

Windermere & Bowness Medical Practice

Enter and View report

25/06/26



Contact details

Service visited: Windermere Health Centre, Goodly Dale,
Windermere, LA23 2EJ

Telephone: 01539 445159

Website: <https://www.windermerehealthcentre.nhs.uk/>

Service opening hours: Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 8am – 6:30pm,
Wed 8am – 7:30pm

Registered Manager: Nick Jackson

Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness (HWW&F) representatives:

Steve Walmsley, Operations Manager

Rohan Morris, Sessional Engagement Team Member

Date and time of our visit

Date: Thursday 25th June, 2026

Time: 10am–12pm

Acknowledgements

HWW&F 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.



Introduction

Our role at Healthwatch Westmorland and Furness (HWW&F) is to gather people's views and experiences, especially those of communities which 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 or residents, carer, relatives and staff of a service and observe the environment to consider the quality of the service. This was an announced Enter and View visit undertaken by authorised representatives who have the authority to enter health and social care premises, announced or unannounced.

HWW&F 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. The report is sent to the manager for their opportunity to respond before being published on our website at <https://wearepeoplefirst.co.uk/healthwatch-westmorland-and-furness/>

Where appropriate, we may arrange a revisit to check the progress of improvements. The report is available to the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Healthwatch England and Lancashire South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (LSC ICB).

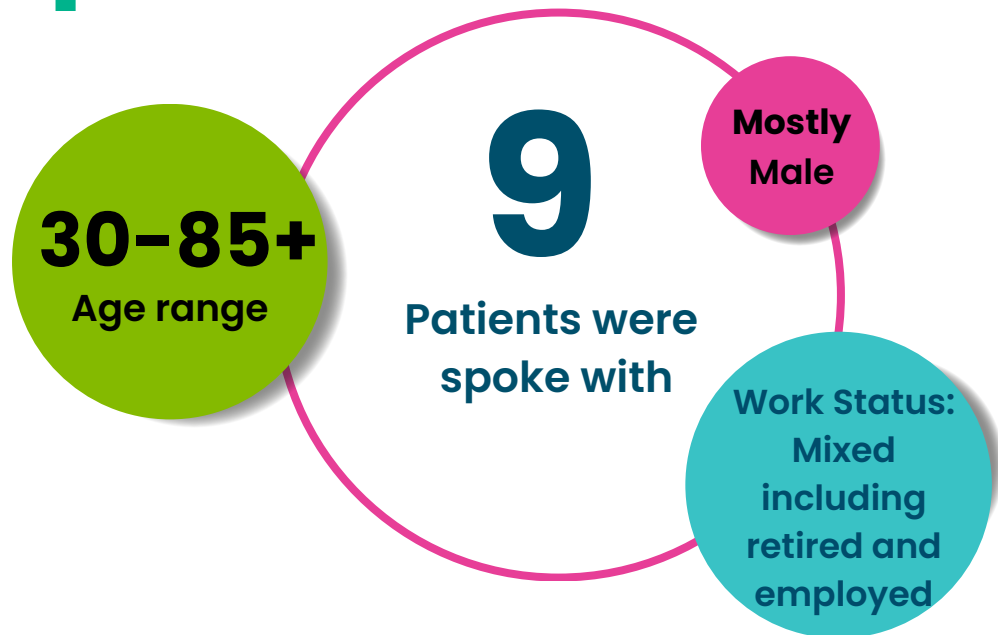


Entrance of practice with display board



External view of building

Key points



Some disabilities were identified

Majority had long term conditions

Themes

Appointments

- Easy to access
- Same-day appointments

Care & treatment

- Consistent care and support
- Staff are attentive and respectful

Communication

- Staff are approachable, informative and professional
- Regular follow-ups
- Kept informed

Feedback & complaints

- Awareness of formal feedback routines is not consistent
- "I have never been asked to give feedback"

General information

Windermere Health Centre serves the local community in Windermere and the surrounding area. The practice recently underwent a major refurbishment, significantly improving the facilities and environment for patients and staff.

