

GP practice report

Hough Green Health Park

November 2025

Contents

About this report.....	3
1. Introduction.....	3
2. Background Information.....	4
2. First Impressions and Environment.....	5
4. Patient Feedback.....	6
5. Summary.....	8
6. Overall Findings.....	9
7. Recommendations.....	9
8. Practice response.....	10

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

Healthwatch Halton conducted an Enter and View visit to Hough Green Health Park to observe the environment, facilities, and patient experience. The visit focused on how people accessed appointments, how staff engaged with patients, and how the physical space supported the service.

The visit took place while resurfacing work was underway in the front car park. During our visit, patients arrived steadily for appointments and reception enquiries.

2. Background Information

Practice Information	Details
Address	Hough Green Health Park 45–47 Hough Green Road, Widnes, WA8 4JN Tel: 0151 511 5805
Registered Patients	5,000
GPs	2 Partners, 1 Locum
Advanced Nurse Practitioners	0
Nurses	3
Paramedics	0
Care Navigators	2
Managers	2
Admin Team	2 admin, 6 reception
HCA	1
Clinical Pharmacist	1
NHS Total Triage	Triage open during all core hours online so patients can complete an online consultation throughout the day as needed
Same-Day Appointments	Yes
Pre-bookable Appointments	Yes
GP Extra Referrals	Yes
Patient Participation Group	Yes – 7 members
Phlebotomy Clinic	Yes – Wednesday mornings (HCA-led)

2. First Impressions and Environment

Access into the building is level, with automatic sliding doors leading into a small porch containing prescription slips, a collection box, hand sanitiser and decorative plants.

Inside, the reception area is bright, open and easy to navigate. Shared toilets are located off the main waiting space, and the adjoining pharmacy entrance is clearly visible.

The main reception desk is positioned to the left of the entrance and was staffed throughout the visit. A steady flow of patients approached the desk for queries, prescriptions and general advice.

Waiting Area

The waiting area contains six sets of bench-style seating in good condition. Information is arranged across noticeboards and leaflets were available in the waiting area, with a small display stand highlighting asthma and arthritis resources. A Healthwatch poster was also displayed.

A TV screen functions as the patient calling system, although **no sound or visual alert** was active during the visit, meaning patients needed to rely on hearing staff call their names.

Clinical Areas

Seven consultation and treatment rooms sit along the main corridor. These were clean, organised and in regular use, with patients being called through consistently across the 90-minute visit.

3. Staff Interaction

Staff were friendly and approachable during the visit, supporting patients with enquiries and directing them as needed.

The practice uses Blinx, primarily for messaging and administrative communication. NHS Total Triage is not used; patients continue to access appointments by telephone or in person.

4. Patient Feedback

During our visit, Healthwatch Halton spoke with 17 patients. People shared a wide range of views on appointments, online services and their experience of care. Many had been attending Hough Green for several years.

4.1 Access to Appointments

Many patients described being able to get an appointment when they needed one, particularly by calling at 8am. One person said,

“99% of the time I get an appointment on the day, and if there are none left, I still get a telephone triage call.”

Another patient told us,

“I called today and got an appointment straight away.”

Parents described prompt access for their children, including:

“When I called this morning, they slotted my baby in straight away.”

Some patients explained that appointment availability can reduce quickly in the morning. One said,

“Normally I ring at 8am and by 8:15 appointments are gone.”

Another commented,

“I’d say I only get an appointment about one out of every three times I try.”

A small number spoke about occasionally attending in person due to urgent need or difficulty getting through on the phone. One person shared,

“Sometimes if I need to see a doctor urgently, I can’t get an appointment the same day – I’ve had to come down and queue outside.”

Patients attending planned clinics described straightforward booking, such as,

“This appointment was pre-booked two weeks ago for the nurse clinic.”

4.2 Use of Online Services

Most patients preferred telephone contact over online systems. Comments included:

“I don’t use online services – they’re too complicated.”

“I don’t use apps at all; I prefer to call.”

Several patients used the NHS App in limited ways, often for prescriptions or test

results rather than booking appointments. They told us:

"I use the NHS App for prescriptions but not for anything else."

"I use the NHS App for medication but ring for appointments."

One patient said,

"I hate technology – I prefer speaking to a human so I know it's confirmed."

Another shared,

"I don't take medication so I don't feel I need the NHS App."

Some found digital options useful for checking information but still relied on telephone access for arranging care.

4.3 Experience of Care

Patients consistently described staff as friendly, helpful and supportive.

Comments included:

"Everyone is brilliant here."

"Staff are lovely."

"The surgery is really good and works very well."

People also talked about good support for those with additional needs. One relative shared,

"This surgery is very understanding. My husband has a brain injury and they are brilliant with him."

A parent described their experience by saying,

"My son has severe learning difficulties and they are superb with him. Excellent care."

Even among those who mentioned challenges with appointment access, most expressed confidence in the care they received once they were in contact with staff.

