

Carlisle Healthcare South Carlisle Enter and View report

28/07/2026



Contact details

Service visited: South Carlisle, Locke Road, Carlisle, CA1 3UB

Telephone: 01228 588121

Website: <https://www.carlislehealthcare.co.uk/>

Service opening hours:

- Mon, Tues, Fri 8am to 8:30pm
- Wed, Thurs 8am – 6:30pm
- Sat 9am – 1pm (pre-booked only)

Registered Practice Manager: Tracey Darrington

Healthwatch Cumberland (HWC) representatives:

Clandon Armstrong, Engagement Officer HWC

Caitlin Graham, Research and Data Officer HWC

Paul Wiggins, HWC Volunteer

Date and time of our visit

Date: Tuesday 28th July 2026

Time: 10am to 12pm

Acknowledgements

HWC 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.



[Image 1: Main Entrance]

Introduction

Our role at Healthwatch Cumberland (HWC) 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. HWC is an independent organisation, therefore we do not make judgements or express personal opinions, but rely on feedback received and objective observations of the environment. It is sent to the service manager to give them an opportunity to respond before it is published on our website at <https://wearepeoplefirst.co.uk/healthwatch-cumberland/>

Where appropriate, Healthwatch Cumberland may arrange a revisit to check the progress of improvements.

The report is also sent to the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Healthwatch England, Cumberland Council, and North East North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB).

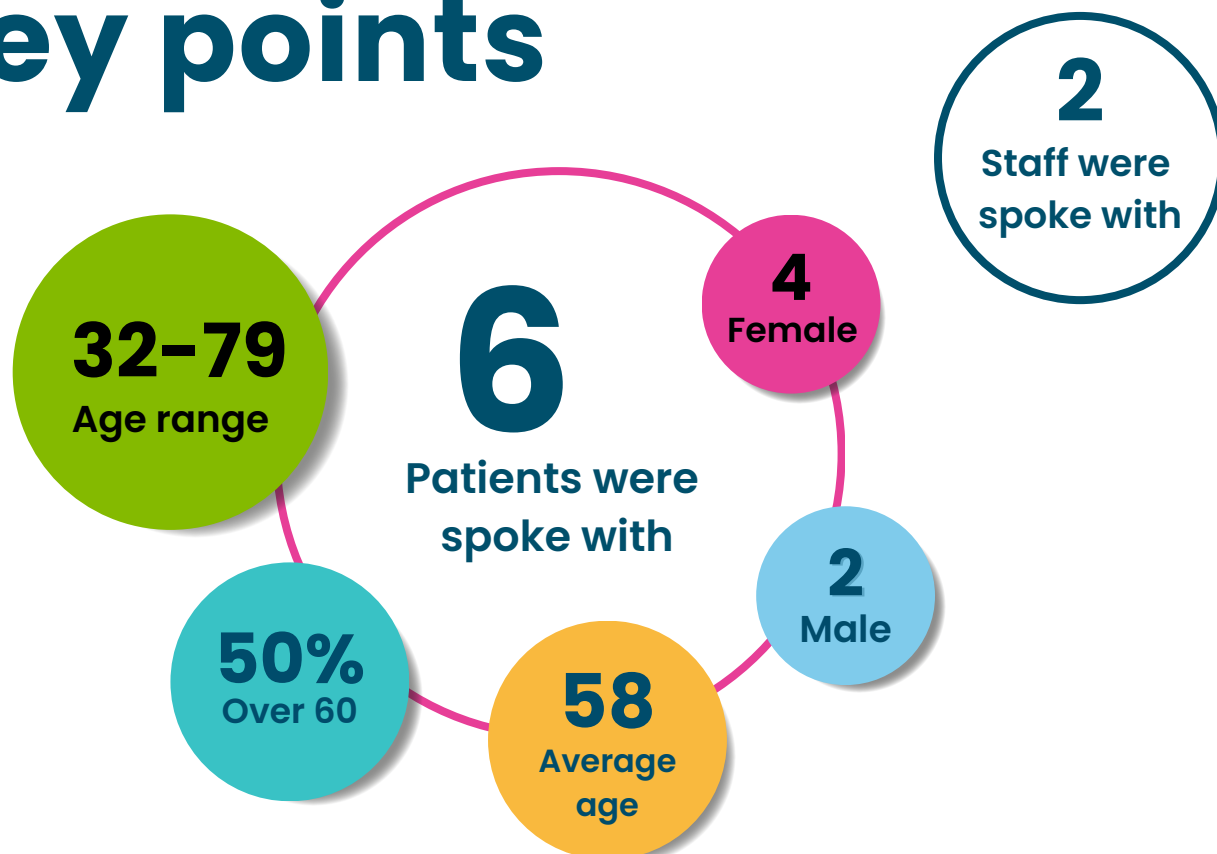


[Image 2: One of the ground floor waiting areas



[Image 3: Digital Check in and Signage]

