

# Enter and View Report

**Rock Healthcare GP Practice**

**April 2026**



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# 2 Introduction

## 2.1 Details of visit

|                               |                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name of setting               | Rock Healthcare, GP Practice                                                                                  |
| Service provider              | Rock Healthcare, GP Practice                                                                                  |
| Date and time                 | 27 <sup>th</sup> April 9.30am                                                                                 |
| Authorised representative (s) | Alison Slater<br>Alan Norton<br>Sharon Allen (PA)<br>Caroline Sutcliffe<br>Andrea Wilson<br>Annemari Poldkivi |

## 2.2 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Bury would like to thank the Rock Healthcare GP practice manager, Sharon Smith, all staff members, patients and their families for contributing to this Enter and View visit, notably for their helpfulness, hospitality, and courtesy.

## 2.3 How we gathered the data

This report is based on our observations and the experiences of patients of Rock Healthcare including their relatives and staff we spoke to on the day of the visit.

**Disclaimer.** Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all patients and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.

# 3 What is Enter and View?

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out Enter and View visits. Local Healthwatch representatives carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families, and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists, and pharmacies. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service, but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation, so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch Enter and Views are not intended to identify safeguarding issues specifically. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit, they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies. If at any time an authorised representative observes anything that they feel uncomfortable about, they need to inform their lead, who will inform the service manager, ending the visit.

In addition, if any staff member wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer, they will be directed to the Care Quality Commission, where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern. However, this was not the case during the visit to Grundy as they are not regulated by the CQC although any concerns could be escalated to the Bury Council.

## 3.1 Purpose of visit

The purpose of this visit was to provide an independent view of the quality of care and overall patient experience at Rock Healthcare practice.

This visit formed part of Healthwatch Bury's Enter and View programme for 2026/27, which involves visiting a small number of GP practices across the borough.

As part of our statutory role, Healthwatch Bury carries out Enter and View visits to observe how services are delivered, speak with patients and carers, and gather feedback on their experiences. The aim is to support continuous improvement in local health services.

These visits are not inspections. They are intended to highlight good practice, as well as identify areas where patient experience could be improved. Healthwatch Bury works collaboratively and transparently with providers throughout the process.

## 3.2 Strategic drivers

Healthwatch Bury has been set up by the Government with several legislative requirements, which include:

1. Promoting and supporting the involvement of local people in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of local health and social care services.
2. Enabling local people to monitor the standard of provision of local health and social care services and whether and how local care services could and ought to be improved.
3. Obtaining the views of local people regarding their needs for, and experiences of, local health and social care services and, importantly, to make these views known.
4. Making reports and recommendations about how local health and social care services could or ought to be improved. These should be directed to commissioners and providers of those services, and people responsible for managing or scrutinising local health and social care services and shared with Healthwatch England.

(Section 221 (2) of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007)

Healthwatch have an additional statutory power to Enter and View providers to observe matters relating to health and social care services.

1. **Organisations must allow an authorised representative to Enter and View and observe activities on premises controlled by the provider so long as this does not affect the provision of care or the privacy and dignity of people using services.**

(The Local Authorities (Public Health Functions and entry to Premises by Local Healthwatch Representatives) Regulations 2013)

# 4 Overall summary

Rock Healthcare is an NHS GP practice based at Moorgate Primary Care Centre in Bury, providing services to around 10,000 patients. The practice originally operated across two sites until recently and works as part of the Bury Primary Care Network, delivering care through a multidisciplinary team and in partnership with wider health and care services.

Patients generally describe the practice as clean, well maintained, and easy to navigate. Facilities are easy to find, and the environment supports a safe and comfortable experience. However, some concerns were raised about seating in the waiting area and privacy at reception.

While some patients reported concerns about the loss of weekend appointments following the closure of its branch in Radcliffe, the practice continues to provide access to out-of-hours appointments through the Primary Care Network (PCN), including evening appointments between 6:30pm and 8:00pm and weekend availability. Patient feedback nevertheless indicates ongoing demand for flexible access options, particularly online, evening, and weekend appointments. The comments also suggest that greater awareness and promotion of the existing out-of-hours service may be beneficial, as some patients may not be fully aware of the evening and weekend appointments currently available through the PCN.

