



**ENTER AND VIEW:
THE RIVERSIDE PRACTICE**

Content

Executive Summary	3
Visit details	7
What is an Enter and View?	7
Purpose of the visit	8
What we did, why and how	8
About the service	13
Findings	15
Appointment bookings and waiting times	15
Reception and check-in experience	16
Staff attitude	17
Quality of care	18
Feedback, compliments and complaints	19
Findings from mystery shopping	20
Patients' suggestions for improvement	21
Service Provider's Response	23
Closing remarks	24
Acknowledgements	24

Executive Summary

On 25th September 2024, Healthwatch Hackney visited The Riverside Practice.

This Enter and View visit had two purposes. Firstly, we wanted to evaluate patient experience, focusing on accessibility, support for vulnerable individuals, the quality of care provided and the relationship between staff and patients. This aligns with Healthwatch's mission to amplify patients' voices, ensuring their feedback informs improvements in local health and social care services. This visit supports our commitment to ensuring high-quality, patient-centred care.

Secondly, we wanted to follow up on the recommendations from our report [GP Registration in Hackney, the right to access healthcare \(4th review\)](#), which highlighted that The Riverside Practice was still asking for proof of ID and/or address when registering new patients.

What we did, why and how

Preparation included reviewing the practice's website, the latest CQC report, and existing patient feedback. Based on this insight, our visit was guided by three questions:

1. What is the overall patient experience like?
2. How well does the Practice ensure everyone gets the healthcare they need regardless of their background or situation?
3. To what extent has the Practice implemented our previous recommendations regarding the registration of new patients?

To answer these questions, we used a variety of qualitative research methods, including observations; interviews with patients, staff and the practice manager; mystery shopping. Throughout the process we maintained an ethical approach, including minimising disruption to the Practice's operations, seeking patients' consent and anonymising data at collection.

Finally, we coded and analysed the data to identify key themes, while comparing the patient and staff feedback to offer a comprehensive and balanced view of the Practice.

During our visit we spoke with 11 patients, the practice manager and one of the receptionists. While our data is not representative of the entire patient population, we captured a diverse sample to ensure we gathered a broad range

of perspectives and experiences, reflecting different patient needs and interactions with the Practice.

Key Findings

Practice Environment: The Practice appeared tidy and clean, with a sense of calm and order. Patients described it as “well maintained”, “fresh”, “tidy”, “pleasant” and “welcoming”. They agreed that their overall experience is generally pleasant and all the patients we spoke to told us they “would and have recommended the practice” to others.

Accessibility: The Practice strives to be accessible. Examples of accessibility include proactively offering interpreters; training all staff on learning disabilities (LD) and offering LD patients double appointments; being autistic-friendly and veteran-friendly. Additionally, the practice is flexible in accommodating patients’ needs regarding registration, booking appointment and repeat prescriptions. While they encourage patients to use online systems where possible, they are open to offering their services face-to-face and on the phone. On the other hand, we have noticed that the new patient questionnaire could be more user-friendly and clearer. Additionally, the Practice does not have a separate breastfeeding area, which patients told us “is important to maintain mothers’ privacy and dignity”.

New Patient Registration: The Practice has taken on board our recommendations about new patient registration, whereby no proof of ID or address are asked unless the patient wishes to access their records online. Additionally, a guide to patient registration has been created for staff and they are undergoing training to become a Safe Surgery, as recommended.

Appointment Booking and Waiting Times: Patients are generally “satisfied” with the appointment booking system. They particularly appreciated the option to book appointments on the phone or in-person. 90% of patients are seen on the same day. Patients who wait longer generally acknowledge and understand that “the system gives priority to the most important cases first, as it should be”.

Reception and check-in: The Practice shares the reception and waiting area with The Clapton Surgery. Patients told us that “privacy can sometimes be an issue when both receptions are in use at the same time”. All patients we spoke to on the day found the check-in process “straightforward”. They also praised the reception staff for being “professional” and “friendly”.

Staff attitude: Patients described staff as “responsive”, “prompt”, “attentive”, “helpful”, “tolerant”, “welcoming”, “quick”, “polite”, “understanding” and “welcoming”. This is a testament to the staff’s commitment to ensuring that “the practice runs efficiently, and patients are well looked after”.

Quality of Care: Patients told us that they are “satisfied” with the quality of care received, including how clinical staff takes the time to speak to them and ensure they feel informed about and involved in their care. However, despite continuity of care being encouraged, several patients expressed frustration over having to see different clinicians. In response to patient feedback requesting access to a female doctor, the practice have recruited one due to join the team the week after our visit.

