptionists also spoke to us about the GP Hub appointments. Patients are able to be sent to Essex House in Barnes if there are no appointments left at Seymour House or Lock Road. However, this location can be inconvenient, particularly for elderly patients at Lock Road, as it is difficult to reach via public transport from Ham. It appeared that the Hub location had recently changed from a practice in Twickenham, which was more convenient for their patients. There also appeared there was some confusion when this changed, with one of the receptionists being ‘told off’ for continuing to book appointments in Twickenham.

One of the patients that we spoke to at Seymour House was normally a patient at Lock Road, however they had been sent to Seymour House to see a doctor which specialised in their condition. It is pleasing to see that by being based across two sites a greater capacity of care is available for patients. We did ask the Practice Manager about this, and were told that although patients can be sent to either practice for appointments, this does rarely happen as both practices are consistently busy.

Appointment waiting times

Most of the patients we spoke to were satisfied with the waiting times they experienced for appointments. This included patients who were able to book same day appointments.

“Haven’t found it too difficult to get an appointment the last few times”

“Quick to get an appointment”

“Called 2 hrs after morning surgery started that day and they found [me] an appointment in the PM session.”

We found that the website states same day appointments are not available to book in person. This was consistent with signage we observed at both sites which advertised

same day appointments but asked patients to book these over the phone or online. This did not appear to be an issue for the patients we spoke to, including those who preferred to make appointments in person as often these would be for routine or non urgent concerns.

A minority of patients expressed that they struggled to make timely appointments.

"It's a busy practice so you sometimes have to wait."

"Appointments not always timely, very variable, depends on who is on reception."

This also included a patient who found it frustrating when if all same-day appointments are booked, they have to call again the next day rather than being able to make an appointment for the following day.

One patient at Seymour House shared that they can often experience long waiting times for appointments with the practice nurse for blood tests, saying it is quicker and easier to go to Kingston Hospital.

One patient described that sometimes they feel that the reception staff *"gatekeep appointments"* which is *"frustrating and leads to a bit of a verbal fight"*. Though this patient clearly felt frustration at being unable to access an appointment in a time frame which suited them, we do not feel this is reflective of reception staff attitude or conduct. One receptionist told us that *"when there aren't enough appointments for patients' needs, patients can be cross"*.

We also wanted to know if patients' appointments were running on time. One patient told us that appointments were usually on time, however, an appointment at Lock Road during our visit was running 20 minutes late. Although we did observe one of the GPs telling the receptionists that they were able to take another GP's appointment as they were running late.

Communication from the practice

In general we heard no concerns around communication to patients, in fact many patients described communication as being a real positive.

"Good communication"

Most of the communication that patients have with the practice comes through email, text message or the NHS App. However some patients told us they try to avoid the NHS App, finding it difficult to use or generally unhelpful.

"NHS app good but not always easy to understand"

"NHS app frustrating"

One area of communication which did receive a lot of praise from patients was the text message system. The practice (across both sites) can use the Accurx system to send text messages to patients. They include screening invites and reminders of appointments. In

particular patients liked the appointment reminders, especially for routine appointments which are often booked weeks in advance.

"Text app reminders very good"

"Texts are very useful"

One patient told us they would receive screening invites for themselves via text, however, they had never received anything for their child, such as vaccination reminders. They were going to ask their GP about this.

The practice has recently introduced a new phone system across both sites. It included new features such as all phone calls being recorded and the ability to see patients' names when they call. The practice manager was *"delighted"* with the new system and was pleased it offered a useful help desk. One of the reception staff also praised the new system, however they did remark that there was no ability to place patients on hold whilst they called one of the GPs. Instead they need to hang up on the patient in order to call anyone else.

Patient comments

Experience of care

Across both of our visits we heard many comments from patients which highly praised the care they received from the practice. This included both long-term and newly registered patients.

"Brilliant! Been using it for 35 years and it has always been good"

"I have been treated very well"

"I am very pleased to be a patient at this practice"

There was certainly a sentiment that the staff would make efforts to ensure patients' needs were met, and this was then reflected in the praise provided by patients.

"I would just like to thank everyone who works at Lock Road Surgery for all they do for me"

[Meets your needs?] "Yes it certainly does"

"I can't commend the team enough. They go above and beyond always"

Patients at Lock Road in particular clearly valued the small community-focused feel of the practice.