Patients reported that waiting times at the practice are generally short. However, patients reported inconsistencies in communication during waiting times and some queues at reception. Improving communication would help strengthen the overall patient experience.

Feedback about staff was generally positive, particularly in relation to clinical care. Patients reported feeling listened to, treated with respect, and well supported during their appointments. Feedback regarding reception services was more mixed, with some patients expressing concerns about communication and privacy. The practice has already taken steps to support patient confidentiality, including displaying information on how patients can request the use of a private room and purchasing a privacy screen in March 2026. These measures may help address some of the concerns raised and improve patient awareness of the privacy options available.

The practice demonstrates a strong commitment to supporting individual patient needs, with systems such as a triage process in place to help ensure patients receive appropriate and timely care. Staff described a positive working culture, although ongoing pressures related to demand and workload continue to impact capacity and access to services.

The branch closure in Radcliffe in 2025 has supported improvements in staffing levels and service delivery at the Moorgate site. While some patients reported that the closure reduced convenience, particularly in relation to weekend appointments, the practice continues to provide evening and weekend appointments through the PCN's out-of-hours service.

Overall, staff and Patients felt that Rock Healthcare provides a good standard of care, particularly in terms of clinical quality and patient support. Patient feedback suggests that further improvements to access and communication could help ensure a more consistent experience for all patients. The practice has several communication channels available, including its website, and access to out-of-hours appointments via the PCN. Increasing awareness of these services may help address some of the concerns raised by patients.

## 5 Methodology

The visit was prearranged with respect to timing, and an overview explanation of the purpose was also provided.

The Authorised Representatives (ARs) attended the GP practice on Monday 27th April, arriving at 9.30am and engaging with staff and patients between 9.30am and 12.30pm. A follow-up visit was conducted on Tuesday 23rd June to gather additional patient feedback, during which a further 10 patient experiences were collected.

On arrival, the AR(s) introduced themselves to the Manager, and the visit details were discussed and agreed. The Manager provided the ARs with a tour of the GP practice and introduced them to staff along the way. The ARs were subsequently afforded access to all parts of the GP practice for the duration of the visit.

The ARs used a semi-structured conversation approach in meeting users of the day care centre and staff members on a one-to-one basis, mainly in the communal lounges/areas. The checklist of conversation topics was based on the pre-agreed themes for the day care services visits. Additionally, the ARs spent time observing routine activity but were unable to observe the provision of lunch due to the pre agreed arrival time and. The ARs recorded the conversations and observations via hand-written notes.

Patients were approached and asked if they would be willing to discuss their experiences. The challenge in approaching patients was that patients were in a rush to leave after their appointment, there was a limitation and Healthwatch acknowledged the need for further patient feedback. The patient survey poster is displayed at the practice waiting area and the survey has been shared on our social media pages to collect more feedback from the patients.

A total of two patients of the GP practice and five staff members took part in these conversations on the day.

During the visits to Rock Healthcare practice, feedback was gathered from 5 staff members and 14 patients.

At the end of the visit, the Manager was verbally briefed on the overall outcome.

# 6 Summary of findings

## 6.1 Overview

Rock Healthcare is a long-established GP practice serving the Bury population from Moorgate Primary Care Centre, a modern, purpose-built healthcare facility located on Derby Way in central Bury.

Rock Healthcare provides primary medical services to approximately 10,000 registered patients and is part of the Bury Primary Care Network (PCN). The Practice Manager also holds a leadership role as Chair of Bury PCN, supporting collaborative working across local GP practices and community services. The practice works closely with BARDOC and PCN-aligned teams to support extended access, urgent care provision, home visits, and enhanced services.

### Regulatory context

Rock Healthcare is registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and was most recently inspected in March 2025, when it was rated “Good” overall across all five inspection domains: Safe, Effective, Caring, Responsive and Well-Led. The inspection report highlighted a positive learning culture, strong safeguarding arrangements, effective risk management, and good staff engagement, alongside a commitment to continuous improvement.

### Practice model and access

The practice operates core opening hours from 8am to 6.30pm, Monday to Friday, with additional extended access appointments available through the PCN, including evening appointments between 6.30pm and 8.30pm and weekend appointments. Urgent triage is provided each morning, with same-day urgent appointments offered where clinically appropriate. The practice also makes specific provisions for patients who may require additional support, including children under 12 and patients aged over 65, by offering longer double appointments to allow sufficient time for assessment, discussion, and care planning.

