

GP practice report

Newtown Surgery

December 2025

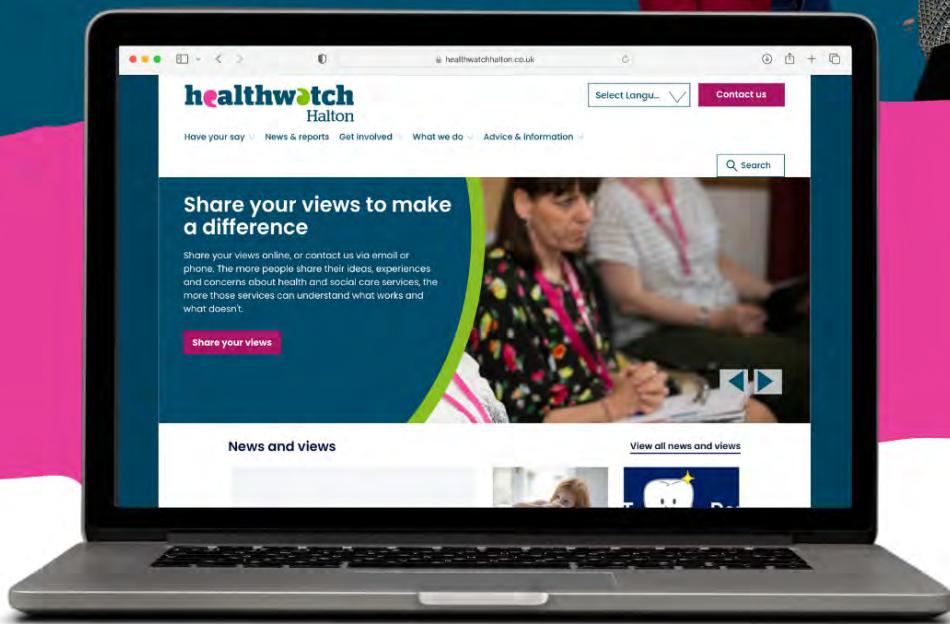
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About this report

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. A draft of the report is shared with the practice for comment, and any clarifications or updates are included in the final published version.

1. Introduction

Healthwatch Halton is the independent champion for people who use health and care services locally. We have statutory powers to visit publicly funded services, observe how care is provided, and gather feedback directly from patients, carers, and staff. The findings from our visits are shared with providers and commissioners to help improve local services.

Healthwatch Halton carried out an arranged Enter and View visit to Newtown Surgery on 10 December 2025. Enter and View visits enable us to observe the patient environment, speak with patients and staff, and gather feedback about people's experiences of accessing GP services. This report reflects what we observed during the visit and what patients told us on the day.

2. Background Information

Practice Information	Details
Address:	Newtown Surgery Caldwell Road, Widnes, WA8 7GD Telephone: 0151 495 5110
Registered Patients:	6904
GPs:	8
Advanced Nurse Practitioners:	1
Practice Nurses:	1
Paramedics:	1
Care Navigators	8
Practice Manager / Deputy	2
Administrative Team	5
Healthcare Assistants	2
Clinical Pharmacist	Shared with Hough Green (recruitment planned)

Appointment Systems

- *Patchs: Yes – used for admin and appointment requests*
- *NHS Total Triage: No*
- *Same-day appointments: Yes*
- *Pre-bookable appointments: Yes*
- *GP Extra referrals: Yes*
- *Patient Participation Group: 5 active members*

Clinical and additional services

Phlebotomy (weekly), Mental Health Practitioner, Wellbeing services, NHS Health Checks, Minor Surgery, First Contact Physiotherapy, Smoking Cessation.

3. Environment and Facilities

3.1 Entrance and Reception

Newtown Surgery is situated within the Health Care Resource Centre alongside the Urgent Treatment Centre, Oaks Place Surgery and McDougall's Pharmacy. The large car park provides good access to the building.

The reception area is compact, with a desk positioned in front of the reception window, which limited visibility and privacy. Prescription slips, a small number of leaflets and a buzzer for staff contact were available.

3.2 Waiting Area

The waiting area is shared with other services in the centre. Seating consisted of clean, colour-coded bench seats and high-back chairs. Flooring and furniture were in good condition and dementia-friendly.

Patient information was limited, and no feedback box was available.

3.3 Notice Boards

Three notice boards were displayed but sparsely populated. They would benefit from refreshed content and clearer organisation. A glass-fronted notice board near the treatment corridor displayed Resource Centre materials rather than surgery-specific information.

3.4 Clinical Areas

A corridor leads to seven treatment rooms, offices and toilets. Staff routinely entered the waiting area to call patients. An electronic calling system was present but unplugged.

A taped-over prescription box remained on the wall despite a newer replacement being in use.

Staff were friendly, helpful and welcoming throughout.

4. Patient Feedback

We spoke with patients in the shared waiting area during the visit. People described a range of experiences relating to appointments, communication and the wider service. Most spoke positively about the surgery and staff, while some mentioned waiting times or challenges with specific processes.

4.1 Access to Appointments

Many patients told us they were able to book appointments when needed, often by attending in person or calling the surgery. Emergency appointments were described as accessible.

Patients said:

- *“Booked an appointment yesterday when I came in to put a prescription in... I always get an appointment.”*
- *“Emergency appointment today – I called this morning and got straight in.”*
- *“Everything is alright here at the surgery.”*

Some patients raised issues about routine waiting times:

- *“Waiting times can be an issue but everything else is good.”*
- *“The online service is clear and good, but it’s the waiting times that are the problem.”*

4.2 Digital Access and Repeat Prescriptions

Use of the NHS App and online tools varied. Some patients preferred telephone contact, while others used the app mainly for prescriptions.

