



Enter and View

Grove Surgery, Chadwell Heath
14th November 2017

Lifeline
Projects

healthwatch
Barking and
Dagenham

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham is administered by the **FaithAction** National Team on behalf of **Lifeline**

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1 Introduction

1.1 Details of visit

Details of visit:	
Service Address	Grove Surgery 200-202 Chadwell Heath Lane Romford Essex RM6 4YU
Service Provider	Grove Surgery General Practice
Date and Time	14 th November 2017 - 10.30am to 12.30pm
Authorised Representatives	Richard Vann (Lead Officer) Val Shaw (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 patients and staff at Grove Surgery for their help and 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. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/28/section/221>

- 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 so that good practice can be shared.
- The visits enable Healthwatch to share examples of best practice and make recommendations where improvements are needed from the perspective of people who experience the service first-hand.
- Healthwatch is given an opportunity to give authoritative, evidence based feedback to organisations responsible for delivering and commissioning services through enter and view observations and feedback from service users.
- 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, becoming an authorised representative for Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham, then please visit:

www.healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk



2.1 Purpose of Visit

The purpose was to identify concerns raised by the public which prompted the visit, and whether they were consistent with the experiences of other patients using the same service. Concerns raised included issues relating to:

- Appointment Waiting Times
- Consultation Times
- Staff Conduct

2.2 Strategic drivers

This was an unannounced visit that was undertaken as a consequence of feedback and concerns raised about services at this GP surgery. We engaged with people from the local community and residents from Barking and Dagenham.



The following areas were highlighted:

- **Waiting times for a doctor's appointment could be up to 4 weeks.**
- **The consultation with the doctor was rushed and not long enough.**
- **Reports of rude, unprofessional behaviour from reception staff.**

2.3 Methodology

Before the visit

- Before the visit, Healthwatch representatives discussed how to conduct our approach and how to engage with patients at the premises, as well as considering any issues or factors that might arise during the time there.
- The feedback we received from the residents we engaged with was used to develop a questionnaire which reflected the issues they had told us about. When we spoke with patients at the surgery about their experiences of using the service, representatives were on hand to support them to complete the questionnaire themselves (This can be found in Appendix A).

Day of the visit

- Healthwatch arrived at 10.30am and the lead representative went to speak with the reception staff; introduced who we were, why we were there and ask if we could speak with the practice manager.

- The practice manager was not available to speak with until part way through the visit. However, the lead representative spoke with the reception staff and was advised that it was ok to engage and speak with patients. When the practice manager introduced herself to the lead representative she confirmed that it was ok to continue the visit.
- Patients were approached randomly and asked if they wanted to complete the questionnaire by themselves or with a representative helping them and answering any questions they might have.
- Where individuals were worried about their feedback affecting the service they might receive, it was explained to them that participation as part of the Enter and View visit 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 they are currently receiving
- Information collected would be kept anonymous and only used to summarise what the outcomes from the visit are.
- If a patient wanted to get in touch with us after the visit, contact details were exchanged.



3 Summary of findings

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham representatives were at the surgery for 2 hours; we engaged with a total of 18 patients that attended during that time.



Evidence gathered from the visit shows that all the patients we spoke with had been registered with the practice for more than 2 years.

The overall picture for patients' experiences of using the service and interacting with practice staff, was a positive one. The majority of responses about being well treated by staff were good or better.

Most patients said the waiting time for their routine appointments was up to 2 weeks; with some waiting a couple of days, while others said they had waited up to 4 weeks.

The majority of patients indicated that the time they got to speak with their doctor about health matters was satisfactory. There were 6 patients who indicated that the time they had to consult with the doctor was not satisfactory.

Here are some of the comments from patients;

- **Length of Appointment:** 'The doctor didn't take the time to be thorough; he rushed through it!'
- **Appointment Time:** 'The appointments could be a bit more convenient for us at times when I need them; not when the GP decides they should be available.'
- **Interacting with the Staff:** 'All the staff that I have had dealings with here are very good, always helpful and polite.'



