

Enter & View Report: **Deerness Park  
GP Practice**



## Executive Summary: Key findings

- Healthwatch Sunderland's Enter & View carried out in February 2015 overall found high levels of patient satisfaction with Deerness Park Medical Centre.
- Our Enter & View research matches findings from the Patient Participation Group patient satisfaction survey undertaken in 2013-14.
- Patients commented around areas such as staff from the Practice "going the extra mile".
- There was a high level of meaningful involvement of patients in the work of the Practice.
- Patients felt listened to and the Patient Participation Group gave examples where their feedback had directly led to action.
- Regular patient surveys and feedback are undertaken by the Practice and results published.
- The Patient Participation Group has regular monthly meetings and minutes of meetings and action plans are published on the Practice website.
- Although rated by patients overall very highly, there are some issues around appointment systems. There was some disparity between patient's feedback of issues around appointment availability and what Practice staff told us. This would suggest that some patients may not be aware of the full range of options currently on offer around appointments (e.g. early morning and weekend appointments, and the ability to pre-book appointments without having to ring on the day an appointment is needed). We recommend, therefore, that further information is available for patients around appointments and current systems to promote their choice and range of options.
- Deerness Park GP Practice may be useful as a model of good practice around patient engagement for others in Sunderland. We would recommend that its mechanisms of public involvement are widely shared.
- We feel that it is important that all GP Practices in Sunderland understand the value that can be added by having an active Patient Participation Group.



## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 What is Healthwatch?

Local Healthwatches have been set up across England to create a strong, independent consumer champion whose aim is to:

- **Strengthen the collective voice of citizens and communities in influencing local health and social care services in order to better meet their needs and**
- **Enable people to find the right health and social care services for them by providing appropriate information, advice and signposting.**

Healthwatch Sunderland works with local people, patients, service users, carers, community groups, organisations, service providers and commissioners to get the best out of local health and social care services.

### 1.2 What is “Enter and View?”

In order to enable Healthwatch Sunderland to gather the information it needs about services, there are times when it is appropriate for Healthwatch staff and volunteers to see and hear for themselves how those services are provided.

That is why the Government has introduced duties on certain commissioners and providers of health and social care services (with some exceptions) to allow authorized Healthwatch representatives to enter premises that service providers own or control to observe the nature and quality of those services<sup>1</sup>. Authorised representatives include both staff and volunteers who have undergone specialist training based on the national Healthwatch England Enter & View guidelines.

Healthwatch “Enter and Views” are not part of a formal inspection process, neither are they any form of audit. Rather, they are a way for Healthwatch Sunderland to gain a better understanding of local health and social care services by seeing them in operation.

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<sup>1</sup> In “Caring for our Future –Reforming Care and Support” HM Government July 2012

Healthwatch Enter and View participants are not required to have any prior in-depth knowledge about a service before they Enter and View it. Their role is simply to observe the service, talk to service users and staff if appropriate, and make comments and recommendations based on their observations and impressions in the form of a report. The Enter and View Report is aimed at outlining what they saw and making any suitable suggestions for improvement to the service concerned. Enter and View can also be used to identify and share good practice where a service is receiving consistently good feedback from service users.

The reports may also make recommendations for commissioners, regulators or for Healthwatch to explore particular issues in more detail. Unless stated otherwise, the visits are not designed to pursue the rectification of issues previously identified by other regulatory agencies. Any serious issues that are identified during a Healthwatch Enter and View visit are referred to the service provider and appropriate regulatory agencies for their rectification. The Enter and View visits are triggered exclusively by feedback from the public unless stated otherwise.

