

GP Enter and View Report

The Woodside Medical Centre, Middleton

247 Wood Street, Manchester, England, M24 5QL

August 2025



Introduction

Healthwatch Rochdale is the independent voice of Heywood, Middleton, and Rochdale residents. We listen, challenge, and shape local health and social care services.

Healthwatch Rochdale representatives conducted an Enter and View visit at The Woodside Medical Centre on 17/07/2025 at 10.00am as part of a planned Quality Visit conducted by the Primary Care Team, GM Integrated Care Heywood, Middleton, and Rochdale (HMR) locality.

The Woodside Medical Centre is a GP practice in the Rochdale Borough with approximately 10,000 patients.



Purpose of Visit:

The purpose of the visit was to review how patients access GP services, including appointment booking systems, accessibility of information, and the overall patient experience. There were two patients in the waiting room. It was not possible to speak with them as they chose not to engage. However observations and staff engagement highlighted several key areas for improvement and good practice.

Who was involved:

- Moira Auchterlonie – Project Officer HWR
- Tina Bennion – Practice Manager
- Sean Fitzpatrick – Assistant Practice Manager
- Dr Sumayya Nowrin – GP Partner
- Jackie Woodhall – HMR Primary Care Commissioning Team

Executive Summary

Quick Wins: Here are three quick wins which could improve the service and patients' experiences at The Woodside Medical Centre.

- 1. To activate a call back option on the telephone system and improve continuity of messaging on the phone system**
- 2. To offer training sessions to help patients use digital access tools and promote this both digitally and in person, involving the PPG where appropriate**
- 3. To ensure waiting room TV is on during practice hours to maximise patient communication opportunities**

Key recommendations include activating the telephone call-back system, looking at ways to reduce long appointment telephone queues, ensuring the waiting room TV is switched on, and updating the practice brass name plaque in the entrance to reflect the current clinical team.

These findings and recommendations have been shared with the practice, and a formal response has been requested in line with Healthwatch's statutory role. For more information on this please click [here](#).



What patients said: It was not practical to speak with patients in the practice waiting area during the Enter and View visit.

Booking system:

Telephone System

- We conducted a 'mystery shopper' review of the telephone booking system.
- The phone was answered within 30 seconds, and the recorded message mentioned repeat prescriptions, fit notes, the NHS App and call back option.
- Automated information – Phone introduction provides emergency contact information. No mention of Pharmacy First Scheme.
- Queue management – 30th in the queue at 9am, 17th in the queue at 2pm and 10th in the queue at 4pm. Calls were unanswered after 11, 8 and 7 minutes respectively and abandoned to free up a space for patients in the queue.
- Repeat prescriptions offer is the dedicated phone line that patients ring separately. The message also mentions using the NHS App and the website offers the NHS App, PatientAccess, PATCHS or the repeat prescriptions box at the practice.
- Missing "callback" feature on appointments option. Waiting on the appointments option, the callback feature is mentioned but it was not given as an option on any of the 'mystery shopper' calls.

Appointment Access

- Appointments can be booked online using the Patient Access and the NHS App.
- Accessing test results information. Phone message says available between 3pm and 6pm and the website says available by phone after 3pm. It also directs patients to the NHS App or Patient Access to self-serve.
- Interpretation services available on request, though no mention on the website.

Staffing and Availability

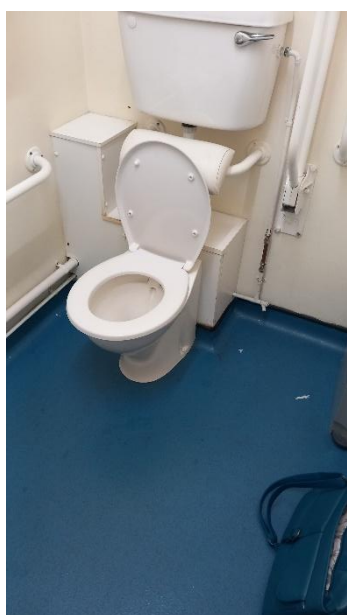
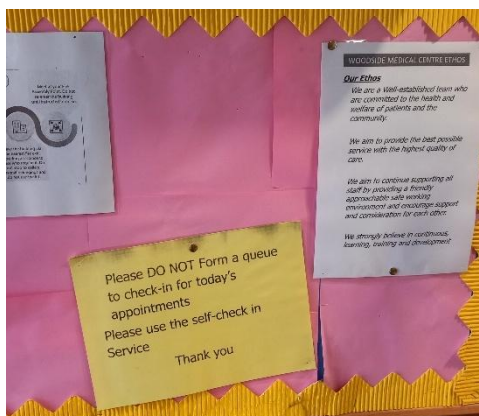
- Male and female clinicians are available including GPs and Advanced Healthcare Practitioners.
- Out-of-hours services. The practice had just started hosting the Enhanced Access Service. This is offered Weekdays 6:30pm to 8:00pm and Saturday

9:00am to 5:00pm. It was too early to comment on whether this has improved appointment access.