4.4 Communication and Practical Considerations

A few patients commented on practical aspects of communication. One person said,

"It would help to have an alert before the surgery call, so you know it isn't a scam."

Others noted they were sometimes advised to attend the Walk-In Centre when appointments were full, and several described using telephone triage as an alternative.

Overall, patients expressed positive views about the care provided by staff and clinicians. Access varied depending on the time of day and individual confidence with online systems, but most people described feeling supported and listened to once they were in contact with the practice.

5. Summary

During our visit, Hough Green Health Park was clean, accessible and easy to navigate, and many patients spoke positively about their interactions with staff. People told us they were often able to get appointments when needed, although some reported difficulty getting through at 8am or finding that appointments were taken quickly.

Patients had mixed confidence with online systems, with many preferring to contact the surgery by phone. People also described receiving good support once they were in contact with staff, including those with additional or complex needs.

During the visit, the patient calling system had no sound or visual alerts, and a small number of patients told us they had queued outside when needing urgent appointments. Clearer guidance on digital options may help some people. Overall, our observations and patient feedback showed a number of positive experiences, along with areas where adjustments could help improve access and communication.

6. Overall Findings

What is working well

- Clean, bright and well-maintained environment
- Friendly, approachable staff
- Many patients able to access same-day appointments
- Positive feedback for support with additional needs
- Clear internal layout and accessible facilities
- Active Patient Participation Group

Where improvements may help

- High demand for 8am appointments
- Patient calling system lacked sound and visual alerts
- Some patients not confident with digital systems
- Occasional reports of queuing outside for urgent access

7. Recommendations

1. Enable sound and visual alerts on the patient call system; consider additional screens.
2. Review appointment release patterns to reduce 8am bottlenecks.
3. Provide simple guides for digital services and offer optional support.
4. Share advice on recognising calls from the surgery.
5. Clarify walk-in expectations to reduce unnecessary queuing.
6. Continue strengthening engagement with the PPG.

8. Practice response

We have triage open during all core hours online so patients can complete an online consultation throughout the day as needed, we have no cap on these so patients can complete them without having to wait/queue at the practice. The patients have all been informed of this via text, it is on the front page of our website, on posters around the practice and our staff push this with the patients.

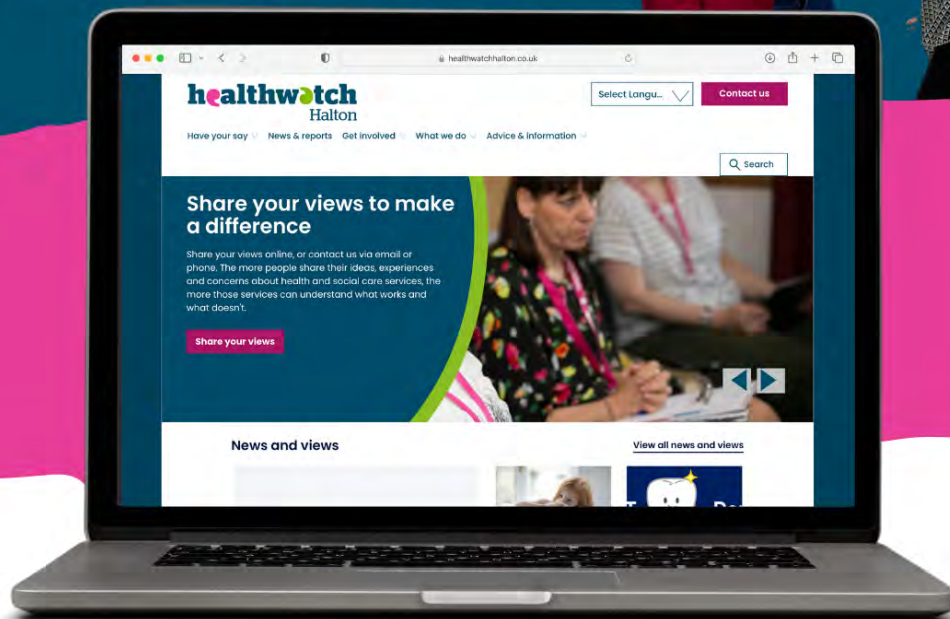
We try to promote online access to our patients with our nurses taking a lead role and discussing this with each patient when they come in for their annual reviews to try and increase the use of online access.

Lucy Fonterigo, Practice Manager, Hough Green Health Park

Have Your Say

Share your experiences of health & social care services in Halton on our website or with your mobile phone.

Visit our webpage:
www.healthwatchhalton.co.uk
click on the tab 'Have Your Say'



healthwatch
Halton

**Scan the QR code
or call us on 0300 777 6543**





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.



A.R.T. Centre

Tan House Lane

Widnes

WA8 0RR

Tel: 0300 777 6543

E: feedback@healthwatchhalton.co.uk