Comments included:

- *“I don’t use online services for the GP practice, but I use the NHS App for prescriptions.”*
- *“I wish I could request my son’s prescription milk through the NHS App... coming in every couple of days isn’t a good system for new parents.”*

4.3 Experience of Care and Staff Interaction

Most patients described positive interactions with staff:

- *“Surgery is fine.”*
- *“Everything has been good so far – this is my first visit since transferring here.”*

A single patient described a less positive experience with one GP:

They found the communication to be abrupt compared with their usual expectations.

5. Key Findings

Positive Observations

Positive Observations

- Welcoming, friendly staff
- Clean and dementia-friendly environment
- Good range of clinics and additional services
- Same-day and pre-bookable appointments available
- Clear internal layout and accessible facilities

Areas for Improvement

- Reception layout limits visibility and privacy
- Sparse patient information and no feedback box
- Electronic calling system not in use
- Confusion caused by outdated prescription box
- Some patients reported longer waiting times
- One isolated concern about communication style

6. Summary

We visited Newtown Surgery on 10 December 2025 to observe the environment, speak with patients and gather feedback about people's experiences of accessing care. The surgery is based within the Health Care Resource Centre and benefits from a clean, well-maintained and dementia-friendly environment, supported by friendly and welcoming staff.

Many patients told us they were able to book appointments when needed, particularly by attending in person or calling the surgery. People generally described positive experiences once they were seen. Some patients did, however, raise concerns about waiting times for routine appointments, and a small number highlighted challenges with the current prescription process.

Confidence with digital systems varied. While some patients used the NHS App for prescriptions, others preferred telephone or face-to-face contact.

Parents needing to request frequent prescriptions, such as infant formula, reported that the process could be time-consuming.

During our visit we observed limited patient information on display, an old prescription box still fixed to the wall and an electronic calling system that was not in use. Addressing these small practical issues could help improve clarity and patient flow.

Overall, Newtown Surgery provides a supportive and accessible service, offering a range of clinics and additional services to meet patient needs. The suggestions in this report focus on improving communication, strengthening information displays and reviewing operational processes to support a consistently positive experience for patients.

7. Recommendations

1. Patient information displays

The surgery may wish to review and reorganise patient noticeboards to ensure information is easy to find and kept well stocked.

2. Remove the outdated prescription box

It may be helpful to remove the unused, taped-up prescription box to avoid confusion.

3. Introduce a patient feedback box

The practice could consider providing a clearly visible feedback box so patients can share comments more easily.

4. Electronic calling system

Reinstating the electronic calling system could support smoother patient flow and reduce reliance on verbal announcements.

5. Reception layout

The surgery may find it useful to review the reception desk arrangement to improve visibility, privacy and communication.

6. Communication within consultations

Reflecting on how patients experience communication during appointments may help the practice maintain the positive and consistent

approach that patients value.

7. Digital prescription processes

The practice could explore whether digital options for frequent prescriptions, such as infant formula requests, can be simplified for parents.

Practice response

The practice has reviewed the recommendations and provided the following response.

Recommendation 1: Patient information displays

No response was provided by the practice in relation to this recommendation.

Recommendation 2: Reception layout

The reception area is located within the Health Care Resource Centre and operates within an allocated space. As such, the practice is unable to make structural changes to the reception layout.

Recommendation 3: Communication within consultations

The practice has confirmed that feedback relating to communication will be shared with clinicians at the next clinical meeting.

Recommendation 4: Digital prescription processes

The practice has advised that digital prescription requests, including infant formula prescriptions, can be made via the NHS App where proxy access has been set up for parents or carers.

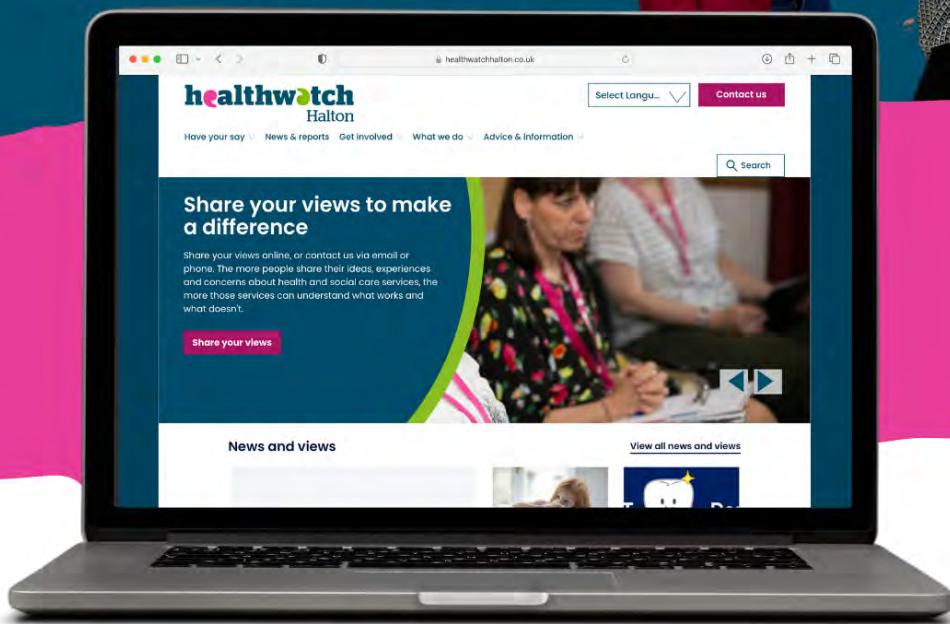
Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Halton thanks the management, staff and patients of Newtown Surgery for their cooperation and openness during this Enter and View visit.

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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.

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