### Inclusivity and reasonable adjustments

The practice describes a strong focus on equity of access and the identification of patients with additional needs. Systems are in place to support people with learning disabilities, autism, sensory impairments, mental health needs, frailty, and complex conditions. Adjustments include longer appointments, interpreter services (including Language Line), accessible signage with Braille, hearing loop facilities, and automatic alerts on patient records to ensure staff awareness.

An Important Patient Register is maintained, covering groups such as carers, patients with dementia or learning disabilities, veterans, people at end of life, and those with safeguarding concerns. Named leads oversee these cohorts, and their needs are monitored routinely through team meetings and care planning processes.

### **Workforce and partnership working**

Rock Healthcare employs a multidisciplinary team, including salaried GPs, limited locums, an Advanced Nurse Practitioner, prescribing pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, nurses, reception and administrative staff, and PCN-funded roles such as physiotherapy support. Staff training is supported through structured online and face-to-face programmes, including safeguarding, equality and diversity, basic life support, and customer care. The practice holds specialist accreditations, including LGBT+ gold award recognition and Veterans' accreditation, reflecting its commitment to inclusive care.

The practice works in partnership with a wide range of external services, including mental health teams, Physio, community nursing, social care, voluntary organisations, and public health initiatives. Collaborative projects have included targeted screening awareness, immunisation promotion, and support for patients with highly complex needs in care settings.

### **Purpose of the Enter and View visit**

Healthwatch Bury undertook this Enter and View visit as part of its statutory role to understand how local GP services are experienced by patients, carers, and staff. The visit was informed by the Practice Manager's pre-visit questionnaire, with a particular focus on access, communication, inclusivity, patient experience, and the impact of recent service changes, including the branch closure in Radcliffe completed in June 2025. The findings presented in this report reflect observations from the visit alongside feedback shared during engagement with the practice.

## **6 1. Premises, environment and accessibility**

Most patients spoke positively about the environment at Rock Healthcare. Overall, the surgery is seen as clean, easy to get around, and generally accessible.

The majority of patients said the building is clean and well maintained, with most also saying that key areas such as reception, consulting rooms and toilets are easy to find.

The waiting area was generally described by patients as comfortable and safe, although a small number of respondents raised concerns about seating. Responsibility for the waiting room environment and facilities sits with NHS Property Services, which manages the building.

Some patients also raised concerns about privacy at reception, particularly regarding the possibility of conversations being overheard. The practice has implemented measures to support patient confidentiality, including displaying information about privacy options and installing a privacy screen for use when required in the waiting area.

Overall, the environment supports a positive patient experience. While some concerns were raised regarding comfort and privacy, the practice has taken steps to address confidentiality issues, and any changes relating to the building and waiting area are dependent on NHS Property Services as the building owner and manager.

## **6.2. Access to appointments and services**

Patient feedback regarding access to appointments was mixed. While around half of respondents reported finding it difficult or very difficult to obtain an appointment, others described the process as easy or expressed neutral views, suggesting that experiences vary. The practice operates a daily triage system, with urgent cases assessed and offered same-day appointments or appointments within 48 hours where clinically appropriate. Friends and Family Test (FFT) results are also reviewed monthly alongside appointment demand to monitor patient experience and access.

Some patients reported experiencing long waits for routine appointments, including one example of a wait of up to four weeks. The length of wait may vary depending on the type of appointment required and clinician availability, for example when a specific GP is on leave. Feedback also included concerns about the perceived loss of weekend appointments; however, the practice continues to provide access to evening and weekend appointments through the PCN.

Several patients expressed a desire for greater flexibility in how appointments are accessed, including increased availability of online, evening, and weekend appointments. In response to patient demand, the practice has increased the number of appointments available through the Accurx online system.

Overall, the practice has systems in place to manage demand and provide timely access to urgent care. However, patient experiences of accessing routine

appointments remain varied. National Patient Survey results were reviewed with staff in July, and an action plan has been developed. The practice is also encouraging patients to provide feedback through online reviews and a suggestion box, with ongoing review and discussion of improvement actions by the practice team.

### 6.3. Arrival and check in experience

The check-in process worked well for many patients, but not for everyone.