Patient population

The practice serves a mixed population including working-age adults, families, and a significant proportion of older and retired residents. Feedback gathered during the visit indicates a notable number of patients managing long-term conditions, with many requiring regular monitoring and ongoing care.

Appointments

Patients are able to book appointments by telephone, in person at reception, or via the NHS app. The practice offers both same-day and pre-booked appointments, and patients reported being able to access appointments with ease in most cases. The practice also offers text message reminders and a phone feedback option for patients.

Additional services

The practice hosts a range of additional services, including retinal screening delivered on-site. An on-site pharmacy operates within the centre and was highlighted positively by multiple patients. Patients are referred to specialist services when required, including ophthalmology and mental health services. Patients noted a need for greater access to mental health and physiotherapy services locally.



"It has improved a lot since it was refurbished. It is excellent."

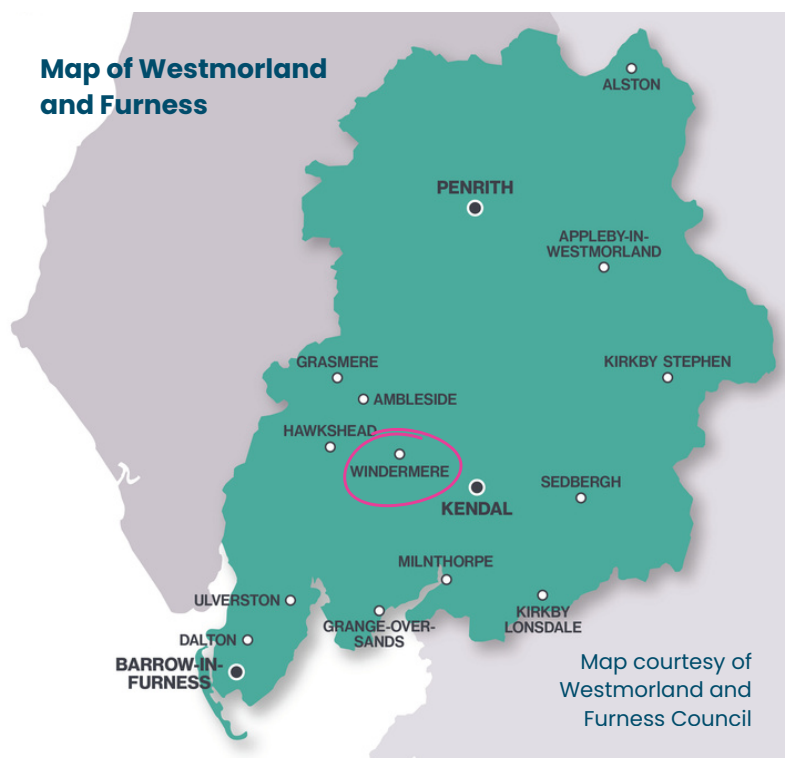
About Windermere

Windermere is in the Lake District National Park. The town lies approximately half a mile east of England's largest natural lake, Windermere, and forms a continuous urban area with Bowness-on-Windermere on the lakeshore. Windermere town had a resident population of 4,826 at the 2021 census, while the wider parish of Windermere and Bowness had a population of 7,676.

Windermere serves a largely rural population spread across the South Lakeland area, including surrounding villages, hamlets and farming communities. The landscape is characterised by lakes and fells – making it one of Britain's top tourist destinations – as well as winding rural roads that can make travel challenging, particularly during adverse weather conditions and peak tourist seasons.

This rural setting makes the provision of accessible healthcare services particularly important for local residents. Reliable appointment availability, effective communication and responsive patient services are especially valuable in a community where transport links can be limited for some patients and journeys to alternative healthcare providers may involve significant travel.