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## 2. Background and rationale

### 2.1. Initial feedback from service users of Deerness Park

Healthwatch Sunderland picked up some positive feedback from a number of service users of Deerness Park Medical Centre which was reported to us in November and December 2014. This was fed in by service users through our on-line Health Surveys and also by our Engagement Team. Comments included:



***“Treatment is wonderful - friendly receptionist”***

***“Excellent Doctor”***

***“Total excellence”***

***“Treatment is wonderful. The receptionist is nice and friendly. I can contact them on facebook too. I always get a quick response and my GP visits me at home”***

***“They have their own newsletter and we can leave comments on it and they will respond with an article. They also hold tea and cake parties at the surgery”***



When we discussed the feedback as a team and with the Healthwatch Sunderland Board, it was decided to conduct more in-depth research through Enter & View. This would enable us to determine if the positive views Healthwatch Sunderland received from its online survey and engagement were generally reflective of the Practice and, if so, what good practice within Deerness Park could be shared elsewhere.

## 2.2. Deerness Park Practice

Deerness Park Practice is part of Deerness Park Medical Group which also has a Practice at Bunnyhill Primary Care Centre. The total number of patients in Deerness Park Medical Group is 14,500.

Deerness Park Medical Group has a Patient Participation Group which was established in 2011. The group currently has 7 active members who meet regularly to discuss issues of importance to the Practice and its patients, and to provide feedback on health matters across the Practice area.

The Deerness Park Patient Participation Group carried out a patient survey in 2013-14 with 200 patients of their Practice. This found:

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- Patients' responses to "How did you find your experience of contacting the surgery by phone" were: 71% easy and 27% not easy. This was an improvement on the previous year and satisfaction increased since moving from an 0844 number back to an 0191 number.
  - 89% of patients stated they had trust and confidence in the GP or Nurse they saw
  - 87% of patients felt reception staff were very helpful ; 11% of patients felt reception staff were fairly helpful
  - 84% of patients said they would recommend the surgery to family or a friend
  - 77% of patients were satisfied with the hours that the Practice is open
  - 97% of patients described their experience of their surgery as either "very good" or "good"<sup>2</sup>
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## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Patient Surveys

The Enter and View Visit was undertaken by a member of Healthwatch Sunderland staff team and 2 volunteers, who had all been trained and had been DBS checked.

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<sup>2</sup> For full survey see Practice website <http://www.deernesspark.co.uk/surveyreport.aspx?p=A89001>

The visit took place on February 10<sup>th</sup> 2015 in two sessions (both morning and afternoon) in order to get a representative sample of patients attending the Practice. A pre-prepared questionnaire was used to ask patients questions around satisfaction with the Practice and any areas for improvement <sup>3</sup>. In total 32 patient questionnaires were completed. Patients were given the opportunity to talk in confidence if they wished, and the Practice made available a confidential room which could be used if necessary.

Following the Enter & View visit, it was decided to re-visit the Practice again on 18<sup>th</sup> February to explore in-depth initial themes from the surveys. This also involved observing the reception area, and conducting discussions with around 10 patients of Deerness Park Practice and also with Practice staff. Comments about overall care at the Practice included in both Enter & View Questionnaires and through the patient interviews included very positive feedback:

*“Very happy with the service I received, especially from Drs ... (2 doctors named). They both take time to listen and have empathy. My children both like to see both doctors as I do”*

*“I have been with this surgery all of my life...I feel I have a good relationship with the doctors I see...they all have time to listen”.*

*“Have always found this GP practice helpful and efficient - especially Doctor ...”(named)*

*“Have had no problems with this practice”*

*“It is a really good service”*

*“Happy with doctors, overall service excellent”.*

*“Good quality care”*

*“Doctors I’ve seen have appeared genuinely interested and assisted”*

*“Happy with everything - they take time for me”*

*“I love the surgery”*

*“The surgery is fine”*



<sup>3</sup> See Appendix for copy of Enter & View Questionnaire used by Healthwatch Sunderland



However, a number of less positive comments centred around appointments and appointment systems were received:

*It's a really good service with the exception of getting an appointment. They do try and are better than most. The telephone consultation helps and this always leads to an appointment if needed*