Just over half said it was easy to check in, but a large number said it was only sometimes easy, and a small number said they had difficulties.

Some patients reported experiencing queues at reception and felt that staffing levels were not always

sufficient during busy periods. The practice has a staff rota in place to help ensure appropriate reception cover throughout the day. Reception arrangements are also influenced by the shared reception space within the health centre, and a self-check-in system has now been introduced to help improve patient flow and reduce pressure at busy times. A small number of patients also raised concerns about accessibility at the reception desk.



Most patients travelled to the practice by car, with a smaller number arriving by taxi or on foot, suggesting that the location is particularly convenient for those using private transport.

Overall, the patient registration and arrival process appears to work well for most patients. However, activity within the wider health centre can sometimes affect the reception experience. The building accommodates a number of other services, some of which do not have dedicated reception staff available at all times. As a result, patients occasionally approach the Rock Healthcare reception team in error seeking assistance with appointments for other services. While staff endeavour to help where possible, this is outside the practice's control and can contribute to additional pressure at the reception desk during busy periods.

### 6.4. Waiting experience

Waiting times were generally good. Most patients said they were seen within 10 minutes, and almost all within 20 minutes.

However, communication during the wait could be better. Less than half of patients said they were kept informed, and many said they were not told about any delays.

This shows that while waiting times themselves are not a major issue, keeping patients informed would improve the experience.

## **6.5. Staff interaction and quality of care**

Feedback about staff interaction and the quality of care was overwhelmingly positive.

Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that staff listened to their concerns (10 of 13 respondents, 77%), treated them with dignity and respect (11 of 13 respondents, 85%), and clearly explained information about their care (12 of 13 respondents, 92%). Patients also reported feeling safe, supported, and reassured during their visit. However, a small number of respondents provided neutral or negative feedback across these areas, with between 1 and 3 respondents expressing less positive views, indicating that patient experience, while generally very positive, is not always consistent.

Feedback regarding reception services was more mixed. While 8 of the 13 respondents (62%) rated their experience as excellent or good, 5 respondents (38%) rated it as fair or very poor. Comments highlighted concerns around queues, privacy, and accessibility at reception, suggesting there is scope to improve consistency in the patient experience.

## **6.6. Personalised care and individual needs**

Most patients felt that their individual needs were met and that staff understood their situation.

However, a small number said this was only partly the case or not always met, suggesting there are some differences in experience.

Over half of the people who responded said they have a disability or long-term condition, which makes this feedback especially important.

Overall, the practice is doing well in this area, but there is still room to make experiences more consistent for all patients.

## **6.7. Overall experience and patient confidence**

Overall, feedback about the practice is positive. Most patients rated their experience as positive or very positive, although some said it was neutral.

Most patients said they would feel confident returning to the practice. However, a small number expressed reservations, with some indicating that they would not choose to return or felt they had limited alternatives. It should be noted that patients have a choice of GP registration across a number of practices in Bury, including another practice located within the same building.

Patients were generally positive about their interactions with GPs and the care they received. However, concerns relating to appointment availability and access to services were also reflected in comments about their overall experience. The practice has recently introduced a new triage system aimed at improving access and directing patients to the most appropriate care. As this is a relatively new process, it may take time for patients to become familiar with the system and for its full impact on patient experience to be realised.

Overall, patient experience was positive, with 77% of respondents rating their visit as positive or very positive. Nevertheless, 23% of respondents gave a neutral rating, suggesting that experiences vary and that there remains scope to improve consistency across all aspects of the patient journey.