The practice serves a diverse population of permanent residents, older people, rural communities and seasonal visitors across the Lake District.



Ages of patients

Children and young people (0-19)

Female	Male
318	353

Working age people (20-59)

Female	Male
1132	1351

Older people (60+)

Female	Male
679	643

Source: NHS England Digital
accurate as of July 2026

Our observations

Accessibility and general environment

The practice website is clear and easy to navigate, with a well-structured top menu offering quick access to appointments, prescriptions, contact information, new patient registration, sick notes and test results. The site includes a news section that is kept current and appears mobile-friendly.

The building has recently undergone a major refurbishment which has significantly improved the environment. The updated floors are now matte and free of reflection to be more dementia-friendly. The building is clean and well maintained throughout. One loose step was observed at the front of the building which could pose a hazard. It is recommended that this is addressed promptly.

Public transport links are available locally, with the practice website directing patients to Traveline for journey planning. Sufficient parking is available, with patient and staff bays clearly marked by signs and lettering.

The stairs are clearly marked with yellow lines on the edge of each step to assist patients with visual impairments, and handrails are provided on both sides. A ramp is available for patients using prams and wheelchairs and was observed in use during the visit. However, patients were observed leaving mobility scooters near the entrance in a way that obstructed access; it is recommended that signage is added to direct patients to park mobility scooters clear of the entrance.

Room names are displayed above doorframes, which could be difficult to see for some patients. It is recommended that information is also placed at eye level on doors, designed to be visually accessible, and that people with visual impairments are involved in developing suitable signage.



Main entrance and practice noticeboard



Our observations

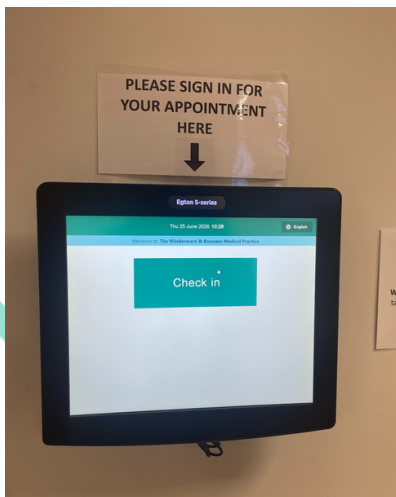
Reception and booking in

A clearly marked self-check-in machine is available at the entrance, next to the reception desk. Staff were observed helping direct patients to use the facility, although in some cases patients were checked in manually.

One patient was noted to have missed their appointment after not checking in on the machine; staff responded with understanding, rebooked the appointment at the earliest convenience, and clearly explained the check-in process to prevent a recurrence.

Staff were observed as being professional and courteous throughout the visit, providing clear advice and confirming that patients had understood any follow-up instructions. Staff were also observed explaining processes to help manage patient expectations, both in person and on the telephone.

A separate room is available should patients need to speak to reception staff privately.



Digital check-in system



Reception desk

Our observations



Waiting area and patient information

Seating is available in the waiting area, although all seats are the same design and height. It is recommended that additional chairs of varying sizes and heights are provided to better meet the range of patient needs, including chairs both with and without arms.

Noticeboards are up to date and contain a range of information including support for veterans, cancer care, local hospices, and explanations about the appointment-making process, including why staff ask set questions to direct patients to the right clinician.

The practice's Patient Participation Group (PPG) is active, with a dedicated PPG page on the website listing named members, the chair and secretary, and meeting minutes from 2022 through to 2026. Whether PPG information is also displayed physically in the surgery should be confirmed.

Patients are called by a staff member coming into the waiting area and calling their name. This was observed to be done politely and courteously, ensuring patients could travel to their appointments with ease.

