



Enter & View Report

Maples Family Medical Practice

February 2025

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Report details

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| Details of Visit | |
| Service Address | Maples Family Medical Practice 35 Hill Street Hinckley LE10 1DS |
| Service Provider | Maples Family Medical Practice |
| Date and Time | Wednesday 5 February, 10am |
| Authorised Representatives undertaking the visit | Kim Marshall-Nichols and Dulna Shahid (Staff) |

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire would like to thank the service provider, patients and staff for their contribution to the Enter & View Programme.

Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

All comments included in this report are written verbatim to capture the tone and authenticity of the experience, therefore no editing of comments has taken place. This report is not representative of the experience of all service users.

This report is written by volunteer Enter and View Authorised Representatives who carried out the visit on behalf of Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire.

Purpose of the visit

- To gather patient views of the service provided at Maples Family Medical Practice.
- To observe the facilities and operation of the service.
- To observe patient access.

Methodology

This was an announced Enter and View visit.

We contacted the Practice Management Team in advance and had access to communal areas during our visit.

The visit was observational, involving the Authorised Representatives observing the surroundings to gain an understanding of how patients engaged with reception staff and the facilities.

To reach patients, we spoke to the management team prior to the visit about using the GP text messaging service. The text message was sent to the patients and we received **22** responses.

At the end of the visit, we gave our initial findings to the management team.

Summary of the findings

Summary

- The practice serves 10,678 patients.
- Located near Hinckley and District Hospital with easy access and clear signage.
- There are adequate clinical rooms, isolation rooms and facilities for disabled patients.
- The practice supports three care homes.
- The reception desk is divided into 'Prescriptions' and 'Reception' sections.
- There is an electronic calling system and check-in screen available.
- A confidential interview room is available on request.
- The children's play area has been removed due to safety concerns.
- There is a blood pressure machine provided for patient use.
- The practice uses a Cloud-based telephone appointment system with call-back feature.
- Online booking available for vaccinations, smear tests and asthma reviews.
- GP appointments are available on the same day.

22 patients responded to the survey

- Staff were described as friendly, helpful and attentive, especially for patients with additional needs.
- Patients felt valued and well cared for, particularly those receiving ongoing treatment.
- 7 patients said they found it '**very difficult**' or '**difficult**' to get through to the practice on the telephone

to make an appointment.

- 16 patients were 'happy' with who they had seen at the time of their appointment.
- 12 patients were 'completely satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their appointments.
- 18 patients said they were 'completely satisfied' or 'slightly satisfied' with the reception service.
- 16 patients said they were 'completely satisfied' or 'slightly satisfied' with the quality of medical care and treatment at the practice.

Results of Visit

The Practice

The practice has 10,678 patients.

The practice is located near the Hinckley and District Hospital. The practice is in a well maintained building. It is easily accessible and has a first set of double doors to a small spaced foyer and then automatic doors which leads to the waiting/ reception area. There was clear signage from the road to the practice and to the entrance. The opening hours are clearly displayed at the entrance of the main door.

The car park is located outside of the practice and there is ample parking spaces with disabled parking available.

The practice has two floors, we were told the ground floor is mainly used by their clinicians, one side is called the GP quarter and the other side is called the nurses quarter. The upstairs floor is used by social prescribers, midwives and the pharmacist that come into the practice. The Practice has adequate rooms available such as clinical rooms, isolation rooms etc.

The practice has a lift and stairs available for patients to use. We were told the practice looks after patients at three care homes.

Reception and waiting areas

The reception area is easily accessible and divided into two sections: one labelled 'Prescriptions' and the other 'Reception.' In the centre, there is a lowered section designed for wheelchair accessibility. Above the reception desk there is a JX board which is an electronic calling system, it displays which room patients need to go to when being called in for their appointment. The Friends and Family suggestion box is located at the reception. Additionally, there is a Friends and Family poster on the wall displaying a QR code.

The waiting area is spacious, tidy and well-lit, with ample natural light. The décor is vibrant and welcoming, with well-placed picture hangings adding to the ambiance. Upon entering, there is a seating area to the left and a larger seating area directly in front of the reception desk. The seating consists of comfortable beam chairs, some with fabric upholstery and others with vinyl, all without armrests.

