

# Temple Sowerby Medical Practice

## Enter and View report

December 2025



# Contact details

**Service visited:** Temple Sowerby Medical Practice

**Address:** Linden Park, Temple Sowerby, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 1RW

**Telephone:** 017683 61232

**Website:** <https://www.templesoverbymedicalpractice.nhs.uk/>

**Service opening hours:** Monday to Friday, 8am - 6.30pm

**Registered Manager:** Jackie O'Neil

## Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness representatives:

Lisa Hart, Senior Engagement Officer

Leila Platt, Engagement Officer

## Date and time of our visit

**Date:** Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025

**Time:** 10.30am - 12.30pm

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank management, staff and patients for welcoming us, and taking the time to speak to us.

**Disclaimer:** This report relates only to the service viewed at the time of the visit and is only representative of the views of the staff and patients who met members of the Enter and View team on that date.



A poster publicising our visit

# Introduction

Our role at Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness (HWW&F) is to gather people's views and experiences, especially those who are under-represented, to give them the opportunity to express how they feel about a service.

The aim of an Enter and View visit is to gather views and experiences of patients relatives and staff of a service and observe the environment to assess the quality of the service. The team collate feedback gathered and observations made to compile a report, such as this one.

This was an announced Enter and View visit undertaken by trained, authorised representatives who have the authority to enter health and social care premises, announced or unannounced.

The report identifies aspects of good practice as well as possible areas of improvement. HWW&F is an independent organisation, so we do not make judgements or express personal opinions, but rely on feedback received and objective observations of the environment.

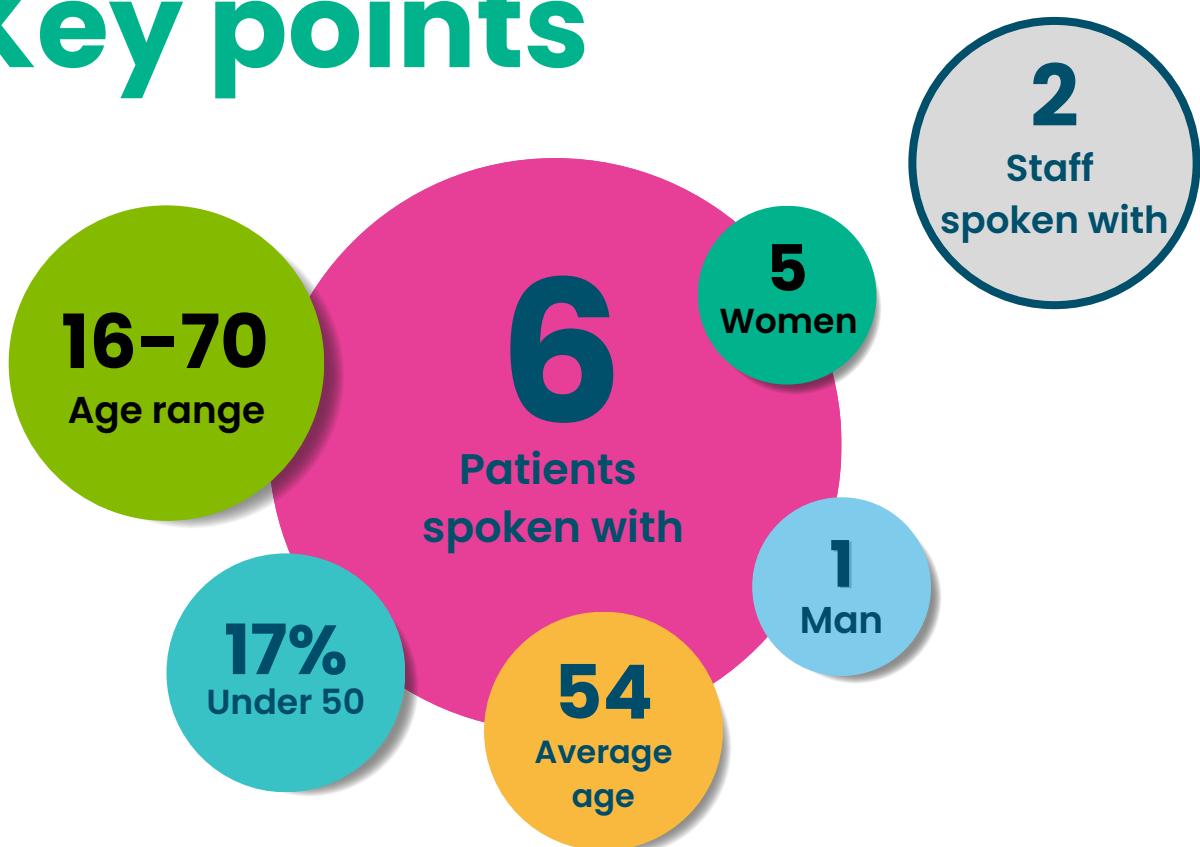
The report is sent to the service manager to give them an opportunity to respond before it is published on our website at  
**[www.wearepeoplefirst.co.uk/healthwatch-westmorland-and-furness/](http://www.wearepeoplefirst.co.uk/healthwatch-westmorland-and-furness/)**