RECEPTION



4 Service Provision

General information

- The practice has patients from Barking and Dagenham registered with them and it is these who raised the concerns. The premises are situated in a populated area of Redbridge, in a row of houses resembling former residential properties. At the time of the visit, there were 2 doctors and a practice nurse on site.
- There is limited parking for patients around the area in the local streets. A bus route runs past the surgery for those who can use public transport.
- A toilet facility is provided for patients to use; it has signage indicating that it is suitable for disabled people.
- There are a number of moveable seats for patients to use in the waiting area.
- A variety of information was displayed around the surgery on the walls.
- There was a TV screen on the wall. At the time of the visit, it was not in use so we were unsure of how it is utilised.



- The Surgery has nearly 8,700 registered patients.
- Opening times for the surgery are: 9am to 8pm Mon-Wed and 9am to 6.30pm Thurs-Fri.
- Notices were on display advising patients of where they can get an appointment outside of surgery hours to see a doctor.

5 Findings

Getting through to the surgery by telephone to make an appointment.

Most patients said that they were always able to get through on the telephone to make an appointment. However, there were 5 patients out of the 18 we spoke with who said that sometimes it was difficult to get through when they tried to ring up to get an appointment.

The waiting times for the next available appointment.

From the 18 patients that we spoke with, 15 of them told us they waited for two weeks or less; the other three indicated waiting times of up to four weeks. There were 3 patients we spoke with who told us that on occasions, when they needed an emergency appointment during surgery hours, they were able to get one straight away.



How well patients were treated by the staff at the practice.

All the patients with the exception of one who we spoke with, indicated that the way they were treated by the staff on the reception area was good; others said it was very good or excellent. The patient who said they had been treated poorly - when this was clarified with them - said they were not happy with the treatment they received from the doctor.

Where patients said they knew where they needed to go urgently for evening and weekend appointments.

During the visit we found information displayed on the walls advising patients of what to do if they needed an urgent appointment during evenings and weekends. The majority of those we asked said they knew where to go at those times. There were four patients who said they did not know.

Some comments people said about this;

“I would go to the A&E casualty”

“If I needed any other help or advice I go to Pharmacy”

“Off to the local hospital or ring NHS111”

“Urgent Care Centre at King George or Queens hospital”



Having long enough time to consult with the doctor about health matters.

When asked about this, the majority of patients indicated they had enough time to discuss their health issues. There were however, six patients who didn't get a satisfactory length of time to consult with the doctor about health issues they needed to discuss.

Accessing GP services online.

Most patients told us they did not use this way to access their GP appointment service. The two patients that did, both indicated that it worked well for them. Of the other 16 patients who didn't use this method, one told us that they don't have use of a computer.

Patients' overall experiences of using this service.

When asked about their view and overall experience of using services at this GP practice, nine people indicated that it was very good or excellent; six said it was good; two said fair and one said it was poor.

These are some of the comments people had to say;

"I don't have any problems with the service here, I have always managed to get an appointment when I have needed it and the doctor is always very helpful"

"If my problem gets any worse, I go to the Walk-in-Centre at Upney Lane Hospital."

"I was feeling pretty sick and unwell; I requested a blood test but the doctor said there was no need because I looked fit"

Other Findings from the visit

Access into the surgery waiting area is through a short corridor from the entrance which was adequately accessible for wheelchairs and people with push chairs.

WAITING ROOM



In the middle of the waiting area there were free standing chairs for patients to sit down. When the surgery got busier and the seating full, patients stood and waited at the back of the waiting area.

When the surgery got very busy and patients went to speak with reception staff, it was apparent that there was very little privacy to discuss personal issues and details without other waiting patients overhearing them.

Anyone with a pushchair or a wheelchair could have difficulty moving around the limited space in the waiting area.

There is a lift installed for people to get upstairs – a sign on the door indicated that it was wheelchair accessible. When representatives looked inside the lift, it had items in there which would have blocked wheelchair users being able to use it.

A door off the waiting area was clearly signed for a toilet that patients could use. Although an individual with mobility difficulties could use the facility, it was not fully accessible for a permanent wheelchair user.



On the wall in the corridor into the surgery was a secure box for patients to put their repeat prescription request into. At the time of the visit this was full and where other patients had to try to force their prescription into it, there was concern that some could fall out with other patients' personal details on. It was not clear during the visit when this box was emptied.

Situated directly above the reception desk was an automated board that displayed the patients' names when they were next up for their appointment. However, owing to the way the seating was set up, it meant that some patients wouldn't be able to see if their name was being displayed. Representatives did observe the doctors coming out to call people for their appointments.



