



Details of visit

Service address:

Shropdoc - Princess Royal Hospital
Apley Castle, Telford, TF1 6TF
Shropdoc Office: Unit A 3 Longbow Close,
Shrewsbury SY1 3GZ

Service Provider:

Shropshire Doctors Co-operative Ltd
(ShropDoc)

Date and Time:

Friday 13th January, 2017 20:00 - 22.00
Saturday 14th January, 2017 14:00 - 16:00

Contact details:

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin, Meeting Point House,
Southwater Square, TELFORD, TF3 4HS

Publication Date:

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin would like to thank the service provider - Shropshire Doctors Co-operative Ltd (Shropdoc) patients, relatives/visitors and carers, and staff for their contribution to the Enter and 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.

What is Enter and View?

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out Enter and View visits. Local Healthwatch representatives carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential care/nursing homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell Healthwatch that there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation - so Healthwatch can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.



Healthwatch Enter and View visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies. In addition, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer they will be directed to the CQC where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.

Purpose of the Visit

- To engage with Patients as service users of Shropdoc to hear about their experiences of care, and to understand how patient dignity is being respected in the out-of-hours GP practice environment.
- To hear about the experiences of relatives/carers and friends.
- Observe the Patients and relatives/visitors engaging with the staff and their surroundings.
- Identify examples of good care practice.

Strategic drivers

- The visit is part of a Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin programme of work on Dignity and Respect in health and care settings.
- The visit is also in response to evaluations of feedback received by Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin from community engagements, and service provider / local council / CQC liaisons, and requests.
- Hospital Wards, Community Health Trust Services, GP Surgeries, Dental Practices, Optometrists, Pharmacies, and Health Clinics are a strategic focus of regional / national programmes of the CQC, PHE / NHS, local Councils, and the local Healthwatch organisations.



Methodology

This was an announced Enter and View visit.

4 authorised representatives were assigned to 2 visits to the Shropdoc service. At the time of Enter & View visits, representatives took advice of the staff on duty whether any patients should not be approached due to their inability to give informed consent, or due to safety or medical reasons. A survey questionnaire was developed before the visit which included some specific questions requested by Shropdoc management. Posters and Healthwatch flyers as well as 'Feedback forms' were provided ahead of the visit, and a post-box for pre-visit feedback from patients.

During the visits, Healthwatch representatives explained to the people they spoke to about Healthwatch and why they were there. Completion of the survey

was optional and could be put aside when called to their appointment with doctor. Patients were asked to complete unfinished survey responses after their appointment, or to send to the Healthwatch office (post free). On the second visit the presence of Healthwatch was explained to patients by an Urgent Care Practitioner staff member, before the representatives engaged with them.

Representatives spoke with 20 patients during the 2x visits (some with relatives/ friends or carers present) to ask them about their views and experiences of the Shropdoc out-of-hours GP services, and capturing their responses to a short question survey that addressed the visit purpose of the visit. A small number of people did not complete the survey.

Representatives also talk to staff present to hear about their contributions to the service provided - quality of care, safety, being treated with dignity and respect, and acknowledging patient and families' wishes. During the visit, representatives also observed the delivery of the service to gain an understanding of how the 'Out-of-Hours GP service' works, and how the patients engaged with staff members and the practice facilities, though this was limited to the patient waiting area. The question survey used to capture the patient (or carer for children) experiences including their calling the 'contact centre', booking an appointment, reception and time waiting, and their time with the doctor or other healthcare staff present. If the patient was called for treatment before the questionnaire was completed patients were requested to return to complete the questionnaire afterwards; freepost envelopes were provided if the representatives had left before the forms were complete. Only two questionnaires remained partially completed; some were not returned. After the visits, key summary findings and any recommendations were shared with the manager

Summary of findings

- Patients told us they were pleased that the Shropdoc service was available for those 'out of hours' needs.
- Patients told us they were pleased with this service - "good service and good staff", they felt "helped and informed" by the staff who were "polite" and treated patients in a "caring way" with "courtesy and respect".
- Patients felt reassured, "listened to, and not rushed"; they felt involved in the decisions and plans for resolving their medical concerns and needs.
- Patients said the service was responsive, and most could attend an appointment within 2 hours of their call to Shropdoc, with some within an hour. There were a small number of exceptions with a 3-4 hour wait.
- Half of those we surveyed contacted their GP before contacting and using the Shropdoc service.