Feedback, compliments and complaints: The practice manager is open to gathering patient feedback and has shared with us examples of improvements made based on this insight. However, all patients we spoke to did not know how to make a complaint or leave feedback.

Patients’ suggestions for Improvement: Patients told us they would like to see “clearer parking signs”; a “curtain at reception to create separation with the Clapton Surgery” and “for added privacy”; “a clock in the waiting room” and “a separate breastfeeding space”.

Recommendations to the Practice Manager

- 1. Improve the new patient health questionnaire** to make it clearer and more user friendly.
 - Review the ethnicity and language sections. Utilise the same format as family history. Make sure the columns are aligned.
 - Review the alcohol section. Reprint the visual using a clearer font, such as Arial or Calibri, as these fonts are most accessible to read.
 - Ensure that font size and style remain consistent for the headings and questions throughout the questionnaire.
- 2. Provide a separate space for mothers wishing to breastfeed their babies** while waiting for their appointment. This is an important step toward creating a welcoming, inclusive environment and it aligns with family-friendly healthcare principles, ensuring the practice is more accessible to patients with infants.

3. **Enhance patient privacy at the reception.** Consider adding a physical barrier, such as a curtain or screen, to create a more discrete environment. Sensitive personal health matters are often discussed at the reception, making it important to ensure that patients feel their privacy is respected. This also aligns with NHS guidelines on maintaining patient confidentiality, fostering a sense of trust between the practice and its patients.
4. **Improve signage for patients' parking.** Consider adding clear signs directing patients to available parking spaces. This would reduce stress for patients before their appointment and improve their overall experience.
5. **Consider placing a clock in the waiting area.** This small change can contribute to a more patient-friendly environment by easing minor frustrations and improving the overall patient experience.
6. **Display clear signs in the waiting area explaining how to make a complaint and provide feedback.** When patients feel unsure about how to raise an issue or provide feedback, valuable insights into service improvement can be lost. Accessible feedback channels ensure that the practice can address concerns promptly, improve patient satisfaction, and enhance the overall quality of care. Additionally, clear complaint procedures build trust and transparency, showing patients that their voices are valued and that the practice is committed to continuous improvement.

These recommendations aim to improve patient satisfaction, enhance accessibility, and ensure a more comfortable, welcoming environment at The Riverside Practice. The implementation of these changes will help the practice continue to provide high-quality, patient-centred care.

Healthwatch Hackney met with the practice manager and clinical lead on 1 November to discuss the report findings and recommendations. Following this meeting, the service provider shared their response. This can be read in the full report below, on page 23.

Visit details

Service Visited	The Riverside Practice
Address	14, Urban Hive, Theydon Rd, London E5 9BQ
Practice Manager	Iqra Khan
Date and Time of Visits	25 September 2024 at 9.30 am to 12 pm
Authorised Representatives	Anam Ahsan, Catherine Perez-Phillips, Sara Morosinotto
Lead Representative	Sara Morosinotto

What is an Enter and View?

Healthwatch Hackney has a legal power under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to visit health and social care services and observe them in action. This power to *Enter and View* services allows us to engage directly with service users and staff, providing a unique opportunity to assess both what is working well and where improvements could be made.

Enter and View visits are not limited to services where complaints or concerns have been raised; we also visit services performing well, enabling us to identify and share best practices more widely. During each visit, we observe how a service is delivered and speak directly with patients, their families and carers to understand their experiences. We also speak with management and staff to gain a comprehensive view of how the service operates.

After a visit, we produce an official *Enter and View* report, which is shared with the service provider, commissioners and regulators, outlining key findings and

offering evidence-based recommendations for improvement. All reports are available to the public on our [website](#), ensuring transparency and accountability.

Enter and View is a valuable tool for driving patient-centered improvements. Through these visits, we have gathered insights directly from patients, carers, and families, which have led to meaningful changes across several services. This feedback has helped shape adjustments in service delivery, raising care quality, patient satisfaction, and health outcomes. Beyond these improvements, our Enter and View work has supported broader changes by making patient and staff voices central to the ongoing development of high-quality, patient-focused care in Hackney.

Purpose of the visit

This visit served two purposes.