Adaptations for specific needs

- **Accessible toilet:** Accessible toilets with disability adaptations including handrails are available. Hand hygiene measures are also available around the practice and in communal areas.
- **Communication support:** The practice uses a hearing loop and regularly uses translation services from Capita. The practice also uses the NHS app, text messages and a phone feedback option to communicate with patients.
- **Dementia-friendly features:** The practice has taken positive steps towards being dementia-friendly, including updating the floors to matte finishes to reduce reflection. However, picture signage was not observed to be present, and the practice should consider whether further adaptations would benefit their patient population.
- **Quiet space:** A quiet room is available if required.



Patient feedback

We spoke with 9 patients during our visit. The following themes emerged from their feedback:

Appointments

The majority of patients reported positive experiences when booking appointments. Several noted that appointments were easy to book by telephone or in person, and that same-day appointments were available when needed.

"I wanted a same day appointment, so I called in to get seen and they gave me an appointment [that day]."

"I find it really easy to get appointments at this practice. I usually get a response quite quickly on the phone. I haven't had any issues getting an appointment."

Communication

Patients generally reported strong communication from the practice, with staff described as approachable, informative and professional.

"They regularly schedule follow-ups and let me get answers to the questions I have."

"They know the processes very well and they make sure that I know when my appointments are."

A number of patients praised the approachability of individual staff members and noted that communication had improved since the practice was taken over under its current management.

Digital communication received mixed feedback. Some patients valued the NHS app for managing appointments, prescriptions and test results:

"It is good to check appointments, prescriptions and check results of tests. It saves me making phone calls to find out."

"I use the app – I live by it, due to the number of appointments I need to attend."

"They are always caring and friendly and talk to me like a person, not a number."





Others did not use the app, citing preference for telephone communication, lack of a smartphone, or connectivity issues:

“I don’t use the app – I only have a basic phone and I am not interested in learning how to use it.

“Phone calls work fine.” “Yes but poor service. I can’t use it a lot as data is an issue where I live.”

Care and treatment

Patients consistently reported that care met their needs and that staff were caring, attentive and respectful.

“They listen to me and are very compassionate, which is great when you have things that you must get off your chest.”

“They provide consistent care and support for my long-term conditions.”

Patients with long-term conditions particularly valued the responsiveness of the practice and the continuity of care, though one patient expressed a preference for greater continuity through being assigned a named doctor:

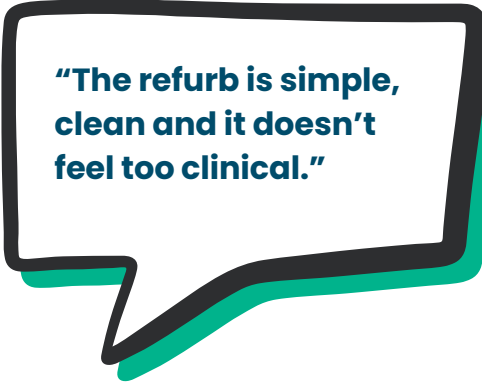
“I am very old school and I would prefer to have a permanent doctor assigned to me but I know that is not possible anymore, even though it would improve continuity of care. You build up a relationship with the doctor when you see them regularly.”

The practice was also commended for being proactive in identifying patient needs, for example by inviting patients for check-ups for ongoing conditions and making referrals for further care.

Premises

Patients were consistently positive about the environment following the recent refurbishment.

“It has improved a lot since it was refurbished. It is excellent.”



“The refurb is simple, clean and it doesn’t feel too clinical.”

Feedback and complaints

Awareness of how to provide feedback was mixed. Some patients were aware of the phone line feedback option and text message surveys, while others had not been asked for feedback or were unsure of the process:

"I can phone the GP and leave feedback as there is a 'leave feedback' option on the phone line."



"I have never been asked to give feedback."

This suggests that awareness of formal feedback routes is not consistent across patients, and clearer communication about how to provide feedback would be beneficial.

Other comments

Patients highlighted a number of additional strengths:

- The on-site pharmacy was praised by multiple patients as an excellent and accessible service.
- The practice was commended for working effectively under pressure while maintaining high standards of professionalism and compassion.
- Patients noted that the service has improved significantly since it was taken over under its current management.