Results of Visit

This is a 'by appointment' service and is not a 'Walk-In' service, but does provide urgent medical services for patients when their own surgery is closed, and whose needs cannot safely wait until the surgery is next open, i.e. evenings, weekends and bank holidays. Doctors staffing the service are from local GP practices. Shropdoc provides a call-centre which is staffed 24/7, and supports several of the Shropdoc services including the Telford and Wrekin GP out-of-hours service, and to several other localities. We were told by the manager that Patients call the advertised phone number to the Shropdoc Call Centre where calls are answered by trained call handlers (but they are not nurses or doctors). Call staff take basic details and identify any life-



threatening conditions which may require a 999 call to the ambulance service. The patient is then called back by either a doctor or a nurse, usually within one hour. The doctor or nurse discuss the medical condition / concern with the patient, and if appropriate may resolve the health concerns with advice over the phone or with a prescription to a local pharmacy. When appropriate, the patient is offered an appointment to see one of the 'up to four' GPs at the Shropdoc base, or nursing staff as appropriate, or a home GP visit depending on the severity and circumstances of the patient's condition.

This out-of-hours doctor appointment service for Telford and Wrekin is provided within a wing of PRH hospital with a controlled external-door access for patients from the hospital car park. The unit is multi-purpose, providing for hospital clinics and treatment services during the weekday. We were told that staff must lock away their Shropdoc equipment and resources at the end of each shift, clearing for the hospital day clinics.

Observations

A large sign, well lit, clearly advertises the entrance to hospital building for Shropdoc where consulting rooms, cloakroom facilities, and a patient waiting room provide secure facilities for staff and patients. The entrance door is enabled remotely, triggered by the reception duty staff who can also see those wanting entry via CCTV screen. A Reception room is in a small room adjacent to the waiting area, and is manned during the appointments/visiting times. We observed the surroundings to be warm, bright, and clean, with appropriate

signage. There were sufficient chairs in the waiting area for the number of patients we observed attending during our 2x visits, though spacing arrangements limited some access for wheelchairs or powered wheelchairs. We also noted that there were no higher individual chairs available, more suitable for elderly patients or those with mobility issues. On the second visit, we observed disposable sick-bowls had been made available for patient needs. A toy on a table provided a distraction for children in attendance, as did the disposable sick-bowls(!). We observed that the Consulting rooms were private and sound-proof, so at no time was it possible to hear any of the doctor/patient consultations from the waiting area.

One patient dressed in night clothes was observed having considerable pain and in distress by this, walking slowly into the waiting area from the car park. There did not appear to be any wheel chairs available (Shropdoc provided or use of hospital chairs) for patients needing such appropriate assistance (from hospital car park to the surgery entrance). The car park is often busy, and a patient may be parked some considerable distance from the Shropdoc base entrance and when weather may be dark and cold/wet/windy.

On arrival for their appointment, patients were met by reception staff or a duty nurse (during one visit an Urgent-Care Practitioner nurse was on duty) to show them the waiting area and explain facilities available while they waited to see the doctor. We observed staff were kind and welcoming to the patients.

A staff member was observed helping a waiting mother with baby who was uncomfortable with the warm temperature of the room. The staff-member also provided and encouraged the child to drink some water to help them while they waited to see the doctor. Representatives also observed reception staff politely and professionally persuaded a reluctant patient to stay and attend the appointment that had been arranged.

Several times we observed staff interacting with patients, providing 'sample' containers, and giving instructions. On each occasion staff were reassuring, respectful, polite, calm, and professional. If it was necessary to discuss the patient's medical condition, they were taken aside to a more private area, or into one of the empty consulting rooms. Doctor's came to the waiting area to identify and guide the next patient to the consulting room - this was done in a professional gentle manner.