First, we wanted to evaluate patient experience, focusing on accessibility, support for vulnerable individuals, the quality of care provided and the relationship between staff and patients. This aligns with Healthwatch's mission to amplify the voices of patients, ensuring their feedback informs improvements in local health and social care services. This visit supports our commitment to ensuring high-quality, patient-centred care.

Second, we wanted to follow up on the recommendations from our report [GP Registration in Hackney, the right to access healthcare \(4th review\)](#), which highlighted that The Riverside Practice was still asking for proof of ID and/or address when registering new patients.

What we did, why and how

This Enter and View was guided by three questions:

1. What is the overall patient experience like?
2. How well does the Practice ensure everyone gets the healthcare they need regardless of their background or situation?
3. To what extent has the Practice implemented our previous recommendations regarding the registration of new patients?

Preparation

Prior to the *Enter and View* visit, we reviewed the practice's [website](#) to gather information about staff; accessibility; the registration process; services provided; appointment booking; patient resources, including support for patients whose first language is not English; safeguarding policies, and complaints and feedback processes.

We also reviewed the latest CQC [report](#) to evaluate the quality of care provided and the practice's strengths and areas of improvement, focusing on key areas such as safety, effectiveness, patient care, responsiveness to patients' needs, and leadership.

Lastly, we reviewed patients' feedback shared on the practice's Google Review [page](#), on [Care Opinion](#) and on social media to gain insights into common themes regarding patient experience.

Data collection

We collected information through direct observations, interviews with patients, discussions with staff and the practice manager, a mystery shopping exercise, and a review of the information leaflets in the waiting area.

We used the knowledge gained in our background research to inform our data collection.

Observations: We used a checklist to evaluate the practice environment, including accessibility, cleanliness and overall atmosphere, focusing on the reception area, waiting room, and toilets. We also observed interactions between reception staff and patients, focusing on professionalism, respect for patient privacy and dignity. We used the findings from these observations to explore accessibility and overall patient experience.

Patient interviews: We interviewed patients to understand their experience with appointments, accessibility, quality of care, interactions with staff and service efficiency.

Staff discussions: We spoke with one of the practice receptionists and the manager to understand the overall approach to patient care. Discussion points included challenges, support to vulnerable patients, feedback and complaints, staff support and teamwork.

Mystery shopping: On the morning of our visit, two mystery shoppers visited the practice separately to assess the registration process for new patients. We used the same approach and format as in the [GP Registration 4th Review](#) to assess whether the practice asked for proof of ID, address, immigration status and date of entry into the country; whether both online and paper registration options were offered; receptionist's attitude and level of confidence; how the mystery shopper felt.

To ensure consistency, both mystery shoppers attended a briefing session where they discussed how to handle different scenarios and interpret the practice's responses. This helped ensure they understood the process in the same way, providing more reliable and consistent results. Additionally, they used the same script:

"I would like to register, what information do you need to register me?"

If asked about proof of ID and/or address, mystery shoppers were instructed to say:

"I have just arrived and I don't have any documents".

If offered to register only online, mystery shoppers would reply:

"I don't have access to the internet, can I have a paper form, please?"

We used findings from the mystery shopping to answer question 4, about how new patients are registered.

After the visit, each Authorised Representative and the Mystery Shoppers documented their observations and findings in a collection sheet. This allowed for thoroughness and accuracy, minimising the risk of errors and omissions. Recording observations in a standardised way also made it easier to analyse the data and identify patterns.

Data analysis

Following the visit, all data was subject to qualitative analysis.

First, we read through all the feedback from patients and the notes from our discussions with staff and the practice manager. This helped us get a good sense of what people were saying about the practice. Then we went through each piece of feedback and highlighted important points, such as waiting times, the friendliness of the staff, or how easy it was to book appointments. Each of these points was labelled to help us organise the information.

After labelling the feedback, we grouped similar points together. This helped us identify bigger themes, such as "Staff attitude" and "Quality of Care." Once we had our themes, we went back to the feedback to make sure they accurately reflected what people said.

Lastly, we compared what patients said with what staff and the practice manager told us. This helped us see the full picture, ensuring that our themes captured both sides of the story—what it's like for patients and how the practice operates behind the scenes.

Ethical considerations

To minimise disruption to the Practice's operations, we notified the practice manager via email two days before to the visit and provided a digital version of the notification leaflet, requesting it be displayed in the waiting area.

Observations and interviews were conducted in a manner respectful of the patients and staff's time and space. Before engaging in the questions, all participants were informed about the purpose of the visit, the nature of the questions and their right to withdraw at any time. Participants' identities were kept confidential, and data anonymised during collection.