Where appropriate, HWW&F may arrange a revisit to check the progress of improvements. This report will also sent to the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Healthwatch England, Westmorland and Furness Council, and North East North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB).



Reception area, and some of the information on display about our visit, for veterans, and support for men's mental health

# Key points



Had unpaid caring duties

**17%**



Had long term conditions

## Feedback themes

### Appointments

- Proactive service
- Easy to book
- On the day appointments

### Communication

- Good signage
- Text service praised

### Overall satisfaction

- Impressed
- Very satisfied
- No complaints

- Friendly administrative staff

# General information

Temple Sowerby Medical Practice is situated in the village of Temple Sowerby, a village in the Eden Valley on the A66. The practice provides services to registered patients from Temple Sowerby, Penrith, Appleby and surrounding rural areas.

There are 21 staff members: one partner, four salaried GPs, one nurse practitioner, two practice nurses, 2 healthcare assistants, one care co-ordinator, one phlebotomy assistant, three dispensary staff, four patient support team members, one general practice administrator and one practice manager.

As well as having an on-site dispensary, services and clinics include chronic disease management, new patient health checks, children's clinics, vaccinations, cervical screening, travel advice, contraception and minor surgery.

They receive regular feedback through the [NHS Friends and Family Test](#).

## 'On the day' service

From July 2025, the practice introduced an 'on-the-day' service to improve timely access for patients with acute or urgent clinical needs. The practice is particularly proud of this service and how it works.

Patients are asked to contact the surgery in the morning, where their request is triaged by a clinician or trained team member. Where clinically appropriate, patients are offered a same-day face-to-face or telephone appointment.