*“Overall I am happy with the service with the exception of appointments”*

*“Appointment pre-booking system would be easier”*

*“Would like appointments before 9am and after 6pm”*

*“Appointments could be improved”*

*“I work full time, it is really hard to access the appointment system without time off work”*

*“You sometimes wait in queue at reception to be told the automatic check-in is working and you have to go and use it”*

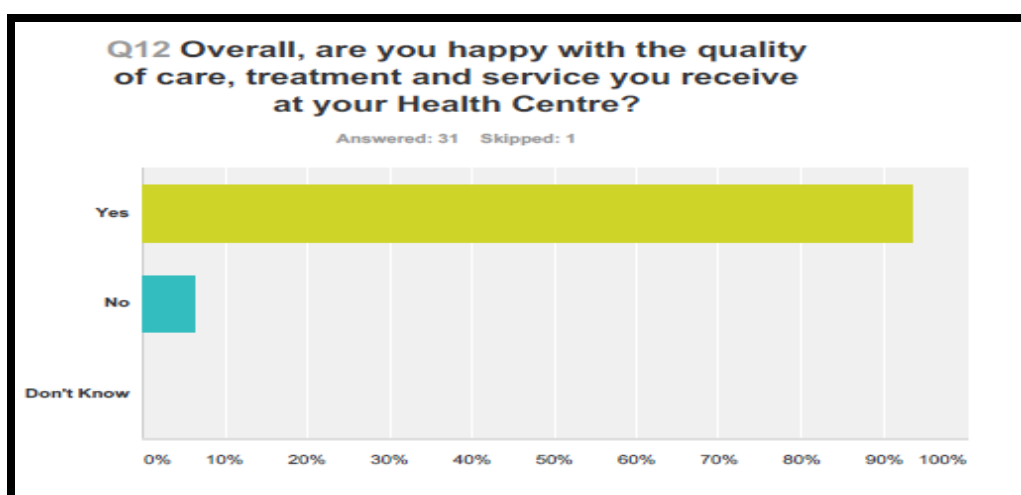
*“Improve phone lines and waiting to get through”*

