

Experiences of trauma-informed practice within GP settings

**168 Medical Group and Clevedon
Medical Centre**

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Introduction

This report is based on patient experiences at two GP surgeries in North Somerset. We conducted Enter and View visits at 168 Medical Group and Clevedon Medical Centre in mid-April 2026 to speak to management and staff at both surgeries about being trauma informed.

You can find out more about our Enter and View powers and read these reports on our website: www.healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk

At the same time, we ran an online survey to capture the views and experiences of patients. We heard similar feedback about both surgeries, so our findings have been combined for this report.

We received 1564 responses from patients attending Clevedon Medical Centre and 1572 responses from patients attending 168 Medical Group. We asked questions about knowledge of choices, waiting rooms and reception interaction, and about experiences with healthcare professionals.

Waiting areas

We asked if patients were aware that they can ask for the following when booking an appointment:

- Requesting a longer appointment
- Seeing the same doctor or healthcare professional for continuity of care
- Choosing the gender of your doctor or healthcare professional
- Written questions
- Attending with a chaperone
- Attending with a friend or family member
- Knowing a healthcare professional will ask for your consent at all stages

The options that people are most aware of are being asked for consent at each stage of a procedure, being able to attend with a family member and friend, and requesting a chaperone.

The other options are less well-known about, with individuals with a long-term condition or disability slightly more likely to have heard about them.

Overall, awareness of key options is mixed and many are not well communicated to patients.

Over 70% of respondents stated, because of their confidence and trust in the surgery, they did not feel anxious or nervous waiting for their appointments, with particular mention of the fish tank at Clevedon Medical Centre and the natural light at 168 Medical Group.

Individuals with long term-health conditions and those aged between 18-24 stated they felt a little anxious to some degree in the waiting area before their appointment.

“I find it stressful waiting. I overthink things.”

“I get scared the GP will be annoyed with me for wasting their time if it’s a minor issue”

Experience with reception staff

There were a lot of compliments about reception staff. The most common theme was that reception staff were friendly, approachable and helpful.

“We are so lucky with the reception staff. I’ve never had such excellent dealings until we moved to Clevedon. They are the epitome of what GP receptionists should be.”

“I always have found them extremely helpful, courteous, and very professional and I thank them for this.”

A small number of individuals said that reception staff made them feel uncomfortable. Their comments often described staff as dismissive or rude, with some patients feeling like an inconvenience.

“I find some, not all the reception team, off hand and at times rude.”

“Nearly always polite but quite understand when they are not, given some of the difficult patients they have to endure!”

Experiences with healthcare staff

Over 90% of respondents said that they felt listened to and were made to feel comfortable by healthcare professionals.

“The GP listened intently and believed my symptoms which is the first time that has ever happened to me”

“The GP I saw last couple of times was really lovely, she listened to all my worries and took appropriate action. She followed up next time and asked again if I needed to share something else with her. She is the most professional, kind and gentle doctor, credit to the surgery”

A small number of people said they felt their health concerns were not being taken seriously, and they experienced a lack of continuity of care.

“Doctors never offered/planned follow up appointments”

“My symptoms have not been addressed despite multiple appointments.”

Patients felt healthcare professionals understood how past experiences may have affected them and felt that during their appointment they were able to take their time and go at their own pace.

“No pressure to make way for the next patient”

“I was in there for 40 minutes while they talked everything through with me and put a plan of action in place”

Of the few who did not feel they were able to take their time, many put this down to time constraints of the appointment system stating:

“I always feel that time is limited at a GP appointment and I’m conscious about being quick for them”

Over 70% of respondents felt they had sufficient information or clarity on next steps following their appointment.

“Referred to research a right to choose pathway. Not what I expected but left with enough information to get started.”

Individuals with a long-term condition or disability were slightly less likely to respond ‘yes’ when asked about whether they were given sufficient information or clarity on next steps following their appointment.

“My symptoms have not been addressed despite multiple appointments.”

Conclusion

Overall, the findings from these two surveys indicate that Clevedon Medical Centre and 168 Medical Group are delivering a positive experience for most of its patients, particularly in terms of interactions with healthcare professionals and reception staff. High levels of trust and satisfaction are evident, with many respondents highlighting the kindness, attentiveness, and professionalism of staff. The strong sense of confidence patients feel in the care they receive is a significant strength.

A few recommendations that would greatly improve patient experience are as follows:

- Awareness of available appointment options would suggest a need for clearer and more proactive communication about patient rights and available support, such as longer appointments or the ability to submit questions in advance.
- A notable minority – particularly younger patients and those with a long-term condition or disability – report feeling anxious prior to appointments. This anxiety is often linked to concerns about health outcomes or difficulties communicating effectively during consultations. Targeted campaigns such as

clear expectations about appointments, may help to further improve patient experience.

- Some patients report discomfort when discussing personal information in an open environment at the reception desk. Although this is acknowledged as a structural limitation rather than a staff issue, it remains an important consideration for service improvement. Exploring ways to enhance confidentiality could significantly improve patient comfort.
- Time constraints associated with standard appointment lengths are a concern for some individuals. A small proportion of patients said that they feel dismissed or rushed, indicating that consistency in patient-centred communication could be an area for development.



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