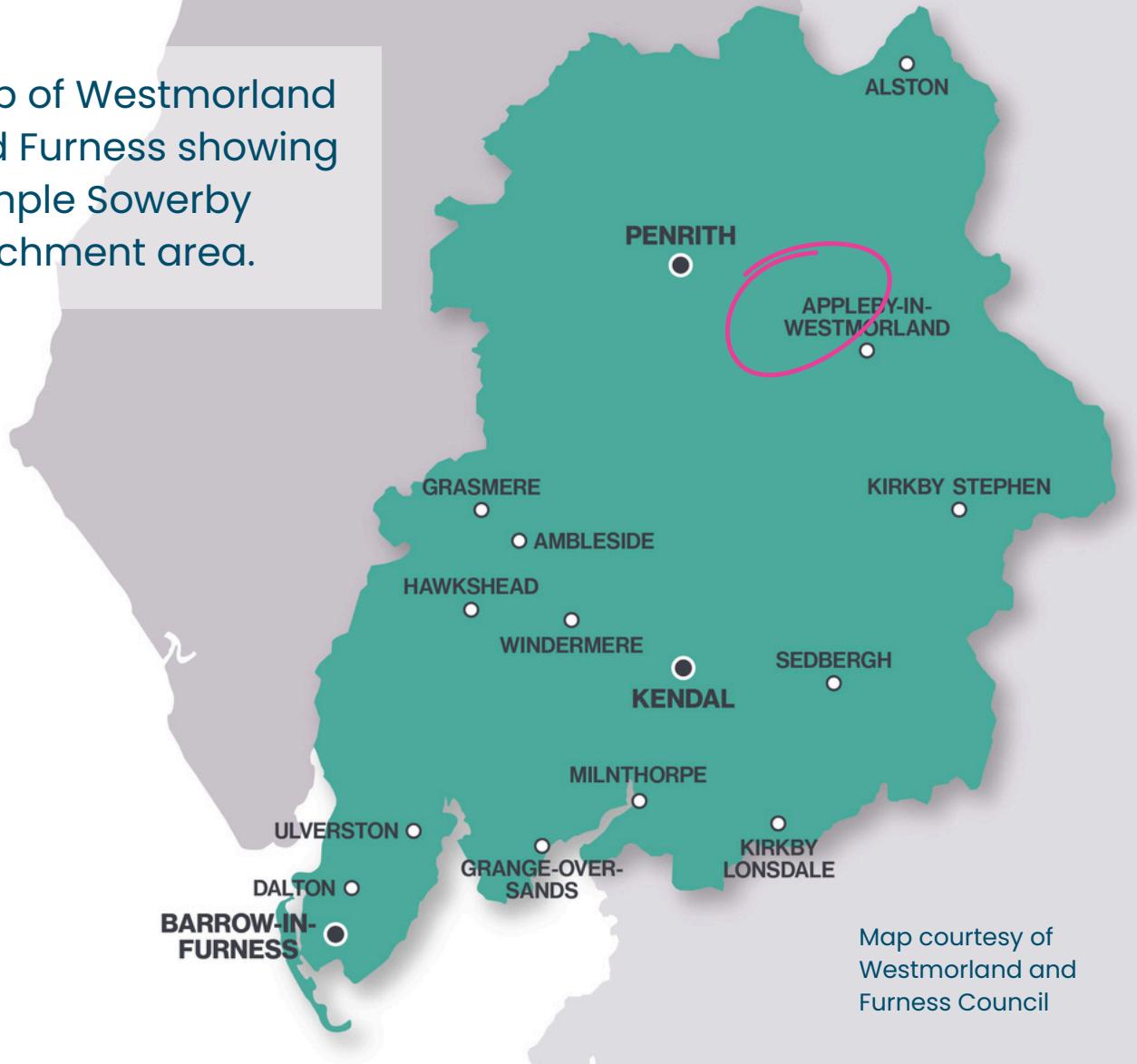
The practice says the model has improved responsiveness, reduced delays for urgent problems, and been well received by patients. For example, on the day of our visit a patient phoned at 8.30am, and was triaged and seen by 10.30am.

### Other things the practice is proud of:

- Women's health services, including menopause care with structured reviews, HRT management, and shared decision-making.
- Wellbeing services, offering support for mental health, lifestyle, and long-term conditions.
- Recognition as a Veteran Aware/Accredited Practice, providing tailored care and support for those who have served in the armed forces.

The practice feels that these services reflect their commitment to patient-centred care and innovation.

Map of Westmorland and Furness showing Temple Sowerby catchment area.



**Practice has 4,661 registered patients**

**Ages of patients at the practice**

Children and young people (0-24)	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
	2,340	2,321
Working age people (25-64)	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
	1,175	1,083
Older people (65+)	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
	589	622

# Our observations

Temple Sowerby Medical Practice offers a good standard of care from a well maintained, modern purpose-built building having several adaptations for patients with additional needs. Staff are courteous, professional and approachable, often knowing patients by name which fosters a welcoming, friendly atmosphere.