## 6.8. Key strengths and areas for improvement

### Key strengths

- **Patients feel well supported by clinical staff**  
Feedback relating to clinical care was overwhelmingly positive. Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that staff listened to their concerns (77%), treated them with dignity and respect (85%), clearly explained information about their care (92%), and were approachable and reassuring (92%). Patients also reported feeling safe and supported during their visit.
- **The surgery is clean and generally easy to access**  
Patients rated the environment positively, with 85% stating that the surgery was clean and well maintained. Similarly, 85% reported that facilities such as reception, consulting rooms and toilets were easy to find and access, indicating that the practice environment supports a positive patient experience.
- **Waiting times at appointments are usually short**  
Once patients had arrived for their appointment, waiting times were generally brief. Almost two-thirds of respondents (64%) reported being seen within 10 minutes, while a further 27% were seen within 10 to 20 minutes. Only one respondent reported waiting longer than 20 minutes.
- **Many patients feel their individual needs are understood and accommodated**  
The majority of respondents felt that the practice recognised and responded appropriately to their personal circumstances. Eighty-three percent said their individual needs were supported, and 83% also reported that staff were aware of and respectful of their individual circumstances. The practice further supports patients through its triage system and the provision of longer appointments for patients who may require additional time.
- **Positive feedback about GP care and overall experience**  
Patients frequently identified seeing a GP as the best part of their visit, with comments highlighting positive interactions with individual clinicians. Overall, 77% of respondents rated their experience as positive or very

positive, and 83% said they would feel confident returning to the practice in the future.

## Areas for Improvement

Patient feedback highlighted several areas where the patient experience could be further enhanced. The practice has provided the following context and actions in response:

- **Improving access to appointments**  
Some patients reported difficulties accessing appointments and would like appointments to be available more quickly. The practice operates a triage system to assess patient need and ensure that urgent cases are prioritised appropriately.
- **Increasing awareness of flexible appointment options**  
Patients expressed an interest in greater flexibility, including online, evening, and weekend appointments. The practice advises that evening and weekend appointments are available through the PCN out-of-hours service, and practice staff contribute to these clinics. This suggests that further promotion of these services may help improve patient awareness of the options already available.
- **Enhancing privacy at reception**  
A small number of patients raised concerns about privacy when speaking with reception staff. The practice has taken steps to address this by displaying information for patients about privacy arrangements and purchasing a privacy screen. However, the reception area is shared with the main building reception, and the practice advises that requests to alter the layout have been raised with NHS Property Services, which manages the premises.
- **Keeping patients informed during waits**  
Some patients felt they would benefit from better communication while waiting for appointments. This feedback has been discussed with staff to help improve communication and ensure patients are kept informed where possible.
- **Reducing pressure at reception during busy periods**  
Feedback indicated that patients can experience queues and delays at reception during peak times. The practice notes that the reception desk is shared within the health centre and that the main building reception is staffed only until 4:00pm. As a result, patients attending other services in the building may approach the Rock Healthcare reception team for assistance, creating additional pressure that is outside the practice's direct control.

## 6.9. Conclusion

Overall, Rock Healthcare provides a good quality service, particularly in terms of clinical care and how staff treat patients.

Patients value being listened to and supported, and many have a positive experience when they attend appointments.

However, there are clear areas that need attention, particularly around getting appointments, communication, and the reception experience.

Addressing these issues would help make the service more consistent and improve the experience for all patients.



# 7 Staff feedback

We spoke to five staff members during the Enter and View visit to Rock Healthcare GP Practice in April, including reception, pharmacy, and clinical staff. Staff shared their experiences of working at the practice, the systems in place, and how patient care is delivered. Overall, feedback highlights a positive and supportive team culture, with staff committed to providing responsive care despite pressures on capacity and demand..

## 7.1. Working environment

Staff consistently described the working environment as positive, highlighting strong teamwork, supportive colleagues, and a culture in which staff work well together. Shared office spaces and approachable team members were identified as key strengths. The building was generally viewed as spacious and accessible; however, some staff raised concerns about the reception layout, privacy at the reception desk, and wheelchair access. The practice notes that the reception desk arrangement was inherited from the previous walk-in centre configuration, and any significant changes to the premises fall under the responsibility of NHS Property Services.

## 7.2. Staffing and continuity of care

Staff reported that the practice is generally well covered and that staffing levels have improved in recent years. Although some staff commented on pressures associated with workload and patient demand, the practice advises that staffing levels are aligned with NHS England whole-time equivalent (WTE) requirements for the registered patient population. Where required, locum clinicians are used to provide cover for annual leave and other absences, while the practice primarily relies on its salaried clinical workforce to support continuity of care.

## 7.3. Training and professional development

Staff described a mix of induction, mandatory training, and ongoing development opportunities, including safeguarding, fire safety, and role-specific training. Systems such as online platforms and regular updates support compliance. Staff also highlighted the use of patient feedback in learning and improvement, demonstrating a culture of reflection and development.