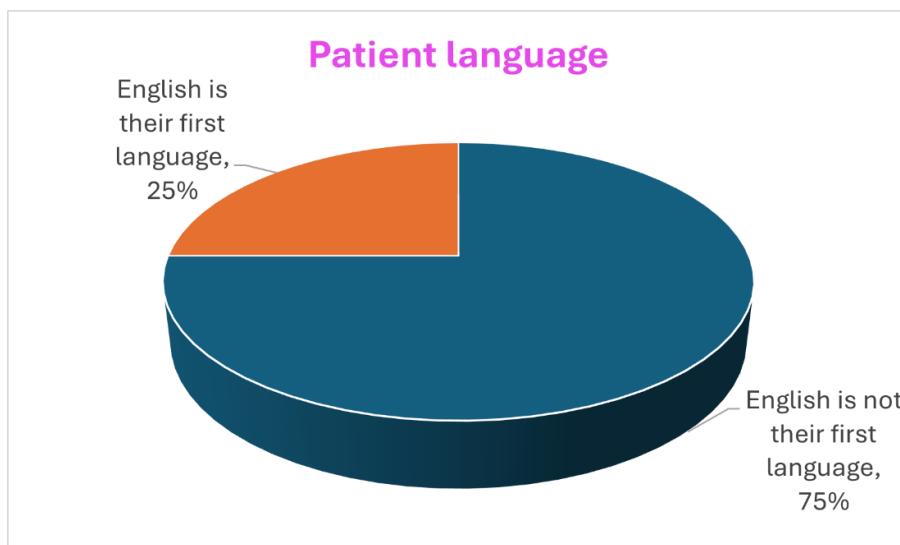
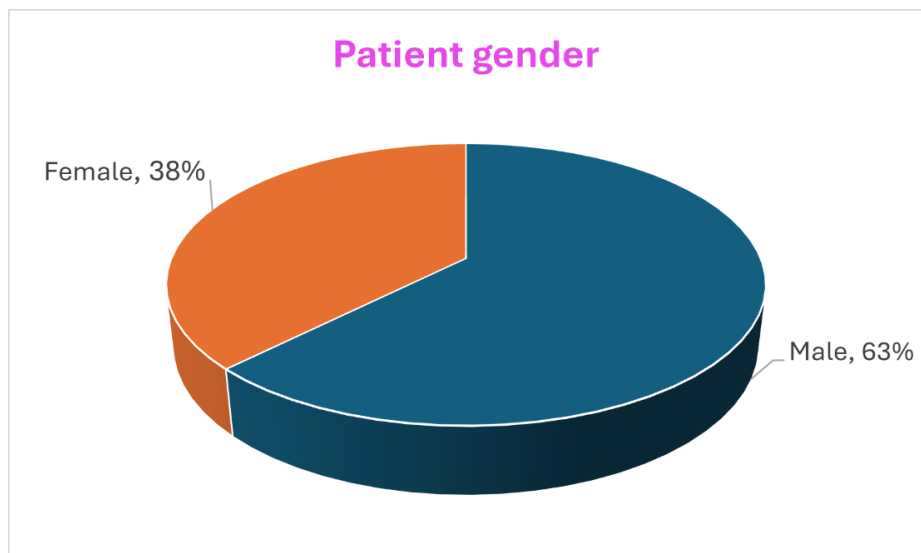
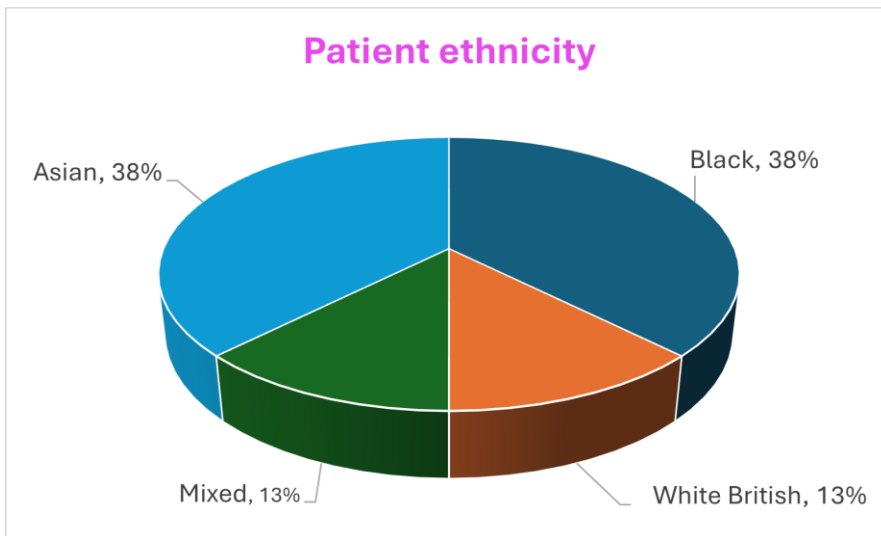
Safeguarding