"It's a village practice where we are all treated with professionalism and care. It's small but precious"

We were pleased to hear such positive feedback from patients, including one patient who told us that they recommend the practice to their friends. It was also reassuring to hear positive comments across both sites, suggesting the practice is able to maintain a high quality of care and there is a consistency of staff and management standards.

There were two patients who said there was more support they would have liked from the practice. One patient said they would have liked more postnatal care. Another patient felt there wasn't good follow-up from the practice when the patient was asked to do something.

"Sometimes they say things like, you should have a blood test every year but I would have to ask for that, they don't send a reminder. Also they say, try these statins on a low dose for a while and then we'll review them but they don't say, come in and let's see how that's working out."

Clinical staff

Such positive comments about the care patients receive from the practice is also seen reflected in the comments patients made about the clinical staff. Such as the GPs who are clearly well respected by patients.

"Doctors are very patient, listening, helpful"

"The doctor was competent and listened"

"I like the doctors and I feel I get a solution"

Patients also praised other clinical staff, including nurses.

"They [nurses] are excellent without exception, efficient, pleasant people always very good"

"They go out of their way to make sure things get done. Nothing is too much trouble"

We did hear one story from a patient at Seymour House who was unhappy with the care provided to them when their blood test results were lost, and they felt their GP did not follow this up sufficiently. Conversely a second patient at Seymour House praised their GP for chasing up lost blood test results at Kingston Hospital.

Reception staff

We also had feedback from patients about reception and admin staff. Patients spoke of the receptionists being helpful and supportive of their needs.

"I have always found the receptionists efficient"

However, praise for the reception staff was not universal. One patient told us that the receptionists can be *"not very patient"* when there is a long queue at reception. Another felt that their experience could be mixed, with some receptionists being more helpful than others.

A patient who had recently registered at the practice spoke of a poor experience on their first visit, where they told us that one receptionist *"was a bit rude and standoffish [...] I was already a bit nervous"*. However they did say that another receptionist 'jumped in' and helped the situation. They did stress that this was their only bad experience at the practice.

Choosing staff

Many of the patients we spoke to preferred to see a specific doctor or clinical staff member for their appointments. This reflected our findings in our 2024 GP access report³ which found that 52% of respondents preferred to see a specific GP. Reasons for this were continuity, relationship with their GP and knowing their medical history. Indeed one patient said they preferred to see a specific doctor as *"with seeing different doctors you have to go through your history again"*. The practice manager told us that elderly patients in particular preferred to see a specific clinician and that they are *"normally good"* at accommodating this. One patient told us that they had a long standing relationship with one of the GPs for over 20 years.

It did appear that patients were able to specify specific clinicians for their appointments, including clinicians of a specific gender. This included a patient who wanted continuity in the treatment of a long term health condition. We did not hear comments that this would lead to a longer waiting time for their appointment. Another patient who is receiving mental health care from the practice is always offered their choice of clinician, they appreciate this, however they are happy to see any of the GPs as they are *"all lovely"*.

Some patients described negative experiences of seeing different clinicians. One patient remarked that *"the personnel changes quite quickly"* and another felt that *"some doctors are better than others"*. Another patient told us their experience of a lack of continuity of care as a result of seeing two different GPs, where they had a blood test repeated by a second GP without any clear rationale. They were confused as to why their blood test had been repeated and felt it may have been because they saw a new doctor.

Referrals

We wanted to hear about patients' experiences of referrals from the practice. Though this was not something every patient we spoke to had experienced, we did hear comments from patients who felt it was a straightforward and simple experience.

"referrals have been easy"

"Very good super quick when needed"

However one patient described *"big delays"* when referred to hospitals.

Referrals are sent off by the medical secretary, who described the process as easy, although they can sometimes struggle to find out information for patients, notably where appointments will take place. The medical secretary, who we spoke to at Lock Road but works across both sites, also does not deal with issues around referrals such as delays or requests for further information. We spoke to one of the GPs about their experience of

³<https://www.healthwatchrichmond.co.uk/report/2024-10-22/general-practice-richmond-patient-experience-report>

making referrals and they described the often *"unnecessary"* advice or requests for further information they can receive from hospital consultants. These referral issues and delays can lead to *"irritating"* additional admin for GPs. An admin staff member told us that slow communication of hospital results can lead to increased anxiety for patients.

