

Seen and heard

The experiences of children and young
people in primary care

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Recommendations

- Practices should ensure that they have welcoming and engaging waiting areas for children to enjoy comfortably and safely. In order to improve experience, **patients need to be kept updated** regarding extended waiting times.
- Practitioners need to more effectively with children and young people regarding procedures and their overall treatment and care

1. Introduction

In April 2022, Healthwatch Manchester partnered with MCR Active on a series of planned engagement events across Manchester. On Tuesday October 18th 2022 we visited East Manchester Leisure Centre to gather views and experiences of children and young people who have used primary care services in East Manchester, specifically General Practice and Dentistry.

2. Background & Rationale

When children and young people access health and/or social care, it is important that their experience is as positive as possible. Having a positive experience can make a child or young person feel confident, empowered and supported in relation to their own health & wellbeing, and break down any barriers into continued access to health & social care services throughout adulthood.

It is important for Healthwatch Manchester therefore, to establish what constitutes a positive or negative experience for children and young people when accessing primary care services.

3. Methodology

3.1 Healthwatch Manchester staff visited East Manchester Leisure Centre on Tuesday October 18th 2022. The aim of the visit was to interact with local service users and gather their views on accessing general practice surgeries and dental practices in Manchester.

3.2 East Manchester leisure centre was chosen at this time for the following reasons:

- Time of day as we had prior knowledge that a class was about to start and therefore footfall would be high.
- People using leisure centres are for the most part in an agreeable frame of mind and are more likely to engage with us.
- The level of risk around engagement with children and young people is very low in an environment such as this

3.3 We created the branded Healthwatch Manchester outreach presence by setting up our stall (See figure 1). The stall comprises of information resources and giveaways which are attractive to passers-by.

Figure 1 - Healthwatch Manchester outreach stall



3.4 A short survey was handed out to children and young people, asking them to provide us with feedback of their local primary care services. 35 responses were received and the responses are provided in this report.

4. Key Findings

4.1 89% of respondents responded positively about their overall experiences of primary care. All respondents were happy with their practitioner, with comments centring around professionalism, friendliness & patient care. The young people that we spoke to had a positive association with visiting their local GP Practice or dentist. 75% of respondents describe enjoying their visit, with “reward stickers” or “fun waiting areas” providing a welcoming environment.

4.2 Those who responded negatively (11%) each had a singular poor experience, which centred around waiting times when visiting their local practice. One service user described waiting “over twenty minutes” for a scheduled appointment, leaving them feeling bored and anxious in the waiting area.

4.3 The majority of negative experiences centred around understandable dislikes related to regular procedures, such as the use of needles for injections. 30% of respondents reported a negative experience when visiting their GP citing this as the reason. Their overall reported experience of the GP primary care remained positive.

4.4 55% of respondents gave feedback on cooling gel used to numb the mouth when visiting the dentist. 20% of respondents stated that they disliked the taste and feel of cooling gels. 35% of respondents reported that they liked the taste and feel of cooling gels.

4.5 Other negative comments centred around:

- Not being told when a procedure might hurt beforehand
- When a practitioner spoke only to parents and didn’t include the young person/child in the conversation



“My dentist is always very caring. They do a great job, especially if I need fillings. “

5. Conclusions

- The majority of children/young people and their parents were pleased with local primary care service provision in East Manchester and the surrounding areas.
- A friendly, professional and patient centred service is present in East Manchester primary care.
- Some of the procedures used in primary care as well as long waiting times create a negative experience for children and young people.
- Children and young people's experience of primary care services can be improved through better communication with them about their treatment and care.

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