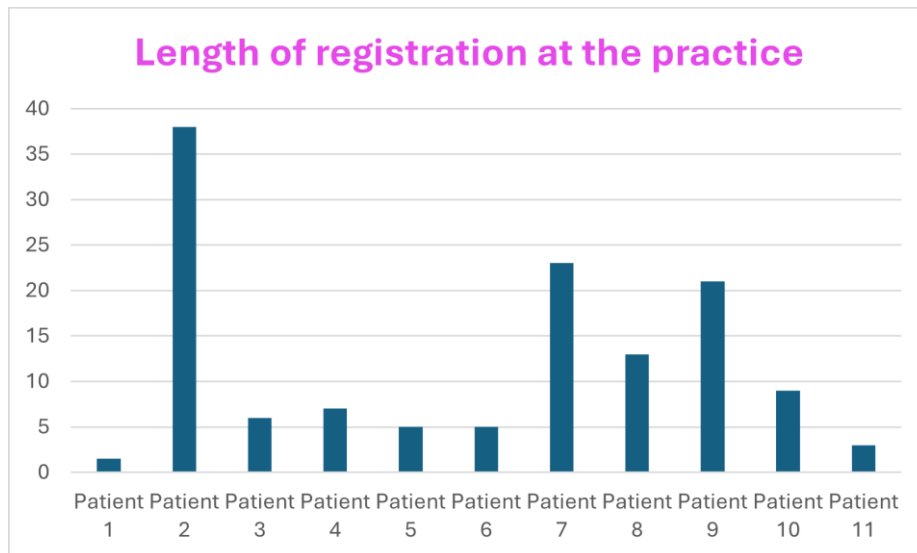
Enter and View visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit, they are reported in accordance with safeguarding policies. If at any time an Authorised Representative observes anything they feel uncomfortable about, they will inform their lead who in turn will inform the practice manager.

Patient profile

During our visit we spoke with 11 patients. While our data is not representative of the entire patient population, we captured a diverse sample to ensure we gathered a broad range of perspectives and experiences, reflecting different patient needs and interactions with the Practice.

The graphs below illustrate the diversity of the patients we spoke with.





About the service

The Riverside Practice is a general practice located in Hackney, London, with a patient list size of 5,210. It is staffed by a team of three doctors (two full-time and one part-time), a full-time junior doctor, a nurse, a healthcare assistant, a pharmacist, a first contact physiotherapist, a social prescriber and three reception staff, with plans to recruit a fourth. The practice manager oversees daily operations and ensures smooth service delivery.

The practice offers a range of healthcare services designed to meet the diverse needs of its patients. The practice's catchment area is primarily E5, but through the Patient Choice system, it registers patients from any area. However, if a patient becomes housebound, the practice is unable to provide home visits outside of the E5 area. The practice also serves homeless patients, using the surgery address for registration, and has patients living on boats.

Patients told us that the practice is not well-served by public transport and shared with us their frustration over the limited availability of parking spaces and lack of clear signage for parking.



Parking is awkward



***They should put up a sign that says:
"PATIENTS PARKING THIS WAY"***

We understand from the practice manager that this is beyond their control, as the council has allocated the car park to be shared between staff from both the Riverside and Clapton Practices. With only nine spaces available, staff kindly allow patients to use these parking spots whenever possible.

During our visit we observed that the practice appeared tidy and clean, with a sense of calm and order. Patients confirmed our observations, as they told us they have a “*generally pleasant experience*” and “*the atmosphere is good*”.



The Practice offers a variety of medical services including new patient and NHS health checks, chronic disease management, family planning, child immunisations, blood pressure management, and social prescribing. In addition to general health services, it provides specialised clinics for family planning, including HIV testing and other health promotion initiatives.