Minor improvements, such as dementia friendly clocks, toilet features and clearer information on patient voice could further enhance patient experience.

## Accessibility and general environment

The building is fully accessible, featuring automatic entrance doors. Most treatment rooms are located on the ground floor. A lift provides access to the first-floor healthcare assistant's room and a counselling room.

Ample parking is available next to the entrance, including two accessible spaces at the front of the building. However public transport options are limited, as there is currently no nearby bus service, and staff reported that local taxi availability is also restricted.

The practice is clean, bright, welcoming, and well maintained, except for a missing guard on an electric radiator in a consulting room corridor.



Disabled parking next to the entrance

## Reception and booking-in

A staffed reception desk is opposite the main entrance. Staff were professional, welcoming and helpful, and were familiar with many patients, often greeting them by name. This created a friendly and personal atmosphere.

Patients check in using a touchscreen or QR code near the entrance, with clear signage provided. Those unable to use the digital system can check in at reception instead. Patients are then personally called to their appointments.

Staff told us that a private space could be provided for confidential conversations if required, although this was not clearly signposted.

# Our observations

## Waiting area and patient engagement

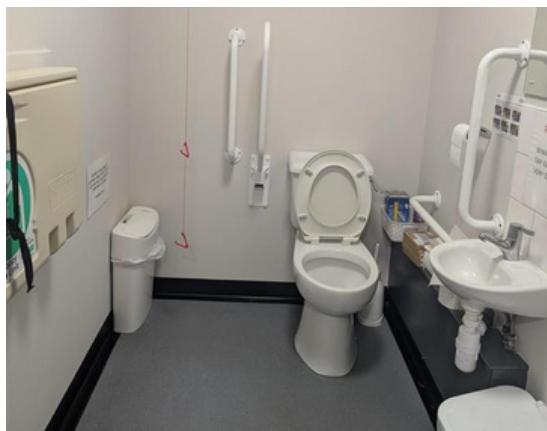
The waiting area is open and well-lit, featuring a mix of modern, easy-clean seating designed to accommodate patients with varying mobility needs and conditions. Notice boards, decorated with colourful bunting, display a broad range of practice updates and local health and wellbeing information, complemented by a TV screen sharing further details. The practice notice board also highlights its newly re-established Patient Participation Group.

We were informed by practice staff that the group meets quarterly to support patient engagement, provide feedback on services, and contribute to service development. Early discussions have focused on access, communication, and patient experience, and they look forward to sharing outcomes as the group continues to develop. Patients can provide feedback through a suggestions box or by following the displayed poster.

## Toilet facilities

There is a large accessible toilet with a safety pull-cord and transfer rails. The absence of a contrasting toilet seat may reduce usability for patients with dementia.

Hygiene facilities are appropriate, with both hot water and hand wash available. However, it was noted that the paper towel dispenser was empty, and some spare towels were placed above the dispenser out of reach for wheelchair users.



Accessible toilet. A contrast-coloured toilet seat and grab rail would make it more suitable for patients with dementia



Reception area noticeboard and TV information screen

# Our observations

## Reasonable adjustments and patient information

For patients who use British Sign Language (BSL) or have translation needs, we were told the practice has established protocols in place to support this, although we were not provided with specific information. These services are arranged through approved NHS interpreting providers and can be booked in advance for appointments to ensure patients can access care equitably and safely.

Currently the practice has no patients who have expressed a need for BSL or translation services. The practice does have a system of hearing loops installed for patients who use hearing aids.

## Quiet rooms

Staff confirmed that although there is not a specific quiet room available for patients with sensory sensitivities such as those with autism, ADHD or social anxiety, a room could be provided if needed. This would be flagged on patients' records once checked in. A chaperone is available upon request.

