



Enter and View

Abbey Medical Centre, Dagenham
20th November 2018

healthwatch
Barking and
Dagenham
Delivered by LifeLine Projects

Contents

- 1 Introduction 3
 - 1.1 Details of visit 3
 - 1.2 Acknowledgements 3
 - 1.3 Disclaimer 3
- 2 What is Enter and View? 4
 - 2.1 Purpose of Visit 4
 - 2.2 Strategic drivers 5
 - 2.3 Methodology 5
- 3 Summary of findings 7
- 4 Service Provision 8
- 5 Findings 9
- 6 Recommendations 13
- 7 Service provider response 14
- 8 Appendix A 16

1 Introduction

1.1 Details of visit

Details of visit:	
Service address	Abbey Medical Centre 1 Harpour Road Barking IG11 8RJ
Service provider	Abbey Medical Centre
Service area	GP Service
Date and time	Tuesday 20 th November 2018
Authorised Representatives	Richard Vann (Lead Officer) Sadia Akhtar (Authorised Representative) Patrick Allanah (Authorised Representative)
Author of report	Richard Vann
Announced/Unannounced	Unannounced
Contact details	Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham Lifeline House Neville Road Dagenham RM8 3QS Richard.Vann@healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk 0800 298 5331

1.2 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham would like to thank the staff and service users for their contribution during the visit.

1.3 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 service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time of the visit.

2 What is Enter and View?

- The Health and Social Care Act 2012 allows local Healthwatch to carry out Enter and View visits.
- Healthwatch representatives are recruited and trained to carry out visits to observe specific settings and give feedback.
- During a visit information is gathered through the experiences of service users, their relatives, friends and staff to collect evidence of the quality and standard of the services being provided.
- 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.
- The visits enable us to share examples of best practice and make recommendations where improvements are needed from the perspective of people who experience the service first-hand.
- An opportunity to give authoritative, evidenced-based feedback to organisations responsible for delivering and commissioning services.
- The visits assist local Healthwatch to alert Healthwatch England or the Care Quality Commission to concerns about specific service providers of health and social care.

If you are interested in finding out more about Enter and View visits or Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham, then please visit:

www.healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk

2.1 Purpose of Visit

Our purpose was to engage with patients who access the services at Abbey Medical Centre, so we could ask them to fill out a questionnaire about their experiences. The main areas being looked at were:

- Access to services
- Care and treatment
- Staff conduct

2.2 Strategic drivers

This visit was undertaken as a direct result of feedback received from the local community.

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham have received consistent feedback from local people about access to GPs in the area. Key points raised have included access to urgent GP Appointments, only speaking to the GP about one issue at a time and staff conduct.



One of the practices highlighted was Abbey Medical Centre. Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham undertook the visit to listen to patients and gain an insight into how the service works for them.

2.3 Methodology

Before the visit

- Enter and View Representatives undertook a pre-meeting to inform and train students on how to approach local people in the community; why the questionnaire was being used and what purpose it has in gathering information that Healthwatch needed.
- We went through the questions in the questionnaire and role played on how we will approach and give the questionnaire to the patients. The questions were used as prompts to speak to patients on their experience with their GP service.
- A date was set for the visit. The visit was unannounced; therefore, prior notification was not sent to the service provider.

Day of the visit

- Healthwatch arrived at 9.30am at the premises. We spoke to the Practice Manager and introduced who we were and why we were there. The manager had heard of Healthwatch.
- The practice manager and the representatives went to the corner of the waiting room where we discussed local changes and issues affecting the practice.
- Patients were approached at random and asked if they would complete a questionnaire; either by themselves or with a representative helping them - to find out their experiences and views. They were encouraged to ask any questions.

To enable respondents to give their views without the fear of their personal details being shared or having an impact on the services they receive, Healthwatch explained the following as part of the Enter and View visit:

- Participation is voluntary, and individuals are not required to answer any questions that they do not want to.
- Participation or non-participation does not affect access to the service patients are currently receiving
- Information collected is kept strictly confidential.

A Healthwatch leaflet was provided giving contact details should people wish to get in touch with the team after the visit.

3 Summary of findings

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham representatives undertook the visit to speak with patients about their experiences of using the services at Abbey Medical Centre.



We spoke to 13 patients – the feedback evidence gathered from speaking to the patients during the visit showed that some improvements have been made at the practice.

According to patients booking in, the next routine appointment was easy, and a self-service screen is available so patients can book-in themselves and do not need to wait for the receptionist.

There was a sign indicating that a hearing loop was available to use and also a notice screen that read out the patient's name when it was their appointment. This was facing the seating area and was easy to see.

Furthermore, there was lots of seats available for the patients to sit down on.

However, areas of improvement patients told Healthwatch about and that were observed during the visit include:

- Patient's waiting a long time for their appointment time to see the GP doctor.
- Sharing information with patients about the out of hours' services
- Telephone lines not being answered quickly enough or patient's not being able to get through.
- In one of the waiting area toilets, facilities were not hygienic- there was no hand wash and no paper towels.