"The new service at the pharmacy needs to be mentioned here – they are a wonderful provider and an asset to the centre."

"I think they are under quite a lot of pressure but you wouldn't know it from how compassionate and professional they are."

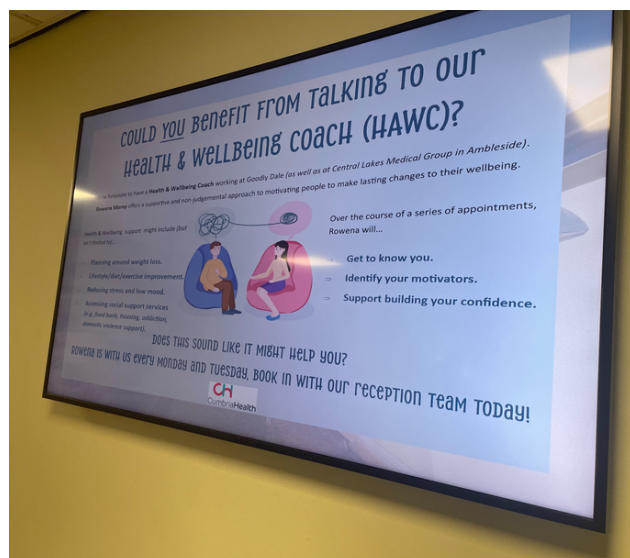
Patients also raised concerns about the availability of mental health and physiotherapy services in the local area, noting that greater provision would benefit the community.

Conclusion

Windermere Health Centre is a well-regarded, patient-centred practice that has undergone significant improvement in recent years. Patients consistently described staff as approachable, professional and compassionate, and many valued the responsive and caring approach to both routine and complex care needs.

The practice demonstrates clear strengths in its recently refurbished environment, its accessible and informative website, and the quality of care provided by clinical and administrative staff. The on-site pharmacy was highlighted as a particular asset to the centre.

While most patient experiences were positive, some areas for improvement were identified, particularly around physical signage, seating variety, mobility scooter access, and the visibility of feedback processes for patients. Addressing these areas would further strengthen an already well-performing service.



Recommendations

The following recommendations have been formulated based on observations of the environment and feedback gathered from patients.

1 Address the loose step at the front entrance

The loose step at the front of the centre poses a potential hazard to patients. This should be repaired as a priority.

2 Add signage for mobility scooter parking

Patients were observed leaving mobility scooters near the entrance in a way that obstructed access. Clear signage directing patients to park scooters safely away from the entrance would improve safety.

3 Review physical signage throughout the building

Room names are displayed above doorframes, which may be difficult to see for some patients. Information should also be placed at eye level on doors. People with visual impairments should be involved in designing accessible signage.

4 Provide varied seating in the waiting area

All seating in the waiting area is currently the same design and height. Providing chairs of varying heights and sizes, both with and without arms, would better meet the range of patient needs.

5 Improve visibility of the feedback and complaints process

Patients had inconsistent awareness of how to provide feedback. Clear, visible information about formal and informal feedback routes – including non-digital options. This would help ensure all patients are aware.

6 Confirm whether PPG information is displayed in the surgery

The PPG is active and well documented online. Confirming whether this is also represented with a physical noticeboard in the surgery would increase patient awareness.

7 Consider further dementia-friendly adaptations

While the refurbishment has made improvements, further adaptations such as picture signage could further support patients with dementia or cognitive difficulties.

Provider response

Recommendation	Action from provider	Timeframe	Comments
Address the loose step at the building entrance.			
Add signage for mobility scooter parking.			
Review and improve physical signage throughout the building.			
Provide varied seating heights in the waiting area.			
Improve visibility of feedback and complaints processes.			
Confirm whether PPG information is displayed in the surgery.			
Consider further dementia-friendly adaptations.			

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