Key points



50%
Have unpaid
caring
duties



83%
Have long
term
conditions

Themes

Appointments

- Mixed feedback on e-consult
- Easy to book

Communication

- Mixed feedback with a general positive view

Overall satisfaction

- Impressed
- Very satisfied
- Some difficulties



General information

Back in 2016, Carlisle Healthcare was formed through the merger of 3 practices: Brunswick House Medical Group, St Paul's Medical Centre and North Carlisle Medical Practice. Brunswick House is no longer part of Carlisle Healthcare and was closed following the opening of the Locke Road practice in 2022.

Patients signed up to Carlisle Healthcare may visit any of the three current sites: North Carlisle Medical Practice on Eden Street, St Paul's Square Medical Centre in the city centre, and South Carlisle on Durrannahill Industrial Estate on Locke Road. As per national guidance for Modern GP Access, all communications go through the e-consult process to prevent 'queue-jumping'. Those who telephone Carlisle Healthcare have an e-consult form completed by a receptionist.

Across the three sites, there are 172 staff with two operational managers below the practice manager.

Patient Population

There are 40,000 patients across the three sites.

Accessibility

The practice is best accessed by car. Recently, a council funded pilot bus service has been introduced to improve access from a set number of locations that brings patients to the main entrance. Prior to this, the nearest bus stop was a minimum 15 minute walk away with some terrain uphill on return.

There are 6 disabled parking spaces and a large free car park available.



[Image 4: Disabled Parking spaces]

About Carlisle

Carlisle is situated in North Cumbria, just south of the Scottish border, making it a key city for travel, trade and connectivity between England and Scotland. As the only city in Cumbria, Carlisle benefits from excellent transport links, including a major railway station, a central bus station with services across Cumbria and neighbouring regions, and easy access to the M6 motorway. These connections provide direct links to major cities such as Glasgow, Newcastle, Manchester and London, making Carlisle an attractive location for businesses, commuters and visitors alike.

The city has a diverse economy, with employment opportunities across a wide range of sectors. Key industries include healthcare, education, retail, logistics, manufacturing and professional business services.

Carlisle is home to the Cumberland Infirmary, as well as several schools, colleges and the University of Cumbria. The city also has a strong retail presence, with a mixture of national retailers, independent businesses and thriving local markets.

In addition, a large number of charitable and voluntary organisations play a vital role in supporting communities and delivering services across the city and surrounding rural areas.



Image 5: Carlisle Market Square

Age & Gender Distribution of Carlisle Healthcare Patients

Source: NHS Digital (July 2026)

Age Range	(Male)	(Female)
0-9	2094	1936
10-19	2547	2380
20-29	2226	2220
30-39	2846	2851
40-49	2612	2552
50-59	2584	2700
60-69	2539	2539
70-79	1905	2047
80-89	803	1195
90+	147	291

Our observations

The Healthwatch Cumberland team met with the Practice Manager Tracey Darrington upon arrival and received a guided tour of the site. Following this, the team then observed the practice from the 3rd floor down. The 2nd floor was not observed as this is privately hosted by Cumbria Health.

Accessibility and general environment

Upon arrival, we observed clear signage for the entrance and six disabled access parking spaces. The main doors were automatic, which is accommodating to a range of abilities. Digital sign in touch screens are located immediately in front of you as you enter and to the left, in a private room, there is a reception desk. There is frosted glass between the reception office and foyer which makes it difficult for staff to see anyone who might be struggling to use the touch screens.