We also heard some examples of poor communication between hospitals and the practice following patient referrals. This included a patient whose test results were lost at Kingston Hospital, but their GP had been chasing this up with various departments. Another patient had an allergic reaction from a treatment provided whilst at a hospital appointment and their GP was chasing this up by writing to the consultant. A third patient told us that Kingston Hospital can sometimes be poor at sending letters and prescription requests to the practice. The stories highlight that sometimes patients can have poor experiences external to the practice, however the GPs are engaged and proactive in ensuring that patients do receive the care they require. This was a very encouraging finding.

Prescriptions and medications

Patients described positive experiences of reviewing prescriptions from the practice. Common themes were that it was an easy and efficient process, with prescriptions being sent directly to patients' nominated pharmacies.

"Smooth process"

"Good, doctors send directly to pharmacy"

"Usually straight forward"

A patient receiving mental health care described the GPs being particularly responsive and supportive about changes to their medications.

However, we heard from two patients whose prescriptions were either lost or not sent to their pharmacy. For one patient their GP said the prescription had been sent but they could not locate it at the pharmacy, and for the second patient their prescription was not sent to the pharmacy and they felt the admin staff were *"indifferent"* when they queried this.

Repeat prescription requests can be made by patients in person, by paper or over email. We spoke to one of the admin staff members who would process email prescription queries. Though this worked well for some patients, they did describe how patients can become *"aggressive"* when they are unable to take prescription requests over the phone. This is for safety reasons, but it can sometimes be challenging to manage patients' expectations. However, they did say that for some patients who are recorded as housebound they are able to take prescription requests over the phone, but this needs to be agreed with their GP in advance.

For paper prescription requests, we observed boxes at the reception of both sites where patients can hand in the forms. However, one patient at Lock Road suggested it would be helpful to have a box on the outside of the building so that they can hand in prescription requests outside of surgery hours.

Whilst at Lock Road we spoke to the pharmacy technician, which is a new role working across both sites. This is alongside a clinical pharmacist based at the Seymour House site. The pharmacy technician told us they are able to speak to patients directly who have any medication queries, as well as monitor patients' medications. They also describe that patient expectations can be a challenge, with patients wanting prescriptions immediately. We were pleased to hear their positive working relationships not only with fellow staff members at the practice, but also with local community pharmacies. This relationship with local pharmacies means that patients can be referred there for tests such as blood pressure tests if the practice lacks the capacity, or through the pharmacy referral scheme⁴. They also describe the local pharmacies as supportive in monitoring patients, notably ensuring elderly patients are taking their medications correctly.

Staff Comments

Support and Training

It was clear to us that the staff at the practice are working in a supportive, positive and professional environment. Staff described good relationships with their colleagues and senior staff.

"My colleagues are excellent, we have a really nice time"

"I love working here. Mainly the people, nice colleagues, really supportive"

This was a particularly reassuring finding given the feedback from staff who felt that their roles can be very busy and that patients can sometimes become difficult or over demanding. But despite these pressures, there are good support channels for staff, particularly from the practice manager.

"There's enough support, it's the same for everyone. The whole system is under pressure"

"like working here, it's challenging but supportive"

Staff are also supported around training. One of the receptionists told us that they receive regular and ongoing training around safeguarding, mental health, sepsis recognition and dementia awareness. They value these training opportunities as they feel it helps the patients. Other staff members felt they receive sufficient training but feel if they were to ask for additional training, the practice manager would be supportive of this.

⁴<https://www.england.nhs.uk/primary-care/pharmacy/community-pharmacy-contractual-framework/referring-minor-illness-patients-to-a-community-pharmacist/>

In our conversation with the practice manager it was clear they held their staff in high regard, describing them as *“reliable”* across both sites. They spoke of the support they give to all staff members, telling us they want to make sure their staff are happy. Such a positive staff culture fostered by this top-down support is certainly reflected in the comments from patients we noted earlier.

Challenges

Despite a positive working culture, there are certainly a number of challenges which staff face at the practice. Notably, as has been mentioned previously, patients can sometimes present a challenge to both admin and clinical staff. Though it is a notable minority of patients who have the potential to cause issues for staff, one of the admin team told us that as a GP practice they are often the first point of call for patients. Therefore, they can *“bare the brunt of patient frustration”* around wider issues with their healthcare, such as delays in hospital appointments. This staff member said this can sometimes make them feel *“helpless”*, feeling as though there is nothing they can do.