There was no visible evidence that the practice provided cleansing hand gel for patients to use when they come into the surgery.

A zero tolerance policy was on the wall that set out the expectation for the behaviour of patients towards staff; there was no information on this about what behaviours patients could expect from staff. There was a clearly displayed compliments and complaints procedure that gave advice and contact details.

Patients are informed by a displayed notice that the doctors would discuss only one health problem at a time. It wasn't clear how well this supported the needs of patients presenting with multiple health concerns connected with some long term health conditions.

There was clear signage indicating that the surgery had a loop system for deaf people and other information put up around the walls was neatly displayed and easy to look at.



After the Visit

The lead representative for Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham was contacted by Healthwatch Redbridge the day after the visit to convey that the practice manager had contacted them to complain that it was unannounced and queried why it had been done that way? There weren't any issues raised by the practice manager with the lead representative at the time of the visit. The senior practice GP, Dr Moghul rung to speak with Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham about the reasons for the unannounced visit and these were explained to him.



6 Recommendations

It was evident from the information provided by patients during the visit and from discussions with Healthwatch representatives, that patients that come to this surgery are satisfied with the services they are receiving.

From feedback we received from patients and observations made by representatives we could not find any indication that the service was not providing patients with satisfactory appointment times.

Feedback and discussion with people highlighted that staff at the surgery were courteous, professional and not rude or aggressive in any way towards the patients we saw.

There are a number of observations from the visit that we recommend for the practice to give consideration to:

Recommendations for patients seeing the GP.

- **Discussing one health issue per appointment:** There is no National or CCG policy guidance for this – however, we are concerned that limiting patients to one health issue at a time could discourage them from talking about other health issues that are important to them and could be overlooked. This is especially a concern for patients with long term conditions or who are vulnerable. We would want the practice to explain why they use this method for consultations and what happens if patients do need to discuss more than one issue. Also we would like to know how this is being communicated to patients to ensure that they are still aware that a GP cares for their holistic health.
- **Length of consultations:** Some patients are not happy with the time they get with the doctor, we suggest that if there are reasons why a person needs longer, that the practice set longer consultations times to meet individuals' needs.

Recommendations for waiting area.

- **Hand Gel for patients use:** The practice should consider the provision of anti-bacterial hand gel and encourage people coming into the surgery to use it.
- **Patient Privacy:** Patients can be overheard discussing private and personal information in the reception area - the practice should have use of a space where private conversations could take place when needed.
- **Zero Tolerance Policy:** Consideration should be given to including a standard of conduct that patients should expect when speaking and engaging with staff at the practice.



- **Repeat Prescriptions Box:** It was observed that when it becomes full, other people coming into the surgery could access the contents. The practice should have a bigger box or it should be emptied more often.

7 Service Provider Response

With reference to the recommendations put forward by Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham, the Practice Manager sent the following responses and included a revised 'Zero Tolerance' policy that they have implemented as one of the outcomes from the visit. See attached at Appendix B.

Discussing one health issue per appointment:

There is no definite policy in our practice for the patient to discuss one health issue per appointment. This is only a suggestion to the patients so that they are aware of their responsibility towards maintaining the overriding time management issue confronting all the GP's across the borough and the whole country.

This time management issue has been a topic of discussions at most GP and CCG meetings and patients have complained on numerous occasions for waiting outside in the reception beyond their appointment times.

This advice or suggestion has been displayed only after the surgery received numerous complaints from the patients for waiting long times outside beyond their fixed appointment times. Unfortunately, these are the very patients who like to spend a long time inside the consultation room and well beyond their 10 minutes' allocation.

In spite of this display sign in front of the consultation rooms our practice continues to be affected by the time management issue as the patients continue to discuss all their problems in one appointment. Our GP's are very polite and friendly and they have never refused any additional problems to be discussed.

It is paramount that the LTC take priority and the minor issues are discussed after that. The GP's are aware of their responsibilities. If the patients request to discuss several issues, and this is most of the time, we do not decline that request. Some Locum GP's might do so, but overall we never decline these requests, in fact, quite frequently they request additional consultations within their own appointment of 10 minutes to discuss about their relatives which in turn they are inside the room for much more than 20 minutes. We have a very clear approach towards their overall holistic health and the GP's like to cover their overall health conditions without being restricted by limitations of allocated appointment times.