- We were unable to get more details on appointment availability and other services (e.g. d/Deaf access) due to reduced staffing caused by sickness. Our usual process is to speak with a receptionist¹.

Digital Systems

- Online platforms – PATCHS system listed on website along with Patient Access.
- Website has information about appointment booking with clear wording on how to access via the telephone and online.
- It was unclear how patients get support from the practice to use these systems (NHS App, Patient Access, PATCHS) A receptionist said that they try to help patients who ask for help using their phone.



¹ The practice manager declined the offer to revisit the practice at a quieter time.

Observations:

- Public transport accessibility. There is a bus stop both outside and opposite the building; There is on street parking; the practice car park appears to be for staff.
- Accessibility to the building includes wider door and ramp. The door was propped open at the time of the visit, partially blocking the entrance to the patient toilet.
- The practice brass plaque only had two names on it and lots of empty slots.
- The waiting room was clean, tidy with plenty of seating space available for patients.
- The reception has a "*stop and wait*" sign to keep patients back from the reception desk. It is an open waiting area so patients can hear what is going on. There was a confidential conversations area at the end of the reception.
- We observed several patients using the self-check in screen and others spoke with the receptionist.
- The patient toilet condition was adequate at 9am. There was no inspection checklist on the door, though there was an empty plastic pocket on the reverse of the door for one.
- The tap was loose on the sink and needed repairing.
- Information and signposting leaflets available in the reception area with a good selection of health and social care leaflets and details of community activities.
- There was a repeat prescription box, patients can order online as well as on the dedicated phone line.
- TV/monitor in the waiting area was off at the time of the visit. On mentioning this, it was switched on. The information provided was diverse, helpful and clear.
- The practice has an active Patient Participation Group with meeting minutes published on the website. While the PPG faces some challenges, there are several positive developments and opportunities for growth. These are:
 - Include the PPG members in practice community activities, e.g. Military Veterans' event and Breast Cancer Awareness events
 - Use the expertise of the new staff member who brings PPG experience from another practice to help revitalise the group

Recommendations and Practice Response

	Healthwatch Rochdale Recommendation August 2025	The Woodside Medical Centre Name & position of responder	Update/Actions/Further comments Date: September 2025
1.	To audit the telephone booking system to reduce queue times for appointments and improve messaging consistency	Tina Bennion, Woodside Medical Centre	We have audited our ongoing telephone traffic. Our welcome message has been updated to enhance information regarding the NHS APP and our online service. Our ongoing vision is to ease telephone traffic with continuous improvements within the practice.
2.	To establish digital literacy training sessions with PPG involvement		This we have already- held 2 events with PPG Participation .
3.	To activate callback functionality across entire phone system		We have check to flow of calls and it does that call functionality is in place.
4.	To implement toilet cleanliness checklist and repair facilities		Cleaning schedule is in place and the cleaner have been updated on this report .
5.	To update the practice brass plaque with current clinical team		This is already in hand.
6.	To ensure waiting room TV is on during practice hours to maximise patient communication opportunities		The TV was not on at the time of HWR attendance at the practice – however I am assured by the team that this is part of the morning schedule and has never happened previously.
7.	To review the test result messaging online and on the website so it is consistent		This has been updated to reflect, Test results line is available Monday to Friday 2pm-6.30pm with exception of Bank Holidays
8.	To include the PPG in practice community activities, e.g. Military Veterans' event and Breast Cancer Awareness events		We held a Military Veteran event 24.07.2025, which health watch was invited to. We had in attendance PPG, Man club and living Well.

9.	To share report findings at next practice PPG meeting		This will be carried out.
10.	The practice manager declined the offer to revisit the practice at a quieter time.		I am sorry to see this comment as I am sure that I did not decline a revisit. I think I had invited HWR to our Military Veteran Event to discuss this. I did not hear anything further.



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