We asked staff what they would do in a situation where a patient became difficult or aggressive. Most described remaining calm and patient whilst trying to determine why the patient is upset, and then trying to help them as best as possible. However, if this is not working there was a sense from all staff that they are able to ask the practice manager for support.

“the manager is very good at dealing with them”

We also spoke to one of the salaried GPs at Seymour House. Although they described feeling supported and happy in their role, they did feel that extra work can sometimes be pushed back onto GPs. For example, other services may request things late in the day, as sometimes there is no perception of a ‘switch off’ time for GPs.

The practice manager also spoke of how wider NHS guidance and policy can sometimes present a challenge when trying to keep up with new changes and ideas. For example, they suspect that NHS England will introduce Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the future. Indeed, since our visits to the practice the Government published the NHS 10 Year Plan⁵ which outlines introducing AI admin systems into GP practices. They also felt that sometimes it can be difficult to deal with complaints whilst adhering to NHS guidance.

⁵<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-year-health-plan-for-england-fit-for-the-future>

Complaints and Incidents

None of the patients we spoke to had put in a formal complaint to the practice. However, we did hear from one patient who considered making a complaint, but they did not *“believe that the complaint systems properly deal with patients’ interests”*.

Complaints are always dealt with by the practice manager and a meeting is always offered, which the practice manager feels often helps to calm down the situation. After complaints or incidents the practice holds group meetings where learnings are shared. Learnings are also shared on a central drive which is accessible by all staff. The practice manager describes the practice as being *“very communicative and very open”* regarding incidents and complaints. The admin staff at both sites also told us that incidents are noted in a book kept in the office which was pointed out to us.

The two sites

Feedback from patients and staff at both sites were generally quite consistent. But we were told by the practice manager that the two sites have significant demographic differences in their patient populations. However, despite this there is no difference in the way the two sites are ran, as they feel they can adapt to individual patient’s needs.

Conclusion

Overall we felt this was a very reassuring insight into Seymour House and Lock Road Practice. We felt that the practice is well managed across both sites and there is a high standard of patient satisfaction of their care and an emphasis on staff support.

Across both sites we found clean and well-equipped facilities. There were some concerns around accessibility at the Lock Road site but at Seymour House it was felt accessibility of wheelchair users in particular was better addressed. Both sites provided a large amount of information for patients in a range of mediums. The inclusion of staff and translated information was particularly valued but we did question if the volume of information may lead to key messaging being lost.

Patients also described their experiences of booking appointments. Although in general patients were able to book timely appointments we did hear examples of the '8am rush' on the phones and a lack of awareness of online booking systems.

Patients were full of praise for the staff looking after them and we were pleased to see a strong sense of support for staff. This is particularly important given the increasing challenges which were raised in our conversations with staff; notably increasing patient expectations, waiting times for hospital appointments and work loads.

Lastly we want to thank all the staff and patients at Seymour House and Lock Road Surgery for their openness and cooperation during our visits. We hope this report provides a useful insight into the practice and that our recommendations provide a helpful range of improvements.

We also want to thank our Enter & View Representatives for their time, effort and expertise during our visits:

- Tadek Cordell
- Phil Bunnell
- Alan McNab
- Carole Haskel
- Caroline Snow
- Katie Rogers

Recommendations

Below are the six recommendations made by Healthwatch Richmond as a result of our findings from this report. For each recommendation the response from Seymour House and Lock Road Surgeries has also been included. We were pleased to see the report was well received and actions are being taken forward.