4 Service Provision

General information

The GP Practice is set within a medical Centre, located in a residential area close to houses and roads. The waiting room had many seats available and accessible facilities.

Opening times are

Monday: 8.00am to 8.00pm

Tuesday: 8.00am to 8.00pm

Wednesday: 8.00am to 8.00pm

Thursday: 8.00am to 6.30pm

Friday: 8.00am to 7.00pm

Saturday and Sunday: Closed

- Healthwatch authorised representatives observed that there was a notice board which displayed a wide variety of information including what medications can no longer be prescribed and the out of hours' service at the walk in centre, plus information on strokes, dementia and cancer.
- There was also a leaflet rack which displayed a number of booklets on different health issues.
- There is a touch screen available for patients to book in for their appointment.
- There was also a prescription box available near the front of the reception desk.
- There was also a sign showing that there is a hearing loop available at the GP.
- Also, there is a response box available for patients to give their feedback on the GP.

5 Findings

Routine and Urgent Appointments

The practice manager told Healthwatch representatives that their connected GP service at Vicarage Field Medical Centre was closing down in December 2018, due to a compulsory redevelopment of the area. The patients from there would be dispersed to register with other local practices and the GP redeployed back to Abbey medical centre.

At Abbey medical centre, most of the patients we spoke to complained about the long period of time they had to wait until they were called in to see the Doctor. This was also witnessed by the health watch representative who saw that some patients had to wait around half an hour before they were seen.

Patients were generally positive about their experiences when dealing with the staff, but some indicated it depended on which receptionist they spoke with. Most patients Healthwatch spoke with said that the service was good and reliable - there were no issues regarding the service.

Patients indicated that there were a number of methods available at the practice for them to book either routine or urgent appointments. A breakdown of the responses is shown in the tables below:

How long do you have to wait to book a routine appointment?

Feedback shows that waiting times to book a routine appointment varied. Most of the Patients that the Healthwatch Representatives spoke to said that it took them around one week or less to wait for a routine appointment, but A few of the patients said they had to wait two or more weeks.

Routine appointments

	Less than one week	1 week	1-2 weeks	2+ week
How long the patient had to wait to book a routine appointment.	4	6	2	1

Patients told representatives that their preferred method to book a routine appointment was by phone and in person, however when booking by phone it was a challenge to get through.

How easy it is to get through to make an appointment using the phone

	Yes	No	Sometimes
How easy it is to get through by phone	7	2	4

Urgent appointments

	Yes	No	Sometimes
Were patients able to make urgent GP appointments	7	1	5

A few people were unaware that they could book appointments online. Patients were either not aware that the online option was available or did not wish to use it. Some indicated they have not got the time to set it up, or was not sure how to use it. The most preferred option to book appointments is by telephone or in person.

Booking appointments

Options	Telephone	SMS/text message	In person	Email	Other (Online)
Available options	10	4	4	1	5
Patients' preferred options	12	1	4	1	0



Signposting

During the visit representatives asked patients if practice staff directed them to other services when the practice was unable to offer an urgent appointment. From the 13 patients we spoke with on the day:

- Six said the reception staff gave them advice about other health services they could access
- Four patients had not been offered any information at the time of trying to make an appointment
- Three patients said sometimes.

Healthwatch representatives asked patients if the surgery had any information about the 'out of hours' services within the practice, 10 people said yes and 3 said no.

Healthwatch representatives asked patients if the surgery offered a good range of morning, evening and weekend appointments:

- Nine people said yes
- Four said no

Online Booking System

On the day of the visit, seven patients told representatives they had not used the online booking system and six people said they had.

Patients who had not used the online booking system, had various reasons:

- Three people said they did not know this option was available,
 - Three people said they did not wish to use the system as they struggle with computers
 - One person was not sure how to use it.
 - One person told representatives they did not have access to the internet.
- Two parents said they have used the online system for themselves but can no longer use it for their children, they felt this was an area that needed to be looked into as they find the online system a good way of accessing GP appointments.

Consultation time with the GP

During the visit, of the 13 patients who shared their experiences with us:

- Nine said the GP only dealt with one issue per appointment
- Four patients indicated this was not the case.

Healthwatch representatives also spoke to patients about the amount of time they had with the doctor and if they felt this was adequate:

- 11 patients felt they were given enough time to discuss all issues,
- Two patient said "sometimes"

Waiting at the practice to be seen by the doctor



Feedback indicates that 50% of people wait at the practice between 30 minutes and one hour. The other 50% wait around 5-10 minutes.

People commented that sometimes they have been asked if they want to wait as the GP is delayed or make another appointment.

Staff conduct

Patients said this all depended on which staff member they spoke with, whilst some were good others were not as helpful. Some of the feedback indicates that staff do not always come over as caring or helpful to patients.

Healthwatch observed one receptionist who came across as much more pleasant than their colleague.



Booking in for appointments

The practice has a touch screen for patients to book in for their appointments. Patients said they found this useful as they did not need to wait in line to book in with the staff members - this saved time.