The Practice is committed to accessibility and inclusivity. It provides wheelchair access, a disabled toilet, and an induction loop system for hearing-impaired patients. For non-English speakers, patient languages are recorded in the EMST system, and translation services are available through Language Line. Interpreters can also be arranged upon request for appointments. The practice communicates with deaf patients via text messaging.

All staff have received training on learning disabilities (LD). LD patients receive double appointments, and they are offered an annual health check. The

practice is also signing up to become an autistic-friendly surgery and is registered as veteran-friendly, offering priority appointments for veterans.

Patients can register either in person or online, and the practice manager told us they are flexible in accommodating patients' needs for booking appointments and repeat prescriptions. This is consistent with what we heard from patients on the day of our visit. Additionally, following patient feedback, the practice created a lifestyle questionnaire form, offering patients the option to complete it independently if they prefer not to discuss these details with staff.

In 2017 the Care Quality Commission (CQC) rated the practice "good" across all areas, reflecting its commitment to safe, effective, and well-led healthcare services. The practice manager is proactive in seeking patient feedback and acting on it, ensuring continuous improvement in the quality of care and its patients' experience.

Findings



I would recommend this practice to other patients. I like it because they are easy-going and flexible with appointments and staff is friendly. It's never crowded. I like it here.

Appointment Booking and Waiting Times

All but one patient we spoke to were satisfied with the practice's appointment booking system. They particularly appreciated the option to book appointments on the phone or in-person. The online appointment booking system was less popular.



Booking an appointment online is complicated. I phone at 8.30 am and it's easy.



They do suggest patients use the internet, but I prefer the phone, and they are ok with it.

The practice manager told us that they have a call-back system in place, and all staff are trained in care navigation to prioritise urgent cases. There is also an option to send photos, such as for skin conditions, to aid triage. Patients can choose between face-to-face or telephone appointments.



90% of patients are seen on the same day.

Patients described the triage system as *“efficient”* and *“working well”*. Only one patient felt it was *“awkward to discuss my issues with the receptionist”* and said they’d rather have that conversation *“directly with the doctor”*.

Some patients told us they were frustrated at having to wait over a week for an appointment. Others praised the practice for accommodating same-day or next-day appointments when necessary. Waiting times on the day of the appointment were also a point of contention, with some patients experiencing delays of up to 30 minutes. However, patients seemed to understand that *“waiting times depend on the individual condition”* and appreciated that it was *“understandable, given that it's a doctor and the nature of the issues discussed here”*.



It's a good practice and you can be seen without any problems.



Appointments are swiftly arranged for the same day or the day after.



Other practices should learn from them how they manage the appointment system.

Reception and Check-in Experience

Patients can check in electronically or in person. However, on the day of our visit the electronic check-in system was not working and all patients checked in at the reception desk.

The Practice shares the reception and waiting area with The Clapton Surgery. Patients told us that privacy can sometimes be an issue when both receptions are in use at the same time.

All patients we spoke to on the day found the check-in process straightforward. They also praised the reception staff for their professionalism and friendliness. This is a testament to the reception staff, who told us they *“try to make sure patients are comfortable, listen to them and try to be understanding”*.

Staff Attitude

During our visit, we observed the practice becoming busier as the day progressed. Despite this, the receptionist staff remained calm and professional, politely asking an Authorised Representative to pause their conversation to attend to waiting patients.

The practice manager was also hands-on, stepping in to help and welcoming a patient in the waiting area, as they were short-staffed that day. She told us that she regularly steps in *“to assist wherever needed”*.

Reception staff told us about the importance of teamwork and collaboration to ensure every patient receives the best care. Staff members feel comfortable asking for help when needed. They told us that communication between clinical and non-clinical staff is *“smooth”*. The team holds regular meetings—at least once a month—to maintain strong collaboration and address any issues that may arise.

This approach demonstrates the staff’s commitment to making sure the practice runs efficiently and that patients are well looked after.



We are a strong team. We get the work done.

This is consistent with what we heard from patients, who spoke in positive terms about their interactions with both clinical and non-clinical staff.

How would you describe the staff at The Riverside Practice?



Quality of Care

Patients generally feel good about the care they receive from the doctors and nurses at the practice. Many said they were “*happy*” with how their health concerns were handled, and they especially appreciated how “*attentive*” the nurses were.

We also heard that the doctors and nurses take the time to explain treatment options and next steps, ensuring that patients feel informed and involved in their care. Only one patient told us that, while they are given options, they would like the doctor to be “*more proactive in offering suggestions*” about their care.