*“GP surgeries should have longer opening times and even open weekends”*

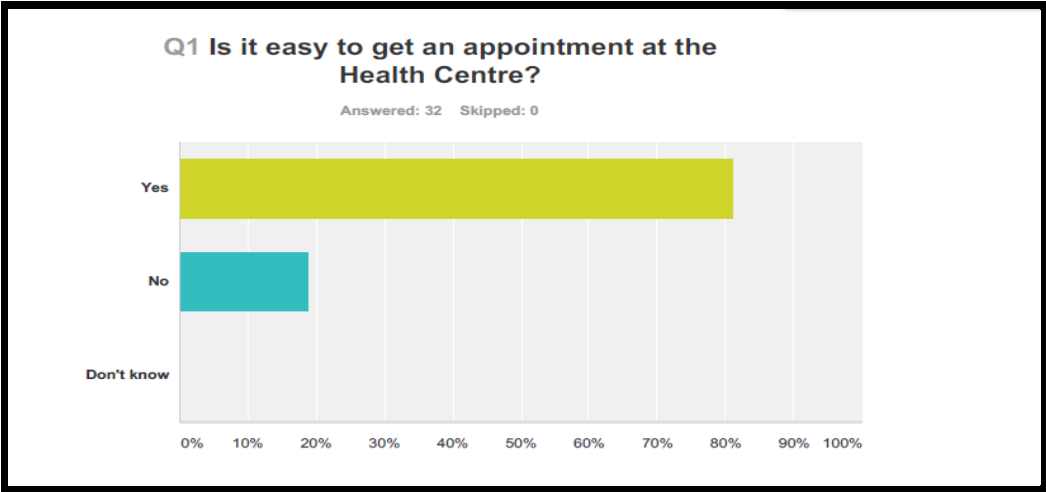
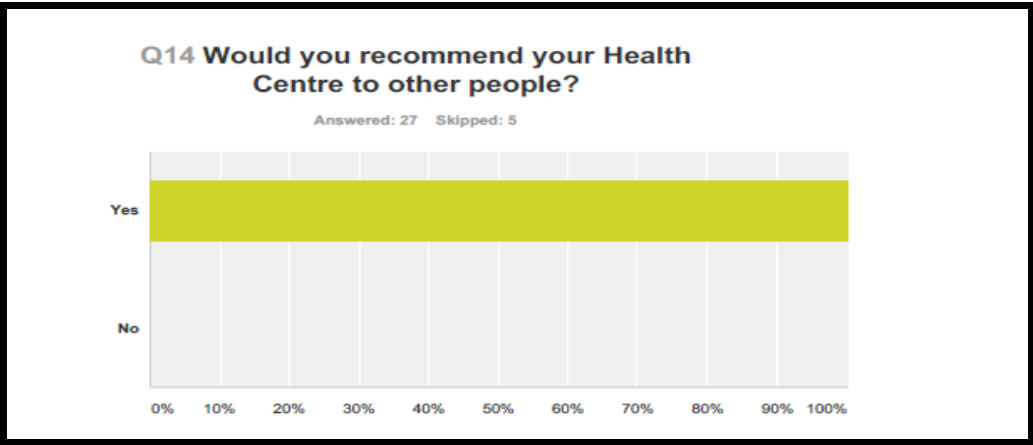
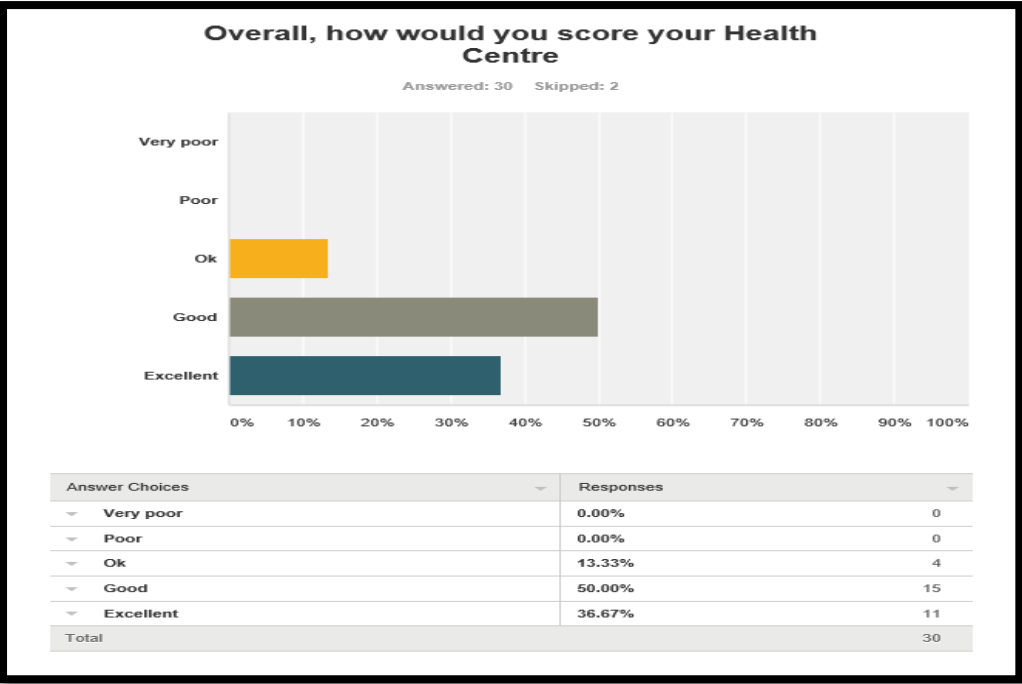
Main findings of the Enter & View Questionnaire were as follows:

