

**Enter and View visit
The Lawson Practice, Hackney
16 April 2019**



Service	General Practice
Service address	St Leonard's 85 Nuttall Street London, N1 5HZ
Provider name	The Lawson Practice
Date/Time of visit	16 April 2019 9.30am – 12.30pm
E&V representative/s	Catherine Perez Phillips Chloe Macri Paula Shaw
Healthwatch staff contact	Catherine Perez Phillips Catherine@healthwatchhackney.co.uk
Practice contacts	Amanda Rayner Deputy Practice Manager

About Healthwatch enter and view visits

The Local Government and Public Involvement Act 2007 as amended by the 2012 Act and directed by Local Healthwatch Regulations 013 imposes a duty on health and social care providers (including the independent sector) to allow authorised representatives of Local Healthwatch to enter premises they own or control to observe the services being provided. These are legally binding directions and are often referred to as 'the right to enter and view'.

1. The Visit

Purpose of our visit

We visited the Lawson Practice to:

- Observe services being provided at the Lawson Practice and interview patients about their experiences.
- Compile a report highlighting good practice and recommendations for improvement.

Our decision to visit was influenced by the following factors:

- Routine comments and feedback from service users received by Healthwatch Hackney
- A desire for Healthwatch Hackney to visit a GP's practice within each of the Neighbourhoods within City and Hackney CCG

We will continue to monitor patients' experiences of the service to check that the changes being made are working and reflected in the National GP Patient Survey.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Hackney would like to thank the practice managers and staff for accommodating our visit and the patients for participating in our interviews. We are also grateful to our volunteer authorised representative for conducting the visit.

Important Information for management/provider

- We expect the Lawson Practice to provide an 'action plan and response' to issues raised under 'Recommendations'
- Copies of this report will be circulated to City and Hackney CCG, the CQC and will be made available on the Healthwatch Hackney website
- We will publish the Lawson Practice's Action Plan and Response along with our report

Disclaimer

- Observations made in this report relate only to the visit carried out at Lawson Practice on 16 April 2019 which lasted for a total of three hours
- This report is not representative of all patients of Lawson Practice on the day of the visit. It only represents the views 19 patients and the members of staff who were able to contribute within the restricted time available.

2. Key information about this provider

- Lawson Practice is based at St Leonards, 85 Nuttall Street, London, N1 5HZ
- The practice has 13,300 registered patients
- The building is purpose built and well maintained. It is owned by the partners and was extended in 2012 so that it now has 22 consulting rooms as well as a minor surgery facility
- The practice is open every week day from 8am – 6.30pm, closing for lunch between 1pm and 2pm and open until 8pm on Wednesdays and Thursdays.
- Practice staff at the time of the visit:
 - 10 GPs - six GP partners and four salaried GPs
 - 4 Practice Nurses and 4 Health Care Assistants
 - 10 receptionists
 - One practice manager
- The practice has used the [Patients First](#) appointments system since July 2018. Appointments can be made online (24/7), by phone or face to face with reception staff. Phone lines open at 8am. Patients are called back by the doctor who asks them what they want help with and then works to solve/support the patient with that problem. If the patient needs a face to face appointment they will be offered one on that same day. The practice also operates a 'duty doctor' system to ensure that when telephone appointments run out, there is always a doctor available to talk to and see patients who consider their problem to be urgent. Access is regularly monitored to make sure we are providing enough appointments for our patients
- The practice has a website www.lawsonpractice.nhs.uk
- The practice makes use of Language Line for translation services
- The Patient Participation Group (PPG) meets quarterly. When patients register with the practice they are asked if they wish to get involved. This can be at face to face meetings or through a virtual PPG online

3. Summary of findings/observations

The following observations were noted during the visit:

- Observed first aid box, defibrillator and fire alarms
- Good access for disabled people from the street – ramp access to the door
- Public toilets located on the ground and first floors
- A dedicated children's play area with soft shapes, and puzzle equipment



Above, children's play area. Below, the practice's free-to-use blood pressure machine.