Length of Consultations:

Kindly see the above explanation.

Some complex patients however are allowed to pre book double appointments and this is a practice that we allow to the patients at large.

Patients Privacy:

Like most practices, we are aware of this privacy issue. The patients are aware of the situation as well and it is their responsibility to be careful. However, we are in the process of restructuring our surgery in a way that the reception area would be different than the present structure. The patients who would like to discuss private issues would be able to get into the reception room from the side to discuss their private matters, which cannot be heard because the door will be closed.

Hand Gel for Patients use:

The practice has always had Hand Gel at the front reception desk but unfortunately it had been removed by others. A fresh hand gel has since been placed on the shelf for the patients to use once again.

Zero Tolerance Policy:

AS ATTACHED

Repeat Prescription Box:

Our prescription box is emptied at the end of the evening ready to be processed early the next morning or Monday morning.

At your suggestion the practice has placed an order for a larger box and are currently awaiting its arrival.



8 Appendix A

These are the questions 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
- Please use this space about any other views or comments you have about the service and your experiences of using it.



Appendix B

GROVE SURGERY

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY / CODE OF CONDUCT

Suggestions and Criticism

Occasionally things do not go as smoothly as we would like. This is often due to matters beyond our control, such as emergencies.

The Practice follows the NHS Complaints Procedure. A copy of our practice complaints procedure is available at reception.

You may also comment on our service in writing or directly to the Practice Manager who will follow up any concerns appropriately.

The complaints procedure should ensure all complaints are dealt with swiftly and fairly and hopefully to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Policy on Violent or Abusive Patients

The NHS operates a zero tolerance policy with regard to violence and abuse and the practice has the right to remove violent patients from the list with immediate effect in order to safeguard practice staff, patients and other persons.

Violence in this context includes actual or threatened physical violence or verbal abuse which leads to fear for a person's safety.

In the situation we are obliged to notify the patient in writing of their removal from the list and record in their medical records the fact of the removal and circumstances leading to it.

This approach applies to any patients, visitors and any persons working within the Practice demonstrating any of the above behaviour towards patients, visitors or staff. **The GP's are committed** to do everything possible to protect staff, patients and visitors from unacceptable behaviour and to support zero tolerance to any incident that causes hurt, alarm, damage or distress. It also applies to any GP or employee of the Practice whilst on duties away from the Surgery if their duties are related to the business of the Practice.

Patients who are violent or aggressive towards any person on Surgery premises will be removed from the Practice list.



Patient's Rights and Responsibilities

You have a right to expect a high standard of medical care from our practice and we will try, at all times, to provide the very best care possible within the resources available.

In order to assist us in this we require that you take full responsibility for ensuring that you do not abuse the service. For example, it is your responsibility to ensure that you keep medical appointments and follow the medical advice given.

Very occasionally a practice/patient relationship breaks down completely. In this situation the patient may choose to register with a different practice. The practice also has the right to remove that patient from their list. This would generally only follow a warning that had failed to remedy the situation and a specific reason for the removal would be given.

Our Responsibility to you:

- You will be greeted courteously
- You have a right to confidentiality
- You have the right to see your medical records subject to the limitations of the law
- You will be seen the same day if your medical need is urgent
- You will be seen by the Doctor of your choice wherever possible
- You will be informed if there will be a delay of more than 20 minutes for your appointment
- You will be referred to a consultant when your GP feels it necessary
- You will be given the result of any test or investigation on request.
- Your repeat prescription will be ready for collection within 48 hours of your request
- Your suggestions and comments about the service we offer will be considered sympathetically and any complaint dealt with quickly

Your Responsibility to us:

- Please treat all Surgery Staff with respect
- Do not ask for information about anyone other than yourself
- Tell us of any change of name or address so that our records are accurate
- Only request an urgent appointment or home visit if appropriate
- Please cancel your appointment if you are unable to attend
- Please be punctual, but be prepared to wait if your consultation is delayed by an unexpected emergency
- Use the tear off slip to request a repeat prescription and attend for review when asked
- Please let us know when you feel that we have not met our responsibility to you but please give praise when it is due

