

GP practice report

Beaconsfield GP Practice

November 2025

Contents

About this report	3
1. Introduction	3
2. Background Information	4
3. First Impressions and Environment	5
4. Westbank Medical Centre (Satellite Site – Context)	6
5. What People Told Us	6
6. Key Findings	7
7. Summary	8
8. Suggestions and Recommendations	8

About this report

This report has been produced by Healthwatch Halton as part of our Enter and View programme. These visits allow us to observe services first-hand, speak with patients and staff, and gather feedback about people's experiences of care and access to appointments.

Our findings reflect what we saw during the visit and what people told us on the day. We aim to give clear, balanced insight into what is working well and where improvements could be made.

A draft of this report has been shared with the practice for comment, and any clarifications or updates will be included in the final published version.

1. Introduction

This report has been produced by Healthwatch Halton as part of our Enter and View programme. Enter and View visits allow authorised representatives to observe services first-hand, speak with patients, and gather feedback about people's experiences of care and access to appointments.

The findings in this report reflect what we observed during the visit to Beaconsfield Surgery on 18 November 2025 and what patients told us on the day. Information about Westbank Medical Centre is included for background context only, based on a previous visit, as patients may be directed between the two sites.

2. Background Information

Details	Information
Address	Beaconsfield Surgery Peelhouse Lane, Widnes, WA8 6SZ Tel: 0151 424 3986
Registered Patients	14,664
GPs	8
GP Registrars	4
Advanced Nurse Practitioners	2
Nurses	4
Paramedic	1
Care Navigators	13
Managers	4
Administrative staff	7
Healthcare Assistant	2
Clinical Pharmacist	2

3. First Impressions and Environment

Beaconsfield Surgery is a large, purpose-built practice with level access and ample on-site parking for patients. Entry is via automatic sliding doors leading into a wide internal corridor and the main waiting area. The reception desk is positioned part-way along this corridor and was clearly visible to patients arriving at the practice.

All GP consulting rooms are located on the ground floor. A lift and stairs provide access to the first floor, where nursing services are based. Hand sanitiser dispensers were available throughout the building.

3.1 Waiting Area

The waiting area at Beaconsfield Surgery was bright, clean and spacious, providing a generally calm and welcoming environment for patients. Seating was arranged using a combination of bench-style seating facing forward and additional seating along the sides of the room, allowing the area to accommodate a steady flow of patients comfortably. The wooden flooring was well maintained and contributed to the open feel of the space.

Patient information was displayed on noticeboards around the waiting area, including details about GP Extra, the Patient Participation Group (PPG), care navigation and local wellbeing services. A self-check-in screen was available for patients to use on arrival, alongside a prescription request box and care navigator information.

A television screen was used both to display information and as the patient calling system. A weight and blood pressure machine was also available for patient use. However, its positioning in a highly visible part of the waiting area may limit privacy and affect how comfortable some patients feel using the equipment. A small seating area was provided for children, although no toys, books or activities were observed at the time of the visit.

3.2 Reception and Patient Flow

During the visit, the reception area was observed to be extremely busy, with a high volume of patients attending in person for prescription queries, appointment enquiries and general requests. Patient flow through reception was constant, reflecting significant demand on front-of-house staff throughout the period of

observation.

4. Westbank Medical Centre (Satellite Site – Context)

Westbank Medical Centre is a smaller satellite surgery within the Bevan Group and shares its patient list and clinical services with Beaconsfield Surgery. Although Westbank was not visited as part of this Enter and View, it is included for context as patients attending Beaconsfield may be redirected to the site for appointments.

Westbank has limited on-site parking, with additional parking available nearby. Access is provided via a small ramp leading into a porch area containing a weight and blood pressure machine, a prescription request box, patient information leaflets and hand sanitiser.

From the porch, a push-button door leads into a small waiting and reception area. During the previous visit, the environment was clean and well maintained, although some patient information displays were out of date. Patients were called from the corridor rather than from reception, which had created difficulties for some patients, particularly those with hearing impairments. A single shared accessible toilet was available.

5. What People Told Us

We spoke with patients during the visit, and their feedback reflected a mix of positive experiences alongside ongoing frustrations, particularly around access and communication.

Access and appointments

Several patients described difficulty getting through to the practice by telephone. Some said they had made repeated attempts before successfully speaking to someone or securing an appointment. One patient told us:

“I once called over 30 times and couldn’t get an appointment before my baby was born.”

Others described being advised to call back at specific times, which they found challenging, especially when calling on behalf of children or dependants:

“I rang at 13:05 for my daughter and was told to call back at 8am.”

Some patients said they had needed family members to attend the practice in person to help them book appointments:

“I had to phone over 100 times; my son had to come down in person to book for me.”