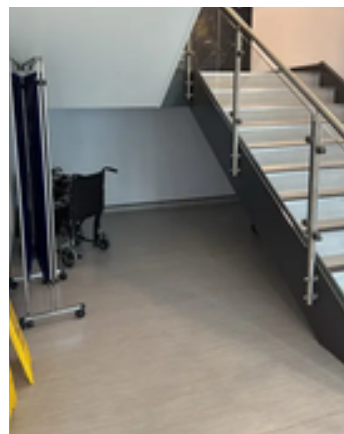
The practice is decorated with a natural colour scheme, including lots of green. This gives the practice a comfortable and clean feel, with a focus on wellness through choice of decor. Healthwatch Cumberland representatives noted significant difficulties reading signage due to poor contrast of the light green against light wood.

Reception and booking in

Digital sign in touch screens are located immediately in front of you as you enter and to the left, in a private room, there is a reception desk. HWC enquired about how patients speak to staff privately to which, it was said that the reception room door could be closed or patients may ask to go to a private room. However, this is not advertised.

There were numerous signs to indicate where to sign in and a significant number of seats. However, a lack of chairs to accommodate accessibility needs were observed such as those higher off the ground.

There were a couple wheelchairs available situated by the staircase, visible from entering the main door.



Our observations

Waiting area and patient information

There were multiple waiting rooms in the practice, with adequate seating for patients waiting for their appointments. There was an up-to-date notice board with suitable items displayed.

Support leaflets and posters were in waiting rooms including materials from Every Life Matters.

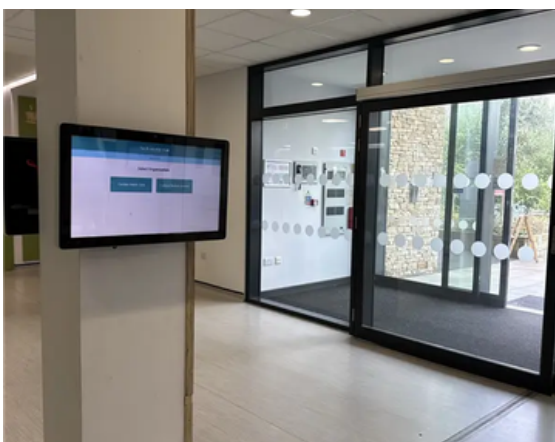
Healthwatch Cumberland observed patients being called for verbally by a member of staff.

Adaptations for specific needs

There are two lifts at the practice, located right next to the staircase for patients to reach other floors.

After speaking with patients and the practice manager, it is clear that adjustments where possible are accommodated for the best experience at this practice. For instance, the practice manager spoke to us around their Saturday opening hours to improve access.

Furthermore, a patient who has difficulty hearing told us about her phone at home that is adjusted to her needs that the practice always make sure to call as she struggles with the app.



[Image 6: Entrance



[Image 7 : Notice Board in one of the waiting areas

Patient feedback

The Healthwatch Cumberland team spoke with 6 patients during our visit, with a few spoken to across various waiting rooms.

Access to appointments

The general consensus of access to appointments was mixed with some having overly positive experiences and some noting their experience as 'extremely difficult'.

A patient told us they struggle with technology i.e. 'the e-consult' so can't use it. They tried telephoning and struggled to get through to someone.

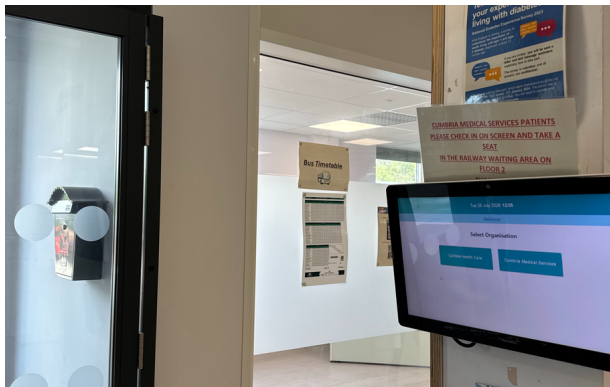
"It's fine when you can get a hold of someone."

"It's pretty good, with the variety. (Call/Text)"

Communication

The majority of those we spoke to were happy with the communication between the practice and themselves. One patient stated that they've had "no problems, they are marvellous".

Patients were happy with text reminders stating the process to be "very easy as I get a text reminder then phone".