Question	Result
1. Is it easy to get an appointment at the Health Centre?	Yes 81.25%; No 18.75%; Don't know 0%
2. Are you happy with your Health Centre's opening hours?	Yes 93.75%; No 3.13%; Don't Know 3.13%
3. Is the building accessible and friendly?	Yes 100%; No 0%; Don't Know 0%
4. Are the staff (reception/practice manager) at your surgery helpful and understanding?	Yes 96.67%; No 0%; Don't Know 3.33%
5. Are you happy with the layout of the waiting room?	Yes 96.67%; No 0%; Don't Know 3.33%

6. Are you happy with the toilets?	Yes 86.67%; No 0.00%; Don't Know 13.33%
7. Is it clear for you to know when it is time to see your doctor?	Yes 93.55%; No 6.45%; Don't Know 0%
8. Is there enough privacy to talk to reception in confidence?	Yes 67.74%; No 25.81%; Don't Know 6.45%
9. Are there any language barriers when communicating with staff or doctors?	Yes 22.58%; No 77.42%; Don't Know 0%
10. Do you feel you have enough time with your doctor?	Yes 93.55%; No 3.23%; Don't Know 3.23%
11. Do you feel your doctor listens to you and considers your opinions?	Yes 96.77%; No 0%; Don't Know 3.23%
12. Overall, are you happy with the quality of care, treatment and service you receive at your Health Centre?	Yes 93.55%; No 6.45%; Don't Know 0%
13. Do you have any suggestions for improving the system/service provided at your surgery?	Yes 32.26%; No 67.74%
14. Would you recommend your Health Centre to other people?	Yes 100%; No 0%; Don't Know 0%
15. Overall how would you score your Health Centre?	Very poor 0%; Poor 0%; OK 13.33%; Good 50%; Excellent 36.67%







### 3.2. Interview with Patient Participation Group

Healthwatch Sunderland staff met with Patient Participation Group (PPG) of Deerness Park Practice prior to the Enter & View visit to talk to patients. This meeting was held on 13<sup>th</sup> February and involved a general discussion about the Practice, the work of the PPG and any observations or issues of the Group on meeting patient needs.

Deerness Park Medical Group's Patient Participation Group has been established since 2011. The group currently has 7 active members who meet regularly to discuss issues of importance to the Practice and its patients, and to provide feedback on health matters across the Practice area.

Key findings from the discussion regarding the Practice included:

- The Patient Participation Group described the Practice as “homely”. It was considered friendly and welcoming for patients.
- Every meeting the Patient Participation Group have a ‘review’ or ‘MOT’ of their suggestions to the Practice Manager, identifying which have been implemented or being considered.
- The Group can put questions to GPs in the Practice through the Practice Manager -this will normally be a formal agenda item.
- An example of the effectiveness of the PPG was the installation of electric doors at the entrance after a wheelchair user could not gain entry. The Group raised this with the Practice and electric doors were duly installed in December 2014.
- The group members expressed the view that the appointments system was an issue. However, they emphasised that this was not just at Deerness but almost everywhere else.

### 3.3 Observation of Reception

In addition to giving patient surveys and conducting patient interviews to ask about patient satisfaction, Healthwatch Sunderland staff were invited to observe the reception area of Deerness Park Practice.

The following are observations made by Healthwatch Sunderland regarding the reception area and staff:

- A patient arriving with a small child asked for an urgent appointment and was spoken to kindly by the receptionist who then spoke to the Doctor. The patient was seen within about 10 minutes.
- We were told that when a patient dies, the relatives are always sent a sympathy card from the Practice and the GP always visits the family home after a death
- Reception staff were observed being professional, friendly and helpful to patients. They explained things clearly. The Practice was very busy at the time of our visit.
- The reception area is very spacious and relaxing - patients don't face each other.
- Toilets were clean and presentable.
- The car park seems to have adequate parking and has 2 disabled parking spaces.
- The main reception desk is high but at the end of the desk is a lower area suitable for wheelchair users (however this might need signage)
- The reception desk is away from waiting patients so to a degree there is privacy when speaking to the receptionist.
- On the main reception there is usually 1 receptionist and in a separate office behind this there are 2-3 administrators taking telephone calls. These staff can be called to reception at busy times.
- At the time of the visit, the check-in system was not working - a sign displaying "out of order" would perhaps be recommended to stop any confusion.
- There is an early morning clinic (7.30-8am) on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday. There is a clinic on a Saturday morning at Bunnyhill Primary Care Centre (which is part of Deerness Park Medical Group) which runs from 8-10am. There is also a Pilot Scheme operating with Riverview Health Centre on evening and weekends through the Practice. Although patients will be seen by another GP, their notes are available during the shared arrangement.