An electronic sign-in screen is positioned near the reception desk. There is also an electronic signing in system for patients to register their cars when visiting the practice.



There is a children's table area with multi-coloured chairs, we were told the practice used to provide toys, Lego, colouring etc. however due to safety reasons the practice is no longer allowed to provide toys. There is

a blood pressure machine with clear instructions on how to use it in the waiting area, patients are able to use the machine to record their blood pressure. . Hand sanitisers are available in the practice. There is another waiting area along the corridor which leads towards the clinicians rooms. During our visit, we observed patients waiting in the reception area did not have to wait long before being called for their appointment. We were informed that if patients request a confidential area, an interview room near the reception is made available.



Appointments

The practice has a cloud-based telephone system that was implemented last year. Patients can call from 8.30am, and the system places them in a queue with a call-back feature. We were told that this system has been well-received, as the practice previously operated as a sit-and-wait clinic, which had mixed reviews from patients: some liked it, while others didn't. We were told that with the cloud-based system in place, patients have expressed that they appreciate receiving an appointment and feel there are fewer misunderstandings.

Appointments are available for face-to-face consultations with appropriate clinicians. Online appointments can be booked for vaccinations, smear tests and asthma reviews. We were told that patients who are very ill or have additional needs will be prioritised and seen, reception staff will be aware of the patients who require additional needs or very ill as it will be on the patient plan.

The practice offers extended access, providing appointments in the evenings and on weekends. We were informed that patients are signposted to other services, such as Pharmacy First, currently through verbal referrals, with plans to introduce electronic referrals soon.

GP in-person appointments are all same-day, while pre-booked telephone appointments are available for discussing test results or referrals. Nurses and Healthcare Assistants' appointments can be booked up to four weeks in advance.

We were informed that patients can be booked with the paramedic and these appointments are pre-booked.



Patients can use Accurx to submit administrative queries, such as requesting sick notes. They can also complete pre-travel questionnaires and other forms, which can be submitted through Accurx. Once received, the reception staff will contact the patient to follow up.

For home visits, patients can call the practice and will first have a consultation with the on-call clinician, who will then allocate the visit. Home visits are always scheduled for the same day.

We were informed that the DHU Healthcare visiting service can also be used when needed. If patients require urgent appointments, we were informed that reception will liaise with a clinician. If it is urgent, the patient will be seen on the same day; if it is less urgent, they will be booked for the next day.

We were told the in house pharmacist does the medication reviews.

Accessibility

The accessible toilet is located in between the GP quarter and nurses quarter corridor. It is a small space, clean, has an alarm cord and hand rails, the toilet also has a baby changing area. There are a separate female and male toilets, which are spacious and clean.

The practice does not have a breastfeeding room, however we were told a room can be made available if

required. There is a hearing loop is located at the front reception. We were told braille can be requested. Wheelchairs are available at the practice.

Information available to patients

There were multiple leaflet stands around the waiting area containing information leaflets on topics such as the Joy app, cancer support, and more. One leaflet stand had a note stating, 'When it's less urgent than 999, call 111.'

Information posters were displayed throughout the waiting areas, along with various boards, including a PPG board and a Carers' information board. On one of the information boards, we observed a language identification poster that stated, 'Point to your language, and an interpreter will be called.' The complaints procedure was also clearly displayed, along with the CQC report.

A poster regarding data privacy and the use of health records and health-related activities, such as carer support, were clearly displayed.

On a plastic stand, there is information about the surgery stating that it no longer operates as a sit-and-wait clinic and that patients should call to arrange a phone consultation with a clinician. Additionally, there is an information poster about a dedicated vaccination clinic for people with learning disabilities.

Staffing

We were told there are 29 employees, including management, administration staff, two partners, locum GPs, advanced nurse practitioners, minor illness nurses, practice nurses, paramedics, healthcare assistants, phlebotomist, in-house pharmacists and social prescribers.

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

During our visit, we met with three members of the PPG. During our discussion with the PPG, members shared positive feedback regarding patient access and communication within the practice. They had said that patients are able to follow the correct procedure when seeking appointments stating those who call are accommodated appropriately, ensuring they can see a clinician when needed.