Survey Results

21 survey responses were collected across both visits. We did not survey any patients who were visited at home for their appointment (on call), nor did we survey staff about delivery of the service. A few surveys did not have answers provided to a few questions, and some patients/carers/relatives did not leave comments.

- More than half of the patients or their carer/relatives contacted Shropdoc directly (62%). A few were referred/advised by NHS111 (25%).
- Half of the patients contacted their GP about their medical concern **before** contacting Shropdoc, and half did not. (A few patients observed to

our representatives that they had issues getting an appointment that day with their own doctor/surgery, but never had a problem with Shropdoc)

- More than half of the patients were contacted by a doctor or nurse within an hour of their initial call to Shropdoc, and all were contacted within 2 hours.
- 25% of patients saw a doctor or nurse within an hour of their call to Shropdoc, and more than half between 1 and 2 hours. Two patients reported a time-lapse of 3 to 4 hours before they could see a doctor.
- Most patients agreed that staff treated them with courtesy, respect, and in a caring way.
- All patients who responded felt reassured that Shropdoc staff had listened to them about their medical concerns and needs, and had involved the patient (or carer) in the decisions and plans made for resolving those concerns/needs.

Patients were given an opportunity to comment on the service and staff they interact with. There were no negative comments about the Shropdoc service and staff providing the service. Patients, carers, and relatives said:

“Brilliant service - never had a problem.”

“I am extremely grateful for this service.”

“Very pleased with this service.”

“Good service and good staff.”

“Happy I was listened to and not rushed.”

“Helped me and reassured me about my concern.”

“Very quick and very pleasant.”

“Doctor explained what he thought was wrong with my baby; we decided what to do together.”

“Professional.”

“Very informative.”

“I feel lucky.”

Question Survey Results

Question Survey

Note: Some respondents omitted answering some questions, and so the sum of those question results may be less than total of surveys completed.

Q1. Are you visiting Shropdoc as a relative, patient or friend?

Patient	Relative	Friend
16	4	1

Q2. How did you contact Shropdoc today?

Direct to Shropdoc	NHS111 Out of Hours Services	Other
13	5	2

Q3. How easy was it to contact Shropdoc today?

Very Easy	Easy	Difficult	Very Difficult
17	3	0	0

Q4. Have you tried already to get an appointment with your own GP to talk about your medical concern?

Yes	No	Don't know
10	10	0

Q5. How long did it take you to receive a call-back from Shropdoc after you called them?

Less than 1 hour	1 to 2 hours	3 to 4 hours	4 to 5 hours	5 to 6 hours	6 hours or more
12	8	0	0	0	0

Q6. How long did it take you to see a doctor (or nurse) from the time you phoned the service?

Less than 1 hour	1 to 2 hours	3 to 4 hours	4 to 5 hours	5 to 6 hours	6 hours or more
5	12	2	0	0	0

Q7. Do you feel reassured that Shropdoc has taken steps to listen and resolve your/or your relative's medical and personal needs?

Yes	No	Don't know	Not answered
19	0	0	1

Q8. Did you feel involved in the decisions and plans made in relation to resolving the reason for you contacting Shropdoc?

Yes	No	Don't know	Not answered
19	0	0	1

Q9. Have you been treated with courtesy, respect and in a caring way?

Yes	No	Don't know	Not answered
17	0	0	2

Q10. Do you have any comments to make about the service?

All comments provided have been documented in the previous section.
Not all respondents chose to leave a comment about the service or staff.

Recommendations

- Investigate the possible provision of fold-up wheelchair(s) for use by patients with need or mobility issues coming from the car park, and ensure appropriate information is then provided to patients at the time when an appointment is made.
- Engage with hospital facilities to investigate whether at least one stand-alone 'higher' chair can be provided for patients in the waiting room (Shropdoc, or day-time hospital clinics).

Service Provider response

Wonderful timing and we were "very proud" of the report.
The report is great - it shows a real understanding of the service we deliver, and it's reassuring to read that things are being interpreted and experienced as we intend them to be 😊.