Recommendation	Response
<p>We heard from several patients who experienced issues with the '8am rush' when booking appointments, alongside few patients who were aware of the online appointment booking system. In order to reduce this morning rush online appointment booking should be actively promoted through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Posters at the two sites b. Clear information and links on the practice website c. The recorded phone message d. Email and text communications. 	<p>We will have posters advertising the on line booking at both surgeries, including links to our website which gives information on the nhs app.. I will speak about incorporating this on our phone message. I will send an sms advising patients that if they have the nhs app they can book online.</p>
<p>There was insufficient signage on the exterior of the Lock Road site. This should be improved with signage similar to the signage at Seymour House, including opening times and contact details.</p>	<p>We will look into improving the signage at Lock Road.</p>
<p>We had some concerns around a lack of street lighting at the Lock Road site. We ask that the practice provides reassurance around exterior lighting at this site.</p>	<p>I will speak to our electrician who maintains our outside lighting as to how this could be improved.</p>

<p>Both sites had large volumes of information through leaflets, posters and TV screens. We ask that the practice provides reassurance on how this information is managed to ensure it is up to date and relevant. We also ask for reassurance on how information is prioritised.</p>	<p>Both our nurses and HCA maintain the information boards. We keep it up to date and prioritise seasonal campaigns and new services.</p>
<p>We did not observe water dispensers and cups at either site. Water dispensers or facilities should be introduced into the waiting areas for patients to use.</p>	<p>At Sheen Road we keep the water cooler behind reception as we found children were playing with it and causing a trip hazard . There is a notice advising patients that if they would like a cup of cold water to ask at reception. We had a cooler at Lock Road but the same problem occurred. We considered that there was not sufficient room to locate it elsewhere. Again there are notices on display advising patients to ask at reception for water.</p>
<p>We received a large volume of positive comments from patients about the staff and care they receive at the practice. We ask that these positive comments are shared with all staff members.</p>	<p>Thank you for including the extensive praise from our patients. The report has been circulated to all members of our team who were very pleased indeed to read them.</p>

Appendix 1

<p>Questions</p>
<p>Overall experience</p> <p>What is your overall impression of the practice?</p> <p>What is good about the practice? Is there anything you don't like?</p> <p>Have you ever used another service because you could not get an appointment? Which service did you use?</p> <p>Is your appointment currently running on time?</p>
<p>Accessibility/ patient needs</p> <p>What is your experience of booking appointments at the practice?</p> <p>Do you use the NHS app, practice website or phone?</p> <p>What is your experience of getting prescriptions from the practice?</p> <p>What is your experience of getting referrals from the practice?</p> <p>What is your experience of getting communications from the practice? E.g. vaccine reminders, screening invites</p>
<p>Staff</p> <p>What are the staff like?</p> <p>Do you see the same members of staff? Can you request which staff member you are seen by?</p> <p>What is your impression of the reception staff? (If this can be asked out of earshot of reception)</p>
<p>Environment</p> <p>What do you think about the cleanliness of the practice?</p> <p>What do you think about the environment of the practice? E.g. the waiting area, the toilets, temperature, consultation rooms</p> <p>How accessible is the practice? E.g. physical accessibility, opening times, location, parking, and transport.</p>
<p>Anything else</p> <p>Is there anything else you want to tell me about your experiences?</p>

Appendix 2

Questions

How long have you worked here?

What is it like to work here?

What are the biggest **challenges** you face in your role?

How do you ensure you meet patients' needs? Inc. **accessibility** and **local demographics**

How are **incidents or complaints** handled? Do you feel the practice is good at supporting staff and learning from incidents or complaints?

What **support** are you offered in your role? Is there anything that would make your role easier?

What is the process for signing off **prescriptions**? How do you feel about the process?

What is the process for sending patient **referrals**? How do you feel about the process?

Is there anything else you want to share?

Appendix 3

Assessment Criteria
Building Condition - External
Building Condition - Internal
Wheelchair/Pram Access/Stairs?
Cleanliness? (floors/chairs/surfaces washable?/cleaning log)
Are hand sanitizers' available? Do they work?
Waiting Area – Enough space? Good air quality/lighting?
Condition and location of toilets?
Fire exit location and signage
Hearing loop system in place?
Water and cups available in the waiting room?
Clear signs for rooms, opening hours, toilets?
Information about Clinical Staff available? Is this displayed?
Do all staff have name badges? Do they include their job title?
What are staff interactions with patients/ carers like?
Comments/complaints box available? (inc pens/paper)
Incidents book/log available?
Confidentiality/privacy at reception?
Range of literature/leaflets available? Are they up to date?

Is information available in non-English? Is this promoted?
Are Translation/BSL services publicised anywhere? Where?
Patient Participation Group? Is this promoted?
Is the online appointment booking system promoted?
Is there information displayed on out-of-hours appointments?
Is there an appointment text message service promoted?
Electronic check-in at the waiting room? Accessibility considered?