One member highlighted the helpfulness of the reception team, noting that they always do their best to assist and resolve issues efficiently. Members also expressed that they feel welcomed at the practice.

Additionally, communication between the PPG and the practice manager was described as strong. There was particular praise for the new phone system, with members commenting on its improved functionality compared to the previous system.

The PPG typically meets every three months; however, due to illnesses, meetings have not been as frequent as desired. They plan to resume regular meetings soon. Despite this, PPG members have remained engaged by supporting flu jab clinics, coffee mornings and open days.

One member mentioned that they stay informed about community developments and are committed to sharing relevant information with both patients and the practice.



Additional Information

The practice manager explained that the practice previously operated as a sit-and-wait clinic. However, when COVID-19 hit, they saw the need to change the appointment system. Since making this change, the new system has been working well. The sit-and-wait approach was not very effective, as it created too much pressure and became overwhelming for both patients and staff.

The manager also highlighted that having different healthcare professionals available has been beneficial, with the Pharmacy First initiative being particularly helpful and access to enhanced service appointments for weekends and evenings. Overall, these changes have improved the appointment process and made it more efficient.

The practice manager mentioned that accessing funding has been challenging. Although a new doctor is due to start at the practice, the manager is still waiting for confirmation.

The practice manager spoke about difficulty is accessing diagnostic services as local access is not available and this is having a massive impact with long waiting times for patients to access these services. A third party can be used to access the diagnostic services however it is challenging as it is not local.

Patient feedback

During our visit we spoke to 5 patients.

Patient A said: *“Doctors have been a dream, I feel like I am getting the best treatment. I had no problems accessing appointments, I booked a call back and I was called back quickly and given an appointment. Also before seeing the doctor I would have all the tests done which were done within a month. They are all very good and willing to help. I like the call back system.”*

Patient B said: *“we have been a patient here a very long time, we have never wanted to change surgery. I have volunteered here at the practice for a long time, the practice feels like a community surgery. I feel like the doctors care, they listen, they always have an answer on next steps which puts my mind to rest. They take us seriously and we feel cared for.”*

Patient C said that she had been waiting since October to see a doctor after initially seeing a nurse about a lump on her neck who had advised her to see the doctor she had today got an appointment some 2 months later. She had seen it on the news that people had to wait to see the doctors so thought nothing of the long wait, she didn't want to bother them.

Patient D said the doctor's surgery were amazing the only problem was the telephone and not being able to get through when she needed to.

Patient E remarked that she sometimes has to wait a long time to see the doctor when she has an appointment, although the waiting room was always nice and clean.

Patient feedback

A survey was completed on the visit, where we asked if patients would like to take part in the survey, and we received **22** responses. See Appendix 1 for the survey responses. Where we asked for comments, we have

themed the responses and provided a selection of patient comments.

Recommendations

We recommend that Maples Family Medical Practice:

1

Consider all the comments recorded from patients and what the implications are for the operation of the practice.

2

Practice to consider having a follow-up process for unresolved health issues to ensure continuity of care.

Service provider response

The report was agreed with the Service Provider as factually accurate. They have provided the following response to the report:

“Practice to consider having a follow-up process for unresolved health issues to ensure continuity of care. – We always would safety net the patient to contact us if not resolved.”

Distribution

The report is for distribution to the following:

- Maples Family Medical Practice
- LLR Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Leicestershire County Council (LCC)
- NHS England (Leicestershire and Lincolnshire) Local Area Team
- Healthwatch England and the local Healthwatch Network
- Published on www.healthwatchll.com

Appendix 1: Survey Findings

22 Patients

Q1. When did you last visit your GP practice?

20 - In the last 2 years

2 - Over 2 years ago

Q2. How did you book your last appointment? (Patients chose multiple answers)

20 - Telephone

2 - Online Booking Services

0 - In Person

0 - Other (please specify):

2 - Unanswered

Q3. How easy is it to get through to your surgery on the telephone to make an appointment?

4 - Very Easy

9 - Easy

4 - Difficult

3 - Very Difficult

0 - Not sure

2 - Unanswered

Q4. When you last contacted the GP Practice, how long did it take you to get through on the telephone?