[Image 8 : Digital check in and Reception area in background]



[Image 9 : Privacy sign outside of reception area]

Patient feedback

Care and treatment

Most patients were happy with the care and treatment received.

When asked if they were happy with the care and treatment they receive, one patient stated “not at all”. When asked why this is, they have had an ongoing problem causing them pain which nothing has helped so far.

“If I need something (MRI), I get sent for it”

“Oh definitely, I’ve been in all of them”. (referring to cleanliness of the practice)

Maintenance, accessibility and cleanliness

This practice has recently been piloting a bus service due to the difficulty of accessing the practice. The bus is timetabled hourly. Patients were happy with the cleanliness of the practice.

“It’s been made more accessible but the buses are only so often.”

Feedback and complaints

Healthwatch Cumberland asked if patients were aware of how to give feedback to the practice, including how to make a complaint if needed.

Two patients we spoke with were not aware of how to give feedback or file a complaint.

Two patients on the other hand were very confident with how to provide feedback: “Yes, I’m aware of it. I would call.”, “ Yes, email, phone or letter.”.

“I would just ring up and ask, I suppose.”



[Image 10: Disabled Parking Available

Conclusion

Overall, Healthwatch Cumberland had a pleasant visit at the South Carlisle premises of Carlisle Healthcare. Patients are generally happy with the care received with some concerns expressed that our recommendations have taken into account.

Staff Experience

Unlike other Enter and View visits, it is difficult for staff to have time to speak with us. At this visit, Healthwatch Cumberland spoke with the practice manager and a member of staff at reception.

When speaking with staff at reception about their experience working at Carlisle Healthcare, they told us they have been there 23 years and they are happy with what training they are offered and their ability to fulfill their role. They did highlight difficulties when staff are off work.

This member of staff said overall from their experience, they would recommend relatives to use this general practice.

“Holidays and sickness can pose a problem but we all pull together.”



Image 11: Signage on ground floor

Recommendations

1 Improve accessibility of signage throughout the practice

Review and update internal signage to ensure it meets accessibility standards, particularly by improving colour contrast between text and background and ensuring signs are easily readable by patients with visual impairments.

Reason:

Healthwatch representatives noted difficulties reading some signage due to the light green text against light wood backgrounds. Clear, accessible signage supports independent navigation and improves the patient experience.



Image 12: Signage with good visibility

(Good contrast of colours)



Image 13: Signage with poor visibility

(Poor contrast of colours)

2 Promote alternative appointment access routes and support for digitally excluded patients

Continue to promote non-digital routes for accessing appointments and ensure clear information is available regarding support for patients who struggle with the e-consult system.

Reason:

Feedback regarding access was mixed. Some patients reported difficulties using e-consult and experienced challenges contacting the practice by telephone. Providing reassurance and clear guidance on alternative access methods may help reduce barriers for those with limited digital skills.

3 Improve awareness of feedback and complaints processes

Increase promotion of the practice's feedback and complaints procedures through waiting room displays, the website, appointment reminders and patient information materials.

Reason: Some patients were unsure how to provide feedback or make a complaint.



4 Review waiting area seating options

Consider introducing a wider variety of seating within waiting areas, including higher-backed and higher-seated chairs to support patients with mobility difficulties.

Reason:

While there was ample seating available, Healthwatch representatives noted limited variation in chair types. More inclusive seating would better accommodate patients with differing physical needs.



Provider response

Recommendation	Action from provider	Timeframe	Comments
1) Improve accessibility of signage throughout the practice	"We will look at this issue"	6 Months	
2) Promote alternative appointment access routes and support for digitally excluded patients	See Comment		"The practice follows Government Modern GP Access policy. Patients can call the practice and we then input this into e-consult."
3) Improve awareness of feedback and complaints processes	See Comment		"There is a full explanation on the website. The front desk at all sites have leaflets explaining how to log a complaint."
4) Review waiting area seating options	"We have already purchased chairs as requested."	Immediate	"We have three types of seating that are fixed to the wall, high backed, the sofas and bar type stools. On request from a patient, we have no purchased some free standing chairs."

healthwatch
Cumberland

Healthwatch Cumberland
The People First Conference Centre
Milbourne Street
CA2 5XB



t: 0300 303 8567
e: info@healthwatchcumberland.co.uk

<https://wearepeoplefirst.co.uk/healthwatch-cumberland/>