## Signage

Navigation throughout the surgery is clear with signage in large print, which is beneficial for patients with visual impairments. For patients with dementia the addition of picture signage could be beneficial but not critical as the small scale of the surgery makes it easy to navigate.



Services are clearly indicated throughout the building



Information on how to make a complaint, and ask for a chaperone at an appointment or examination

# Patient feedback

During our visit Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness undertook a short survey of patients there. Some filled in a written questionnaire while others competed it verbally. We received feedback from six patients.

The majority pf patients we spoke to agreed that they receive care and treatment that meets their needs, the administrative and clinical staff were praised, and the building maintenance, accessibility and cleanliness were all noted as good by everyone.

## Access to appointments

50% of those we spoke to said that their appointments had been made for them by practice staff. The remainder made their appointments over the phone or through an app. The practice highlighted something it is particularly proud of: offering same-day appointments when clinically needed.

**“Very proactive surgery. Within a day your message has been repsonded to and managed.”**

## Communication

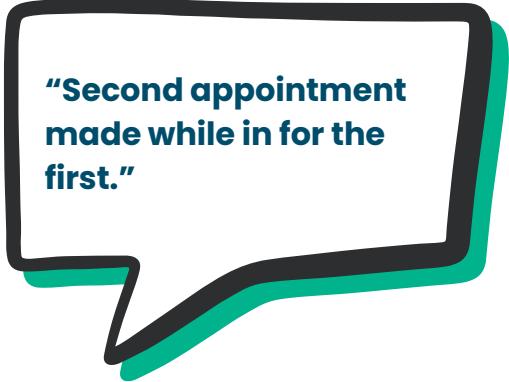
Patients gave positive feedback on communications between the surgery and themselves. Four out of six patients we spoke to approved of the use of text messages as a mode of communication between the surgery and themselves. One woman we spoke to said she found the text messages for results particularly helpful, as they could tell if they were normal or abnormal and then were given instructions of what to do next. The administrative staff were praised for being “very helpful on the phone”.

**“No difficulties on the whole. Getting an appointment is hard. Sometimes you need to be seen at home. Secondary care bloods should be done at the GP not the hospital it is a 30 mile round trip for us..”**

# Patient feedback

## Care and treatment

Five out of six of those surveyed said they received the care and treatment that meets their needs. One man said it was difficult to see a GP and that affected continuity of care. Otherwise, the surgery was described as “very proactive” as well as patients stating that they are “very impressed” with the ease to get an appointment and the timings.



**“Second appointment made while in for the first.”**

## Maintenance, accessibility and cleanliness

Everyone agreed that the premises are well maintained, accessible and clean, one patient said it was particularly easy to park. One concern was that it felt impersonal to be spoken to from behind a screen at reception, but they also recognised that this had been a national change to many premises since the pandemic.

## Additional services

No one surveyed said that they had used any additional services that the practice provides. One woman said she might have if they had been more widely promoted, or if she had been invited.

## Feedback and complaints

When asked how patients could provide feedback on their care at the practice, including making a complaint, there were a mixture of responses but none of the patients seemed to have full appreciation of all the methods.

Two patients did not know how to provide feedback and one of those said it would be difficult to make a complaint. A couple of patients said they would make contact via the app; another would go online. One patient would put the complaint in writing to the practice manager. None of the patients we spoke to knew about the Patient Participation Group.

# Patient feedback

## Other comments

The surgery is recognised as proactive. One woman said she enjoyed seeing cheerful faces when she came for an appointment. Two of those surveyed mentioning problems with getting bloods taken for secondary care.

Healthwatch is aware that in Eden GPs are no longer responsible for taking bloods for secondary care clinician appointments, and we heard from patients that it is a particularly long round trip (30miles) to Penrith to get these bloods taken at Penrith Hospital. Often people had to attend multiple times.