1 - Less than 1 minute

7 - 1-5 minutes

4 - 6-10 minutes

5 - 11-15 minutes

3 - 15- 60 minutes

0 - Over an hour

2 - Unanswered

Q5. Are you happy with who you have seen at the time of your appointment?

16 - Yes

4 - No

2 - Unanswered

Q6. In the last 2 years have you had a telephone or online consultation with a practitioner?

17 - Yes

3 - No

2 - Unanswered

Q7. How satisfied were you with the appointment?

8 - Completely Satisfied

4 - Very Satisfied

1 - Neutral

1 - Slightly satisfied.

3 - Not at all satisfied

5 - Unanswered

Q8. In the last 2 years have you had to book an urgent appointment?

13 - Yes

7 - No

2 - Unanswered

Q9. Were you able to see a doctor or clinician on the same day for urgent appointments?

11 - Yes

2 - No

9 - Unanswered

Q10. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the practice opening hours?

6 - Completely Satisfied

7 - Very Satisfied

5 - Neutral

2 - Slightly satisfied

0 - Not at all satisfied

2 - Unanswered

Q11. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the reception service?

- 11 - Completely Satisfied
- 7 - Slightly Satisfied
- 2 - Slightly Dissatisfied
- 0 - Completely Dissatisfied
- 2 - Unanswered

Q12. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the prescription service?

- 14 - Completely Satisfied
- 4 - Slightly Satisfied
- 0 - Slightly Dissatisfied
- 1 - Completely Dissatisfied
- 1 - Not used
- 2 - Unanswered

Q13. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of medical care and treatment at this surgery?

- 11 - Completely Satisfied
- 5 - Slightly Satisfied
- 4 - Slightly Dissatisfied
- 0 - Completely Dissatisfied
- 2 - Unanswered

People were asked for any other comments including what they like and dislike the most about the GP practice.

Like:

"Myself and my son have both had to use the practice quite regular over the past couple of years. Always can get an appointment and an on day appointment if needed."

"I have a lot to say about Maples. I've had a stroke a year ago at 19 and have therefore had to have more treatment than a usual person my age. The standard of care has been excellent and I feel valued by all the staff there."

"Staff very help, with both my boys having autism and a learning disability everybody is very helpful."

"All staff are friendly and helpful."

"GP listened to me and reassured me to his rational for treatment."

"Always very helpful and particularly like Doctor as he is always friendly and professional and also he always listens to any concerns and takes time to explain everything."

"I have been able to see the same gp thought out an ongoing illness and he has been very helpful all the way through."

Neutral:

"The nurse is amazing. Trying to get an appointment is ridiculous because all doctors are oversubscribed."

"Some of these ratings reflect the care given to my children. I am fortunate that I have private medical care which gives me video appointments over the phone - without this I fear my responses would be much more negative due to availability."

Dislike:

"Nobody listens I work late morning early afternoon and they say we will book you a telephone appointment which is no good to me because I have to lock my phone away whilst I'm at work, then if I do have a missed call it comes through as private number so I don't know if they have rang or not."

"I like that you can be seen on the day if I need urgent care. I do not like how ongoing concerns are dealt with. For example I went to doctor because I was fatigued and losing weight and feeling unwell. Doctor organised lots of tests and everything came back normal results and for the doctors, this was the end of the situation but for me, I was in the same boat and they just had found no cause. This made me feel like I had been making it all up and it wasn't real. And if I wanted to ask again then I seem like a pain and am wasting their time. If the results don't show up a reason, then I would have liked to automatically discuss this further and how to continue and not for it to be case closed because cause hadn't been found. I also find that the doctors do not take a moment to listen well to the symptoms, they hear a couple and then just close down and already moving on to diagnose. I often come away without feeling like I have fully presented my symptoms which may be relevant to getting a diagnosis. I think that not working out a reason for symptoms is very stressful and anxiety provoking which on top of feeling unwell is very detrimental. I think there needs to be particular session if symptoms are vague and could be attributed to many things and needs to be assessed more thoroughly and maybe with a second opinion offered. If you can get to the root cause sooner, it's beneficial to patient and practice."



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