I have a personal rapport with the doctor.



[Doctors and nurses] are ok, they treat me with dignity and respect. They take the time to ask me questions and give me information and discuss treatment options.



I am definitely involved in decisions about my healthcare and treatment.

However, continuity of care is a challenge for some, as patients shared their concerns over frequently changing doctors, making it difficult to maintain a consistent treatment history. This contradicts what we heard from the Practice's Clinical Lead, who told us that they actively promote continuity of care, encouraging patients to speak to the same doctor where possible.

Additionally, some patients noted that referrals to hospitals could take time, which impacted their overall care experience, despite staff sharing with us that external referrals are made on the same day. However, patients recognise that this is *"likely due to delays with the hospital rather than the practice"*.

Feedback, compliments and complaints

The practice offers patients several options for providing feedback and making complaints. There is a QR code on the front desk for patients to scan and a red complaints box at reception. Additionally, the practice's website provides clear information on [how to file a complaint](#). According to the practice manager, patients can speak to her directly, and she ensures to get involved immediately. There is flexibility for patients to choose between making a formal or informal complaint, with the practice manager always asking the patient what outcome they hope to achieve.

However, all patients we spoke to on the day of our visit told us they were not sure how to give feedback or make a complaint. When asked, answers included *"I would speak to the receptionist"* or *"I would tell the doctor"*.



I never had to make a complaint but now that you ask me, I wouldn't know how.

The practice also runs a small but productive Patient Participation Group (PPG), which meets quarterly, with 5-6 regular attendees. The PPG's feedback has led to improvements, including informing patients of their place in the call queue and introducing a call-back option to improve the patient experience. The next PPG meeting is scheduled for the end of October.



If there's room for improvement, we go for it.



I know I would be listened to and changes would be made if appropriate. So far so good.

Recommendation to the Practice Manager: Display clear signs in the waiting area explaining how to make a complaint and provide feedback.

When patients feel unsure about how to raise an issue or provide feedback, valuable insights into service improvement can be lost. Accessible feedback channels ensure that the practice can address concerns promptly, improve patient satisfaction, and enhance the overall quality of care. Additionally, clear complaint procedures build trust and transparency, showing patients that their voices are valued and that the practice is committed to continuous improvement.

Findings from mystery shopping

On the day of our visit, two volunteers carried out two separate mystery shopping to assess the GP registration process and how the Riverside Practice treats new patients, focusing on fairness and accessibility.

The first mystery shopper arrived at 9:00 am. When they asked to register, the receptionist promptly offered the option to complete the form online or use a paper copy, without needing further prompting. She only asked for the shopper's postcode, which she quickly confirmed as being within the practice's catchment area. No proof of ID or address was requested, in line with NHS guidelines. The shopper left with the intention of filling out the form at home and returning with the completed copy.

The first shopper felt that the receptionist was respectful, and they were comfortable asking additional questions about registration. However, they also felt rushed, despite the practice being empty at the time.

The second mystery shopper arrived at 9:15 am and spoke with a different receptionist. The process was very similar, with the receptionist offering both registration options and providing a paper copy upon request. The receptionist

briefly explained the new patient form, and the shopper left without being asked for proof of ID or address.

The second shopper felt that the receptionist answered most questions in the initial conversation. However, they also noted a sense of unnecessary urgency, even though the practice was still quiet.

Both mystery shoppers found the new patient registration forms to be somewhat disorganised and difficult to understand. Notably, the ethnicity and language sections on the second page are unclear, and the alcohol consumption visual on the third page is blurry. While we understand and appreciate that this form was created in response to patient feedback, these issues may make it difficult for some patients to fill out the form accurately.

Overall, our mystery shopping confirmed that Riverside Practice is now following the correct GP registration protocols. The information provided to new patients is clear, accurate, and consistent, and the practice upholds NHS guidelines for equitable access and non-discrimination, regardless of background or circumstances.

Additionally, the practice manager informed us that, following our recommendations, all staff are completing the Safe Surgery learning modules. The practice is working toward becoming a Safe Surgery, and Healthwatch Hackney welcomes this progress. We look forward to seeing the Safe Surgery banner displayed on the practice's website and premises.

Recommendation to the Practice Manager: Improve the new patient health questionnaire to make it clearer and more user friendly.