## 7.4. Patient care and support

The practice has a range of measures in place to support patients with additional needs, including access to interpreters, multilingual staff, hearing loop technology, and longer appointments where clinically appropriate. Staff described a proactive approach to recognising and responding to individual patient needs, including those relating to mental health, learning disabilities, and communication requirements. Communication with patients regarding delays

and appointment availability remains an important focus and has been discussed with staff as part of ongoing service improvement.

## 7.5. Communication and Teamworking

Staff reported that communication within the practice is generally effective and supported by regular day-to-day interaction, internal communication systems, and established management structures. Team members said they felt comfortable seeking advice and raising concerns when needed. While some staff identified opportunities to further strengthen communication between clinical and non-clinical teams, the practice has mechanisms in place to support this, including a designated clinical lead, monthly Learning from Incidents (LTI) meetings, and regular opportunities for concerns and feedback to be escalated through the Practice Manager.

## 7.6. Culture, support and wellbeing

Most staff reported feeling well supported in their roles, with a strong team approach and accessible management structures. Staff expressed confidence in raising concerns or suggestions, contributing to an open and transparent culture.

## 7.7. Access and service pressures

Staff highlighted that the practice offers multiple access routes, including online systems, telephone, and in-person appointments, which generally work well.) However, there are ongoing challenges in managing high demand, patient expectations, and appointment availability, particularly for routine care. Language barriers and patient understanding of appointment systems were also identified as occasional challenges.

## 7.8. Areas for improvement

Staff identified several opportunities to further enhance service delivery:

- **Reception layout and patient privacy** – Some staff felt that improvements to the reception environment could enhance privacy and confidentiality. The practice notes that the building is owned and managed by NHS Property Services, which is responsible for any significant changes to the premises.
- **Patient understanding of access arrangements** – Staff identified the need to further improve patient awareness and understanding of appointment booking and access systems. The practice is actively working in this area through an action plan, a local patient survey, and the use of patient suggestions gathered through its suggestion box and engagement activities during 2026.
- **Communication across teams** – While communication was generally viewed positively, some staff felt there were opportunities to strengthen information sharing between teams. The practice supports this through monthly team meetings, Learning from Incidents meetings, and regular

opportunities for staff to raise issues and suggestions understanding agenda items.

- **Managing capacity and workload pressures** – Although some staff highlighted workload pressures associated with ongoing demand, the practice advises that current staffing levels are appropriate for the size of the patient population and are aligned with NHS England WTE requirements. The focus therefore remains on making best use of available resources and continuously reviewing service delivery processes.



# 9 Recommendations

Based on the findings from this Enter and View visit, Healthwatch Bury makes the following recommendations to support ongoing service improvement at Rock Healthcare GP Practice:

## 1. Improve access to appointments

- Review current appointment availability and demand to improve timeliness of access, particularly for routine GP appointments.
- Explore options to increase capacity, including additional clinics or reviewing appointment allocation.

## 2. Strengthen online and flexible booking options

- Increase the availability and visibility of online booking options, including through the NHS App and practice website.
- Promote digital access routes more widely to patients, while continuing to support those who prefer or require traditional booking methods.

## 3. Improve communication during waiting times

- Introduce simple processes to keep patients informed about delays, such as verbal updates or display screens where appropriate.
- Ensure reception staff provide regular updates during busier periods to help manage patient expectations.

## 4. Review reception capacity and patient flow

- Review staffing levels and processes at reception during peak times to reduce queues and waiting times to check in.
- Consider ways to improve patient flow, including self check-in options or additional support at busy times.

## 5. Address privacy at reception

- Review the reception layout and processes to ensure patient confidentiality is maintained, particularly when discussing personal information.
- Promote the availability of private spaces for sensitive conversations.

**6. Improve patient understanding of services.** Provide clear and accessible information about appointment types, how to access urgent vs routine care and available services and options. This will help patients navigate the system more easily and reduce frustration.

Healthwatch Bury recognises the positive feedback relating to clinical care and patient support at Rock Healthcare. Implementing the above recommendations would help address key concerns around access, communication, and consistency, and further improve the overall patient experience.

# 10 Service provider response

Rock Healthcare's Practice Manager reviewed the findings and draft recommendations set out in this report. Her response is set out below against each recommendation, and against a number of the specific points raised in the findings.