What patients told us

- They are happy with the quality of care they receive at the Lawson Practice
- They have a positive view of staff employed by the practice
- They were given sufficient time with doctors to discuss issues
- Some patients reported that making an appointment was difficult and that there was a significant wait to get a non-urgent consultation

Physical environment/ cleanliness/hygiene

- The premises are accessed by a ramp
- Access using a mobility scooter or with a buggy can be a little difficult due to a tight turn at the end of the ramp
- There are toilets, including accessible toilets, on both floors. These were clean when we visited
- The waiting area is large, with plenty of space and comfortable chairs
- The practice has a blood pressure machine on the ground floor for use by patients, and a defibrillator which all staff are trained to use

Transport

- The building is located with the grounds of St Leonard's Hospital, just off Kingsland Road. A large number of buses pass close to the practice

Patient centred care/dignity/safety

- Good separation between the reception desks and the area where phone calls are answered
- There is a rope in place to encourage patients to queue and offers privacy to others when waiting to speak to the receptionist

Communication with patients/ Information

- The practice has a hearing loop in reception and a portable loop that can be taken into consulting rooms
- Staff do not wear name badges or have their photos on a board, for easy identification
- Turkish advocates are available three times a week and there is a Turkish speaking and Bengali speaking receptionist.
- The practice complaints procedure is on a notice board, but complaints forms were not visible
- The notice about the next PPG meeting in the reception area was out of date and referred to a meeting in November 2018

Website

- The website provides a comprehensive range of information about practice services
- Website has no zoom facility to enlarge text
- Google translate is available for patients for whom English is their second language.
- The information about making a complaint refers patients to VoiceAbility for independent advocacy. This is out of date and should refer patients to Powher
- PPG information is on the website but the latest report dates from 2014/15

Appointments system

- The Patient First appointments system was introduced in July 2018 to tackle the problem of appointments often only being available weeks in advance, leading to a relatively high number of 'no shows'
- Appointments can be booked online line, by telephone or at the reception desk. Patients are given a time that they will be called back.

4. Patient feedback

The following patients were interviewed in the waiting areas

Patient 1 has been patient at this practice since she was born and has no complaints. She thinks there are good doctors and good facilities. She has always been treated with respect. However, she is not happy with the new appointment system. She feels less in control of her own health. She does not like changes in the NHS but was wary to say more.

Patient 2 is not registered at the practice but using it as it is a 'Hub' from another GP practice. She was attending for her child to have a BCG injection. She had been before to have a coil fitted. She prefers coming to Lawson rather than Tuke Ward (Homerton Women's Clinic). All the staff have been friendly and respectful, and she feels *'they have time for me'* When she forgot to attend for a cervical smear test, they contacted her and reminded her. She thought this was very good.

Patient 3 is the older sister of 2-year-old twin boys and was there for them to have BCG injections. Her first visit as referred by own GP to Lawson as a 'Hub'. We talked in the excellent children's room. She thought Lawson was big with a lot of helpful staff. She thought it catered well for little children. Her only criticism was nobody checked the cleanliness in the room – one of the twins had found a discarded sweet and tried to eat it!

Patient 4 has been a patient since birth and was attending with her son aged 2 yrs (a dermatology issue). She had phoned at 8am and had a call back for the appointment. She finds the Repeat Prescription system excellent as it is easier to go straight to the pharmacy having ordered online. She has been happy with the doctors and other staff. She was very unhappy with the Patient First appointment system as she now has to take a day off work for attending appointments and sometimes a day off to wait for the doctor's call back. She cannot plan anything and does not know when she will be called or what time appointments will be.

She says there are a lot of new reception staff and she does not find them *'as useful as older ones'* who knew her as child. She used to always see the same doctor but not no - she prefers continuity of care.

She would prefer to be able to make an appointment online and thinks a doctor could check if appointment was still needed and review after the appointment was booked rather than triage before making the appointment.

Patient 5 is a new patient and has her first appointment with a doctor. After the appointment she came to tell me: *'the doctor was super sweet'*. She had been before to see a nurse for blood tests. She thought the nurse and the reception staff were very friendly. She tried to book an appointment online, but nothing was showing. She then had to phone and received a call back with an appointment time. She was *'pleasantly surprised'* at how nice it is as the Google reviews she saw before registering were *'bad'*.

Patient 6 has been a patient 2 years but has never needed to see a doctor. She was here for her 2-year-old son to have a BCG injection. She thought the nurses and reception staff were very *'friendly and helpful'*. Her only criticism was access into the surgery with a double buggy - having to negotiate bicycles and plants on a narrow path. She thought there were too many plants which was *'bad for someone with hay fever'*.

