

Care Quality Commission

Inspection Evidence Table

Beacon Medical Group – Plympton Health Centre (1-1910340305)

Inspection date: 10 December 2021

Responsive

Rating: Inspected not rated

Access to the service

People were able to access care and treatment in a timely way.

	Y/N/Partial
Patients had timely access to appointments/treatment and action was taken to minimize the length of time people waited for care, treatment or advice	Yes
The practice offered a range of appointment types to suit different needs (e.g. face to face, telephone, online)	Yes
Patients were able to make appointments in a way which met their needs	Yes
There were systems in place to support patients who face communication barriers to access treatment	Yes
Patients with most urgent needs had their care and treatment prioritised	Yes
There was information available for patients to support them to understand how to access services (including on websites and telephone messages)	Yes
Explanation of any answers and additional evidence: The provider, Beacon Medical Group, supports approximately 42,818 patients from their main location, Plympton Health Centre. There are another five branch surgeries; Ivy Bridge Medical Centre, Chaddlewood Surgery, Highlands Health Centre, Glenside Medical Centre and Wotter Surgery within the surrounding areas. Five practices were open Monday to Friday from 8am until 6pm. Wotter surgery was open Monday 8.15 until 3pm and Thursday 8.15 until 3pm. All five practices offered emergency appointments from 6 until 6.30pm Monday to Friday. Two practices provided pre-bookable appointments between 6pm and 8pm. Plympton Health Centre was open on a Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, Ivybridge Medical Centre was open on a Tuesday and Thursday. A Saturday and Sunday morning clinic for baby checks and immunisation was available each week, with three weeks a month being at Glenside Medical Centre and one week per month being at Ivybridge Health Centre.	

Plympton Heath Centre was planning to be open on Christmas and Boxing day, in December 2021, to support and meet the needs of patients, and would be staffed by volunteers from the clinical and non-clinical workforce.

The Beacon Medical Group had a dedicated care home team to undertake home visits and health reviews. They also offered a frailty clinic to support the elderly population.

One of the branches, Glenside Medical Centre, was used as an urgent care hub; providing a mixture of appointments with an emergency care practitioner (ECP), a nurse practitioner (NP), a minor illness nurse (MIN) and a GP.

The provider website informed patients of three options to choose from to make an appointment, which included; via submission of an online consultation request form (with all requests responded to within 48 hours), via telephone, or by using the NHS App. Opening times for each location were clearly stated on their website.

eConsult requests for appointments or clinical advice, received by the practice, were triaged by a clinician and the service was available to patients 24 hours a day, seven days a week. eConsult is a form based online consultation and triage platform that collects the patients' medical or administrative request and sends it through to a clinician who triages all eConsult requests.

Patients unable to access or use the eConsult system were able to contact the surgery and speak to a call handler.

eConsult requests received over the weekend are also reviewed and triaged by an emergency care practitioner, to enable management of demand on Monday morning.

Patients were also able to book routine appointments for blood tests and blood pressure checks, using the NHS appointment app, and this had been extended to cervical screening, following patient feedback.

For patients who had sensory difficulties, processes had been put in place to allow them, or their carer, to visit the practice in person, to make an appointment.

The telephone system had several options to direct patients to the correct department for their needs, for example, fit notes queries and test results. All clinical requests were triaged by a clinician and patients are initially telephoned and an appointment was offered for a face to face review, if deemed appropriate. Patients were advised if their call was to be in the morning or afternoon. All patients requesting an appointment were called twice by the practice and if patients had not answered, a text message was sent to them, detailing a time when the clinician would try again.

GPs provided care and treatment their own patients where possible to support continuity of care. There were appointments available for urgent on the day appointments, or for patients that required a review if their usual GP was not available.

Plympton Health Centre offered a home visiting service in the morning and late afternoon. All home visits were triaged by the duty doctor and then assigned to the appropriate clinician or usual GP.

The number of appointments available varied depending on the clinician's availability. The practice used a 'red, amber, green' model (RAG model) to assess the call demands on a weekly / daily basis. Above 21 patient contacts per session triggered a 'red day' and staff were then deployed from other roles to support, or if a pattern of higher demand was emerging locum doctors are requested. Clinical safety was assessed daily by the operational management team.

Plympton Health Centre had an open support system in place to discuss and share workload concerns and manage solutions. Staff we spoke with felt supported and able to ask for help when needed.

Staff covering weekend and bank holiday clinics did so on a voluntary basis.

On the morning of the inspection there were seven patients on the home visit list, with further capacity available if required for telephone and face to face appointments

The practice offered appointments for the NHS 111 service and the duty doctor to book into each day.

To meet increased demand the practice opened on a Saturday and Sunday with an urgent clinic on a Sunday morning.

The provider had changed to a total triage model four months prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and had increased the use of eConsult requests, this model allowed for an earlier review. They had also adopted the use of video consultations, photographs and an interactive text service. Since the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, the practice has opened its doors for patients. Patients were met at the doors and allocated to the correct area with social distancing being adhered to.

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