## 10.1 Response to Recommendation 1: Improve access to appointments

The practice already operates a triage system through which patients requiring urgent care are seen the same day or within 48 hours; Friends and Family Test (FFT) results are reviewed monthly alongside patient demand. Over the past two years, the practice has introduced a full-time Advanced Nurse Practitioner and a locum prescribing pharmacist, both working five days a week, to increase appointment capacity. Locum GP sessions have been reduced and all GPs are now salaried, with the practice currently employing three female and four male GPs. The results of the national patient survey were reviewed with staff in July 2026 and an action plan has been developed; patients are also encouraged to leave reviews on Google, and a suggestion box and action plan are under review with the practice team. A new triage system is also being introduced, though it is recognised that patients may need time to adjust to the new process.

## 10.2 Response to Recommendation 2: Strengthen online and flexible booking options

The practice continues to provide out-of-hours appointments, including at weekends and between 6.30pm and 8.00pm, through the Bury Primary Care Network (PCN). Online appointment availability has increased through the Accurx platform, and information on all available booking routes, including online options, is published on the practice website. All staff are encouraging patients to book via Accurx as the new triage system is rolled out, and practice staff also work in the PCN's out-of-hours clinics that provide weekend and evening appointments on behalf of the practice.

## 10.3 Response to Recommendation 3: Improve communication during waiting times

The practice has discussed communication during waiting times with staff, including at a recent team meeting, and notes that the waiting room is a large space shared with other services in the building. A self-check-in system was installed in July 2026; however, the practice is unable to introduce display

screens or a call-in system due to staff security and door-access restrictions arising from the current building's layout.

## **10.4 Response to Recommendation 4: Review reception capacity and patient flow**

A staff rota is in place to ensure sufficient reception cover during busy periods, and the practice considers current staffing to be adequate for its size. A self-check-in system, ordered in March 2026, was installed in July 2026 to help manage patient flow. Reception is a shared desk with the main Moorgate building reception, which is staffed only until 4.00pm; after this time, patients and visitors attending other services in the building who are not registered with Rock Healthcare, and who have no reception of their own, are sometimes directed to the practice's desk in error. Practice staff try to assist where they can, although they do not have access to the appointment books of these other services. The Practice Manager has previously asked NHS Property Services, which owns and manages the building, to relocate the main reception desk to the ground floor so that it no longer shares space with the practice; this request was declined.

## **10.5 Response to Recommendation 5: Address privacy at reception**

A sign is displayed in reception inviting patients to request a private room, and a privacy screen was purchased in March 2026, with a further screen ordered following an incident in the reception waiting area. The practice has raised the reception layout, including privacy at the desk, with NHS Property Services, which owns and manages the building; NHS Property Services has not agreed to make changes despite these requests. The practice notes that responsibility for the waiting room and the wider building rests with NHS Property Services rather than with Rock Healthcare directly.

## **10.6 Response to Recommendation 6: Improve patient understanding of services**

Information for patients on appointment types and how to access services is available on the practice website. The practice is also working on this area more broadly through an action plan, its own patient survey, and ideas gathered via a suggestion box introduced in July 2026.

## **10.7 Staffing levels**

The Practice Manager confirmed that current staffing levels are in line with NHS England whole-time-equivalent (WTE) requirements relative to the practice's patient list size, and that a further increase in staffing and capacity is not considered necessary on this basis.

## 10.8 Communication and teamworking

The practice has a clinical lead based at the surgery, and staff feedback is discussed at monthly LTI meetings, with the Practice Manager also raising any concerns as they arise. Monthly practice meetings also give staff the opportunity to raise issues under Any Other Business, which the Practice Manager said is always encouraged.

## 10.9 Patient choice and registration

The Practice Manager noted that all patients have a choice of registration at a number of GP practices across Bury, and that another practice is located on a different floor of the same building.

## 10.10 Requests for clarification

In relation to the patient who reported waiting up to four weeks for an appointment (section 6.2), the Practice Manager noted that understanding the reason for the wait, for example whether it related to a particular GP being on leave, would help put this finding into context.

In closing, the Practice Manager confirmed that the areas identified for improvement in this report, particularly around access to appointments, communication, and the reception experience, are already being actively addressed, as reflected in the responses set out above.

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