Patient 7 was visiting the practice to order a repeat prescription. He commented that previously when he was running out of medication he would go to his local pharmacist and they would then issue him with the medication a day or two later. He does like to call and is not online. The change which involves him coming to the practice is time consuming and not as good as the old system or going directly to the pharmacy.

Patient 8 reported that it was very difficult to make an appointment. He had called previously on Friday, but the doctor had not been in. He called on the Monday and had waited a long time on hold and had finally been called back and got an appointment for the Tuesday. He preferred the old booking system by far. He said some reception staff were very good, other less so in that their manner was very *'rejective'* and their approach did not make him feel welcome. He had brought his iPad into the practice for staff to set up on line booking but they had been unable to do it. He said that he found the doctors often have to rush. There is a system that tells patients if doctors are running late with their appointments, but it has happened that he has waited 30 minutes without knowing what was happening.

Patient 9 reported that it was easy to make an appointment. He has been with the practice for two years and was very happy and feels he has enough time with the doctor.

Patient 10 said it was easy to make an appointment. He had called at 8am (it was easy to get through) and the doctor had called him back. He sees different GPs but he is happy with this as they all have access to his records. He is also happy with the amount of time he has with the doctor.

Patient 11 said it was straight forward to book an appointment, but she is not currently working. When she was working it was very difficult as they would say they would call back and then did not when she had taken the day off work to see the doctor.

Patient 12 said it been difficult to book an appointment. She had tried to book a telephone consultation online but at 8am the system was reporting 'no slots available'. Later in the day some slots became available. She experienced phone signal problems which made it extremely difficult to talk to the doctor. She said she felt like the system is there to stop you seeing a doctor. When she spoke to the doctor she said she did not feel listened to. She commented that people with complex needs and especially those with mental health problems may find it difficult to talk about this during the initial brief telephone consultation. Her doctor is on maternity leave. She feels there is a breakdown in trust caused by always having different doctors for appointments.

Patient 13 has been using the practice for six years. Finds it hard to book appointments and complained that they '*drill you like an idiot*' when you call in. She needed a repeat prescription but was told she needed to check with GP. Has to always wait at least 30 minutes in the waiting room before the appointment. Sometimes the GP is rushed. Her normal GP is on maternity leave, but she is usually very good at examining medicines and prescriptions. Patient trusts and is confident in GP. She was not aware of the PPG. Reception is nice but sometimes the queue is long. Overall she is happy with the service but doesn't like the interrogation. Feels like they don't want people to come into the practice, as they try to treat over the phone.

Patient 14 found it hard to contact the practice and says the phone system is quite difficult - she is on hold for a long time and when the doctor calls back, it is much later. On some occasions, the doctor has forgotten to call back or she has missed the call. Cannot use the online system and said the old system is better. After 9am, says it is impossible to book a general appointment, can only book emergency appointment (which is what she booked today). Cannot see usual doctor, only whoever is free. Her English is not great, but the interpreter is not always there as they work two days only. The consultation is usually good but sometimes rushed, however has good trust and confidence in doctor.

Patient 15 received an NHS sent a letter with appointment. First appointment was cancelled so today was her second appointment. Organised through NHS and received letter. Found it easy to get in contact with practice and easy to access. Found reception to be open and not very confidential, however when there are more staff, it is much better. It is her first time using many of the services and may potentially come back.

Patient 16 has been using this service for 10 years and finds it easy to access. Used to come in to book appointments but now it is harder. Has to phone up and wait on hold. Some days might not be able to get through at all, unless you call at 8am. Today he had a letter for his appointment. Said '*sometimes, you don't have money to be on hold on the phone*'. Can sometimes have a long wait in the waiting room, but not too bad. Doctor does not rush you, you can spend time. He often sees a different doctor each time. Reception staff are very helpful and nice. '*Things are getting better here, even with the new system*'. For prescriptions, the form goes to the pharmacy. GP is good at explaining things and good at referring you. Was not aware of the PPG and understands the complaints procedure. Happy with the services.