Online systems

Experiences of online access were mixed. Some patients said online systems worked well for them, particularly those who could not use the phone during working hours:

“Online works well for me; I usually get a same-day appointment if I call.”

“I prefer online systems because of my job; I can’t have a phone in work.”

However, others raised concerns about limitations within the system, particularly around booking more than one appointment:

“You can’t have two appointments at once on the system, which makes things difficult.”

Staff interactions

Feedback about staff interactions varied. While some patients said they were very happy with the surgery overall, others felt experiences were inconsistent depending on who they spoke to. One patient shared:

“Some staff are lovely, others are rude. I have mental and physical health issues and need support.”

Other issues raised

Parking was mentioned by several patients, with some commenting that the car park was frequently full:

“Parking is always full, but the waiting room is quiet.”

6. Key Findings

What is working well

- Clean, bright and accessible environment
- Wide range of patient information and facilities

- Online access routes that work well for some patients
- Availability of GP Extra referrals
- Some patients reporting very positive overall experiences

Where improvements may help

- Telephone access and call-handling capacity
- Appointment booking restrictions for patients with ongoing or multiple needs
- Consistency of staff communication and approach
- Privacy of self-service clinical equipment in the waiting area

7. Summary

Beaconsfield Surgery provides a well-maintained and accessible environment, supported by a broad range of services and facilities. However, patient feedback highlights ongoing challenges with telephone access, appointment availability and consistency of staff interactions.

Experiences varied, with some patients reporting very positive care, while others described significant frustration when trying to access support. Westbank Medical Centre remains an important part of the Bevan Group network, and differences in site size and layout mean patient experience may vary depending on where appointments are delivered.

8. Suggestions and Recommendations

1. Improve telephone access

The practice may wish to review telephone call-handling capacity and call queue performance during peak periods, including around 8.00am, in light of patient feedback about repeated unsuccessful call attempts.

2. Review appointment booking restrictions

Consider greater flexibility for patients requiring more than one appointment as part of ongoing care, and ensure booking rules are communicated clearly and consistently.

3. Support consistent staff communication

Patients described mixed experiences of communication at reception and

through care navigation. Greater consistency may help improve experiences for people with complex or long-term needs.

4. Improve privacy for self-service equipment

Move the weight and blood pressure machine at Beaconsfield Surgery to a more private location to support dignity and patient confidence.

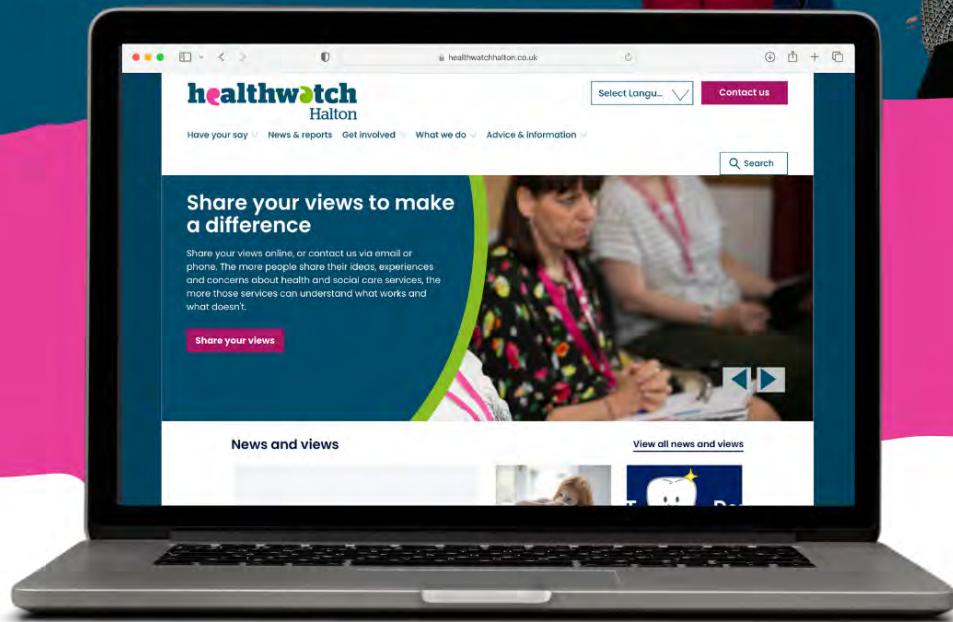
5. Maintain and build on good practice

Some patients shared very positive feedback. Making sure this is passed on to staff may help support morale.

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www.healthwatchhalton.co.uk
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We are committed to the quality of our information.
Every three years we perform an in-depth audit
so that we can be certain of this.

healthwatch Halton

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