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#### 4. Key themes

Patient and carer experience gathered from all methods was collated and analysed. This resulted in the following themes emerging:

## 4.1 Active involvement of patients

Our Enter & View research and observations of Deerness Park Medical Group (which includes Deerness Park Practice) led us to conclude that **patients are actively involved in this Practice.**

*“Once registered, patients and professionals work together to ensure the most appropriate care is provided. This partnership philosophy extends even further and our active patient group exists to make sure that patient needs and the practice offering are always heading in the same direction”*

Deerness Park Practice  
website

Patients’ views appear genuinely encouraged by the Practice and the Patient Participation Group carries out an annual audit of patient satisfaction which in 2013-14 had a large sample of 200 patients.

Interviews with the Practice Manager and Patient Participation Group confirmed this finding of openness and inclusion.

The Patient Participation Group described the Practice as “homely” and welcoming.

We also observed a culture of openness - for example meetings and patient surveys are published on the Deerness Park website.

This confirms our early feedback from patients about the Practice’s newsletter *“we can leave comments...and they will respond with an article”*

## 4.2 Putting things into action

Not only does the Practice actively listen to patients, they also appear to be committed to **putting things in action where needed to address patient concerns.**

The Healthwatch Sunderland staff met with the Practice Manager and Patient Participation Group and were given examples of where patient feedback had led directly to action to address issues raised. For example, electric doors were installed at the entrance to the Practice as a result of the Patient Participation Group’s concern about wheelchair access.

This finding is also borne out by the Practice’s website, where an action plan has been developed in partnership between the Patient Participation Group and the Practice to address patient feedback around areas such as appointment systems.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See Practice Website <http://www.deernesspark.co.uk/ppg.aspx>


### 4.3 Exemplary Staff “going the extra mile”

Our Enter & View research and interviews with patients found a **high level of satisfaction with staff at the Practice**. This included all staff - and especially with care from Doctors at the Practice. The main themes which came through about staff were areas such as listening, empathy and delivering excellent care. Comments such as “*genuinely interested and assisted*”, “*helpful and efficient*” and “*takes time to listen*” were typical.



*“I have been seen by 3 Doctors in the Practice. They have delivered an excellent service to me. As a health professional it is really appreciated”*

### 4.4 Communication of Appointment System



*Need facility to book appointments ahead for non-urgent matters*

*Appointment pre-booking system would be easier*

*Should open weekends*

We received a number of negative comments from patients about the Practice’s appointment system. These centred around having to ring on the day for an appointment to a busy telephone line, and also around opening times (such as early appointments and weekend appointments).

However when we spoke to Practice staff, we were informed that non urgent appointments can be pre-booked in advance, and that the Practice does have early morning appointments. There are also weekend appointments available at Riverview Health Centre which can be arranged through the Practice. In light of this, we would recommend that patients are perhaps provided with more information about appointment and appointment systems to increase their awareness of these options.

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## 5. Summary

Healthwatch Sunderland completed this Enter & View Report on Deerness Park Practice in February 2015 and would like to thank our Enter & View volunteers and staff from the Practice for helping to carry out the work and for providing background information. We would also like to thank the Patient Participation Group and all the patients from the Practice for sharing your views and feedback.

Overall the results were very positive from patients about the Practice - with over 96% of patients saying the care they received was either good or excellent.