- Review the ethnicity and language sections. Utilise the same format as family history. Make sure the columns are aligned.
- Review the alcohol section. Reprint the visual using a clearer font, such as Arial or Calibri, as these fonts are most accessible to read.
- Ensure that font size and style remain consistent for the headings and questions throughout the questionnaire.

Patients' suggestions for improvements

We asked patients to share their suggestions for improving their experience at the Practice.

The most common request was for a female doctor.



If I could change one thing, I would want to have a female doctor because at the moment it is awkward for my daughter and my wife

We understand from the practice manager that a female doctor will join the practice the week after our visit.

Other suggestions included “*clearer patient parking signs*”, “*a curtain at reception for added privacy*”, and a designated “*breastfeeding space with a nice comfy sofa*”. It is worth noting that during our visit we observed a mum breastfeeding her baby in the waiting room and struggling to find a comfortable position.

Additionally, another patient suggested placing “*a clock in the waiting room, as I can't see the time on the clock in the reception office.*”

Recommendations to the Practice Manager

1. **Provide a separate space for mothers wishing to breastfeed their babies while waiting for their appointment.** This is an important step toward creating a welcoming, inclusive environment and it aligns with family-friendly healthcare principles, ensuring the practice is more accessible to patients with infants.
2. **Enhance patient privacy at the reception.** Consider adding a physical barrier, such as a curtain or screen, to create a more discrete environment. Sensitive personal health matters are often discussed at the reception, making it important to ensure that patients feel their privacy is respected. This also aligns with NHS guidelines on maintaining patient confidentiality, fostering a sense of trust between the practice and its patients.
3. **Improve signage for patients' parking.** Consider adding clear signs directing patients to available parking spaces. This would reduce stress for patients before their appointment and improve their overall experience.

4. **Consider placing a clock in the waiting area.** This small change can contribute to a more patient-friendly environment by easing minor frustrations and improving the overall patient experience.

Service Provider's Response

Healthwatch Hackney met with the practice manager and clinical lead on 1 November to discuss the report findings and recommendations. Following this meeting, the service provider shared their response:

Thank you for your report and recommendations. We have discussed this with our patient participation group (PPG) on 6th November 2024 and please see our response below.

1. New Patient Questionnaire

The practice has reviewed and updated its new patient questionnaire as recommended in your report and we have attached a copy of this for your review.

2. Breastfeeding Space

We have a private room next to reception which is used by patients to breast feed in a private space. We will promote this more to patients wishing to breast feed. Our PPG also suggested displaying a poster in our waiting room to promote this more to patients

3. Enhanced patient privacy at reception

As above we have a private room next to reception for confidential conversations and privacy. We already use this room for this purpose and will promote this more by displaying a poster in our waiting room. In 2017 the practice carried out improvement works in accordance with its lease and landlord's approval to partition the front reception desk with a wall and give privacy to our patients. We feel that adding a curtain or screen in the waiting area may not be practicable as this may cause an obstruction and be a health and safety risk.

4. Car park signage

The practice has 9 car parking spaces which are fully utilised by the staff, whose numbers have grown over time. We have a local bus service, the 393, with stops nearby the surgery and on street paid parking. In order to help patients

access the building we allow patients to double park in our rear parking area and display a visitor permit. We have a notice in reception informing patients of this.

5. Waiting room clock

We have now put a clock in our waiting room.

6. Complaints

We have a dedicated red box at reception for patients to give written feedback or to make a complaint. We also have a visible QR code at reception to give feedback or make a complaint. Our practice website also has information on how to give feedback and make a complaint. We also gather monthly feedback using the friends and family test and discuss the feedback with our PPG at our regular meetings.

Closing remarks

Healthwatch Hackney will continue to monitor patient feedback and work collaboratively with the practice manager to maintain and strengthen a high-quality, patient-focused experience that meets the needs of the community it serves.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Hackney would like to thank the team at The Riverside Practice for accommodating our visit and encourage patients to talk to us. We would also like to thank our Authorised Representatives, who assisted us in conducting the visit and writing this report. Finally, we would like to thank our interns, Payton Silverman and Queen Emenyonu, for their significant contributions to this report, including conducting the background research, the mystery shopping and the recommendations on how to improve the new patient health questionnaire.



Healthwatch Hackney

St. Leonards Hospital, 1st floor, Block

Nuttall Street

London

N1 5LZ

Tel: 080 8164 7664

Email: Info@HealthwatchHackney.co.uk

www.healthwatchhackney.co.uk