## Conclusion

There is high patient satisfaction with the quality of care at Temple Sowerby Medical Practice. The building is a credit to the service: modern, clean and accessible with a bright aspect. Appearance is important when providing a positive place to work and attend for appointments.

The practice is rural, and is not easily accessible by public transport, and has an elderly population: all challenges when providing a good general practice experience.

Patients particularly value the appointment system, with many securing same-day or next-day appointments, and the text service offered by the surgery.

This was a very positive visit to a surgery that is doing well for its patients.



# Recommendations

**There was much positive feedback on Temple Sowerby GP Practice, reflecting a service that is doing well to meet the needs of its patients. The building is a credit to the team that it houses. And the team balances well thought-through care with the personal touches which the community values.**

**There is opportunity to make recommendations as we would normally do following an Enter and View visit. We saw nothing major to change at the practice, but we have seven small – but big impact – recommendations that would improve the experience for patients.**

## 1 Formal complaints procedure clarity

Display clear information about how to make formal complaints and signpost external support services such as Healthwatch and NHS Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

**Reason:** Several patients were uncertain about complaint procedures. Simple information displays would address this knowledge gap while maintaining the practice's approachable culture.

## 2 Additional services provided by the practice

Promote what you are proud of – and how it can help support your patient population and access to services.

**Reason:** The practice is rightly proud of the additional services it provides, particularly: women's health, including menopause and HRT advice; wellbeing services including mental health and lifestyle measures; veterans support; annual flu and Covid-19 vaccine clinics. However, patients we asked did not seem as aware of these services as we would hope.

## 3 Dementia-friendly contrasting coloured toilet seats

The practice has a large, accessible disabled toilet but the floor, the toilet seat and the toilet body are all the same colours.

**Reason:** Contrasting colours are useful for those with sensory needs, in particular dementia.

# Recommendations

## 4 Promote the Patient Participation Group

The practice has recently set up a PPG but the details of this are not prominently displayed to patients at the surgery. We recommend promoting how people can get involved, what it is used for and when it meets.

**Reason:** Services are strengthened when the patient population is represented and communicated with on a regular basis.

## 5 Cover the heater on the wall

There is a cover missing from one of the heaters in the corridor. We recommend for patient safety that this is replaced.

**Reason:** Prevent potential injury to patients and staff.

## 6 Install a dementia-friendly clock

It is good practise to have a large, clearly visible clock in a prominent position, such as the waiting room or reception area.

**Reason:** This supports independence for those patients – and their carers – with dementia or sight loss.

## 7 Facilities to dry hands

We noted that the paper towel dispenser in the accessible toilet was empty and spare paper towels were positioned at the top of the unit. This would be out of reach for wheelchair users. We recommend that towels are checked on regularly and replenished inside the dispenser to support all patients to use them.

**Reason:** This enables all patients to maintain their own and the practice's hygiene standards.

# Provider response

Recommendation	Action from provider	Timeframe	Comments
1. Formal complaints procedure clarified	PALS and complaints poster now added to practice notice boards, and will be added to practice website by Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> January.	Completed	
2. Increased promotion of additional services provided by the practice	We are looking at promoting this on the reception notice board and aiming to change the topic on a monthly basis, starting with promoting HRT and menopause support.	Started	
3. Dementia-friendly contrasting coloured toilet seats installed	We are looking into this at the moment.		

# Provider response

Recommendation	Action from provider	Timeframe	Comments
4. Promote the Patient Participation Group (PPG)	Posters in waiting room and on website. We will add this to our Facebook page and promote through leaflets to patients.	Ongoing	
5. Cover the heater on the wall	Heater cover has now been reinstalled.	Completed	
6. Install a dementia-friendly clock	Yellow-faced clock has been purchased and installed.	Completed	
7. Paper towels put in proper dispenser	The hand towel dispenser has now been replaced.	Completed	



# healthwatch

Westmorland  
and Furness



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