Admittedly, our Enter & View research was small scale in nature - with 32 patients completing questionnaires and around 10 further in-depth interviews. However, we are encouraged that our findings echo previous research on a larger scale which was undertaken by the Practice Participation Group in 2013-14, which also found high patient satisfaction levels with the quality of care at Deerness Park. We believe that our findings do have validity and can be used to inform service provision.

We are satisfied that the Enter & View did indeed gather further evidence to corroborate our initial emerging trend around high quality care at this Practice, which had come from a small number of service users in November and December 2014.

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## 6. Findings

- Healthwatch Sunderland's Enter & View carried out in February 2015 overall found high levels of patient satisfaction with Deerness Park Medical Centre.
- Our Enter & View research matches findings from the Patient Participation Group patient satisfaction survey undertaken in 2013-14.
- Patients commented around areas such as staff from the Practice "going the extra mile".
- There was a high level of meaningful involvement of patients in the work of the Practice.
- Patients felt listened to and the Patient Participation Group gave examples where their feedback had directly led to action.
- Regular patient surveys and feedback are undertaken by the Practice and results published.
- The Patient Participation Group has regular monthly meetings and minutes of meetings and action plans are published on the Practice website.

## 7. Recommendations

- Although rated by patients overall very highly, there are some issues around appointment systems at Deerness Park Practice. There was some disparity between patient's feedback of issues around appointment availability and what Practice staff told us. This would suggest that some patients may not be aware of the full range of options currently on offer around appointments (e.g. early morning and weekend appointments, and the ability to pre-book appointments without having to ring on the day an appointment is needed). We recommend, therefore, that further information is available for patients around appointments and current systems to promote their choice and range of options.
- Deerness Park GP Practice may be useful as a model of good practice around patient engagement for other GP Practices in Sunderland. We would recommend that its commitment to public involvement and the patient voice is widely shared, along with its mechanisms of active engagement (such as website, newsletters, meetings, publication of action plans etc.).
- We feel that it is important that all GP Practices in Sunderland understand the value that can be added by having an active Patient Participation Group. We recommend that Patient Participation Groups are seen as key partners in the service provision of GP Practices, and that not only do they capture patient views, but they are also involved in driving forward improvements in service provision.

## 8. Next Steps

Healthwatch Sunderland will share this Enter & View report with Deerness Park Practice. It will also be sent to our members and stakeholders as well as key partners and organisations including other Sunderland GP Practices, Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS England and the Care Quality Commission.

We would be keen to receive feedback from other GP Practices in Sunderland around their mechanisms for public involvement and engagement - and would be happy to share other examples of good practice which strengthen the patient voice in Sunderland.



## Appendix 1: Patient Questionnaire



### Deerness Park Health Centre

This is a survey to ask the patients who use Deerness Park Health Centre their views, opinions and experiences of the health centre.

**1. Is it easy to get an appointment at the Health Centre?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**2. Are you happy with your Health Centre's opening hours?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**3. Is the building accessible and friendly?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**4. Are the staff (reception/practice manager) at your surgery helpful and understanding?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**5. Are you happy with the layout of the waiting room?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**6. Are you happy with the toilets?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**7. Is it clear for you to know when it is time to see your doctor (system in reception for alerting you to see your doctor)?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**8. Is there enough privacy to talk to reception in confidence?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**9. Are there any language barriers when communicating with staff or doctors?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**10. Do you feel you have enough time with your doctor?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**11. Do you feel your doctor listens to you and considers your opinions?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**12. Overall, are you happy with the quality of care, treatment and service you receive at your Health Centre?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

Can you please explain your answer

**13. Do you have any suggestions for improving the system/service provided at your surgery?**

- Yes
- No

If yes, please specify

**14. Would you recommend your Health Centre to other people?**

- Yes
- No

Can you please explain your answer

**15. Overall, how would you score your Health Centre**

- Very poor
- Poor
- Ok
- Good
- Excellent

Thank you for completing our survey

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