Representatives observed that patients who did not see their name displayed on the screen were called in by the doctor. Around 2 hours later, the electronic voice reader read out the name and room number displayed on the screen, which was helpful as we observed a patient sitting in a seat where there was a pillar in front of them blocking their view of the screen.



6 Recommendations

Patients acknowledge that some recent improvements had been made:

- It is easier to make a GP appointment
- the practice now has a touch screen booking in system
- there is health information on the leaflet racks.

There are some areas of concern which have been highlighted within the report and Healthwatch recommends the following:

Recommendations for the practice:

- Although there is information available on the screens about the GP HUB, the text on the last screen containing the contact information needs to be bigger as the font size is too small to read at a distance.
- There is some good information displayed on the board, however the information about the Walk in Centre can easily be missed. Clear and colorful information about the out of hours' services patients can access should be displayed on the information board.
- Encourage patients to use the online system and advertise the system more clearly on the display.
- The receptionists should attend customer service training which may assist them to communicate with patients in a friendly manner, including those patients who are frustrated and unhappy.
- Patients highlighted that there was no privacy when discussing private and personal information in the reception area. The practice should put a notice up informing patients that a private space is available should they wish to have a discreet conversation.
- Waiting for a receptionist to answer the phone was an issue highlighted during the visit, Healthwatch recommend that one receptionist is dedicated to answering the phone during busy times in a timely way to reduce delays for patients.
- The practice should include in their policy, the behaviours that patients can expect when dealing with staff.

7 Service provider response

The practice responded to and commented on the visit report as requested, by 25th January 2019.

Dear Richard,

As requested please see attached report with practice response. Should you need any further information please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you

Regards,
Dimple Patel
Asst. Practice Manager
Abbey Medical Centre
1 Harpour Road
Barking
Essex
IG11 8RJ
Tel: 020 8090 8106

Patient's waiting a long time for their appointment time to see the GP doctor.

- We acknowledge that there are delays.

Sharing information with patients about the out of hours' services

Telephone lines not being answered quickly enough or patient's not being able to get through. Very frustrating!

In one of the waiting area toilets, facilities were not hygienic- there was no hand wash and no paper towels.

- We value your feedback. It was especially helpful that the review was unannounced and ensures that we received an unbiased feedback. Please note the following points:
- Opening hours: Our opening hours on Mon, Tue, Wed are 8am to 8pm; Thurs 8 am to 6.30 pm;
Fri 8 am – 7pm
- We will explore how to change the font on the screen display for GP hub information; meantime we will change our display for patient waiting area and display this information more clearly.
- We regularly send our front staff for customer services training and will continue to do so.
- We are in the process of reconfiguring the reception area and soon we will have two receptionists and one manager in the reception area during peak times. We have recently changed our telephone provider service so that call waiting is less onerous for the patients. We also regularly check our phone answering time data and feed this back to our receptionists. GP National Survey 2019 shows 68% of respondents find it easy to get through to this GP practice by phone. This is higher than Local (CCG) average: 64%. We will continue to try and improve on this based on HW survey. Our current online user patient population is 18% and we are trying to increase it.

- National GP survey 2019 also shows that 68% waited 15 minutes or less after their appointment time to be seen at their last general practice appointment, which is better than Local (CCG) average: 61%. However, we will continue to try and improve on this based on HW survey.
- We apologize unreservedly regarding the toilet facilities on the day. It is most unfortunate that we had to remove the blue disposable towel roll from patient toilets because this was being repeatedly disposed of in the toilet causing blockages, despite polite requests. We will be looking to install an air dryer.

8 Appendix A

The following questions were used by Healthwatch representatives to gather responses from patients during the visit.

- How long have you been a registered patient with this surgery?
- When you contact the surgery for an appointment, how easy is it to get through and get a response that you are satisfied with?
Always
Sometimes
Never
- When making an appointment, how long were you told you would have to wait for the next available one?
Days
Weeks
- How well were you treated by the staff at the practice?
Poorly
Good
Very Good
Excellent
- If you needed to see a GP urgently, would you know where to go?
Yes
No
Where would you go? (Please use the space below)
- In your view, does the time you get for appointments deal with your needs in a satisfactory way?
Yes
No
If 'No' please say why
- Have you tried to access your GP services on-line?
Yes
No
If yes, how well did it work for you?
- Overall, what is your experience of using services and dealing with staff at this practice?
Poor
Fair
Good
Very good
Excellent

• What methods are available at your practice to book a GP routine appointment?

Telephone
Text
In Person
E-Mail
Other

• How long do you have to wait to book a routine appointment?

Less than 1 week
1 week
1 to 2 weeks
2 + weeks

• What methods are available at your practice to book a GP urgent appointment?

Telephone
Text
In Person
E-Mail
Other

• Please use this space to make any comments in regards to urgent appointments:

• If your unable to get an urgent appointment, does the surgery support you by signposting you to other services?

Yes
No

• Is there information within the surgery about out of hours' services?

Yes
No

• When you attend an appointment, does your GP limit your discussion to one health issue each visit?

Yes, No