Patient 17 transferred from another practice and it was only their second time here. It is far from home and the £4 parking is quite expensive. Initially couldn't find the main entrance. Easy to book an appointment, they called and sent a text. Doesn't have to wait long to see the doctor and good consultation time when saw the nurse. Reception was good and friendly. Service is quite good.

Patient 18 has with the practice for years, and uses the app. Was difficult to get app set up, had to download, get form, fill in with proof of ID. Now it is set up, is easier to use. The app is good but sometimes it doesn't show available appointments, so she just emails the practice directly and usually gets an appointment like that. Doesn't use the phone system. Dr doesn't always call at the right time, despite allocating a time. Has often missed the GP call and called back. When called back, was 6th in queue, but was easy to get through and spoke to Dr on the phone. Best services compared to other clinics. Usually a 15-minute delay. Consultation is 10 minutes; if they don't need to see you, they won't. Never sees the same GP. She asks for what she wants/needs and the GP can refer or seek second opinion. They are a good service overall, staff are welcoming and polite, the self check-in service is good and the app has improved.

Patient 19 has been using the practice for 10 years. She used to come in and book but now has to phone in and the doctor calls back. If she calls reception at 8am, the doctor calls back between 3-4pm, which is a long wait. If the doctor does not think it is necessary, he/she doesn't call back. It is hard and difficult to get through to reception in the morning. Not long appointments, just prescriptions and go. Usually have to wait 30 minutes before appointment. GPs are good, but she always sees a different one, even though she wants to see the same one. Sometimes uses the interpreter/translation services, but is easier to bring in her son. Staff and friendly but busy. Old system works better, the new system takes too long and is complicated.

5. Staff comments

We had the opportunity to speak to practice manager Amanda Rayner who was very welcoming and open in her discussion with us.

Summary of staff comments

- They are looking to become a dementia friendly practice and for staff to undergo domestic violence training
- Reported it was hard to recruit full time GPs. They are responding by recruiting a Physicians Associate to fill the gap
- Every Monday a multi-disciplinary team meeting is held to discuss patients of concern. This works to share information amongst the team so that patients are best supported

6. Recommendations

All recommendations are based on patients' feedback and our observations

Recommendation 1

A number of patients commented on difficulties making an appointment. This was particularly difficult for people who were working and/or had limited telephone access during the day. The system should be reviewed to see what steps can be taken to make it easier to book appointments

Recommendation 2

PPG meetings need to be publicised to all patients through up-to-date information on notice boards (we found an out of date poster)

Recommendation 3

The website and complaints leaflet should be updated to refer patients to Powher rather than VoiceAbility. Complaints forms should be readily available in the reception area.

Recommendation 4

Implementation of a system to allow patients to identify staff by name e.g. through staff wearing name badges and/or having a board with staff photos and names

Recommendation 5

The cleanliness of the children's play area needs to be periodically checked to ensure nothing has been left that could be a hazard

7. Summary of demographic/equality information collected

The Lawson Practice has 13,300 patients

Ethnicity	
Asian or Asian British	3
Black or Black British	5
Mixed other	1
Turkish	1
White	6
White Other	3

Gender	
Male	5
Female	14

8. Lawson Practice Action Plan

Healthwatch Hackney recommendation	Practice Response/Action Plan
Appointments system – review to ensure that in particular people with limited telephone access during the day can easily make appointments	We are constantly reviewing the appointments system. We have a rolling audit in place to ensure that we are not running out of telephone slots too early in the day. We are happy for people to use the phone, the internet or walk in to the practice to make an appointment. We are not sure what 'limited phone access' means. We always ring patients back twice, accepting that they will sometimes miss the first call. We have put in place a number of pieces of software to try and make appointment booking easier. We will continue to monitor and work to improve this. However, we would ask patients to understand that throughout the UK it is very difficult to recruit GPs and we are struggling with this. We are thinking about alternative ways of being able to help patients so that we can improve access.
An up-to-date poster publicising PPG meetings	We will do this going forward
The website and complaints leaflet should be updated to refer patients to Powher rather than VoiceAbility. Complaints forms should be readily available in the reception area.	This has been actioned already.
Implementation of a system to allow patients to identify staff by name	We plan to do a board with staff pictures and add this to the website
Check the cleanliness of the children's play area to ensure nothing has been left that could be a hazard	We believe this to be a one off. Reception will regularly check the play area for cleanliness