

Enter & View

St George's Country Park GP Surgery

St George's Health and Wellbeing Hub,
Suttons Lane, Hornchurch, Essex, RM12 6RR

29 April 2025



What is Healthwatch Havering?

Healthwatch Havering is the local consumer champion for both health and social care in the London Borough of Havering. Our aim is to give local citizens and communities a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided for all individuals locally.

We are an independent organisation, established by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, and employ our own staff and involve lay people/volunteers so that we can become the influential and effective voice of the public.

Healthwatch Havering is a Community Interest Company Limited by Guarantee, managed by three part-time directors, including the Chairman and the Company Secretary, supported by two part-time staff, and by volunteers, both from professional health and social care backgrounds and lay people who have an interest in health or social care issues.

Why is this important to you and your family and friends?

Healthwatch England is the national organisation which enables the collective views of the people who use NHS and social services to influence national policy, advice and guidance.

Healthwatch Havering is your voice, enabling you on behalf of yourself, your family and your friends to ensure views and concerns about the local health and social services are understood.

Your contribution is vital in helping to build a picture of where services are doing well and where they need to be improved. This will help and support the Clinical Commissioning Groups, NHS Services and contractors, and the Local Authority to make sure their services really are designed to meet citizens' needs.

*'You make a living by what you get,
but you make a life by what you give.'
Winston Churchill*

What is Enter and View?

Under Section 221 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Healthwatch Havering has statutory powers to carry out Enter and View visits to publicly funded health and social care services in the borough, such as hospitals, GP practices, care homes and dental surgeries, to observe how a service is being run and make any necessary recommendations for improvement.

These visits can be prompted not only by Healthwatch Havering becoming aware of specific issues about the service or after investigation, but also because a service has a good reputation, and we would like to know what it is that makes it special.

Enter & View visits are undertaken by representatives of Healthwatch Havering who have been duly authorised by the Board to carry out visits. Prior to authorisation, representatives receive training in Enter and View, Safeguarding Adults, the Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberties. They also undergo Disclosure Barring Service checks.

Occasionally, we also visit services by invitation rather than by exercising our statutory powers. Where that is the case, we indicate accordingly but our report will be presented in the same style as for statutory visits.

Once we have carried out a visit (statutory or otherwise), we publish a report of our findings (but please note that some time may elapse between the visit and publication of the report). Our reports are written by our representatives who carried out the visit and thus truly represent the voice of local people.

We also usually carry out an informal, follow-up visit a few months later, to monitor progress since the principal visit.

Background and purpose of the visit

Healthwatch Havering is aiming to visit all health and social care facilities in the borough. This is a way of ensuring that all services delivered are acceptable and the welfare of the resident, patient or other service-user is not compromised in any way.

Introduction

The practice was formerly known as the Upminster Bridge Surgery and was located at Upminster. It moved to the St George's Health and Wellbeing Hub in the autumn of 2024 and opened in October under its new name. The principal GP remains Dr O'Moore and the support staff are the same.

St George's Health and Wellbeing Hub

The Hub opened in late 2024 and provides a range of health and care services under one roof.

It is located on the northern half of a site formerly occupied by St George's Hospital (which at one time was the medical facility for RAF Hornchurch, famed as a front-line RAF station during the Battle of Britain in 1940/41). Most of the hospital premises have been demolished and the rest of the site has been redeveloped to provide housing.

As well as this GP practice, there are outpatient and mental health services and convenient access to a range of health care professionals as well as faster access to blood tests, MRI, X-Ray, CT and ultrasound scans. It is also a major centre for kidney dialysis.

A wide range of voluntary sector organisations support the patients, residents and health professionals operating from the Hub, as well as a team of 100 volunteers weekly who “meet and greet” patients and visitors on arrival.

More services will be available in the future, including a new Community Diagnostic Centre, avoiding the need for extra visits to local hospitals. There is also a community café.

The Hub operates 7 days a week and is used by a wide-reaching range of individuals from our communities.

The Hub was deliberately provided with limited car parking facilities in the expectation that patients and staff would arrive and leave by public transport rather than car. The car park is now regularly full, and its use is restricted to four hours, which is not always convenient for those undergoing treatment.

This visit was carried out by two teams at the same time: one team visited the Country Park Surgery and this report is the account of their findings; the other team visited the Hub itself and is reported separately.

Country Park Surgery

This visit was arranged to see how much progress has been made since the opening of the Hub in late 2024.

As this report is focused on the Surgery, the only comment that the team wish to make about the Hub generally is that it has many excellent facilities, with the main reception and volunteers being very helpful towards the Surgery. Having arrived for the visit early, the team spent a little time talking to patients, volunteers and staff, all of whom were happy with the facilities and care being shown to them by the practice. The doctors and staff told the team that the move had been challenging but things are now beginning to settle down.

The Surgery reception (separate from the main reception area and further down the corridor) was up and running with all the normal facilities in place. Lots of informative and useful information was available around the main entrance. The team found fewer people in the area than they had expected.

The team were met by Dr O'Moore, the principal GP, and the practice manager, who were prepared for the visit and, because an appointment later that day had been cancelled, were able to spend the morning with the team and were open and honest in their responses. As a result, the team felt really confident about things and were sure

everything was up and running. There had been challenging times during the transfer from the practice's previous premises, and there was more to be done, but overall the practice was in a satisfactory position.

The Practice is open from 8am until 6.30pm, with appointments being made at any time during the day. Up to 15 urgent appointments are kept aside for dealing with the same day and children are always seen on the same day; otherwise, the wait for an appointment is usually no more than three to four days. The practice has 5,500 patients on its books and its catchment area is adhered as far as is possible. During the move from the old building all but about 100 of the patients came with them.

Staff employed include two doctors, an advanced nurse practitioner and two practice nurses. They also have access to external agencies, including a dietician and physiotherapist; they do not feel that it is necessary to employ a pharmacist. There are six reception staff and a secretary, who all work various shifts according to their designated times. Staff retention has been good so far in the new building, giving the practice lots of help and support during the last six months. It was pointed out that advertising for reception staff is always difficult. The present staff on duty were very welcoming and friendly, they felt very supported and confident moving forward. Locums are called in as and when necessary.

The eight rooms for the surgery are on a ten-year lease, but storage space is much needed, for example larger cupboards and a records room. Some of the rooms need more IT ports, and they cannot have phones in every room as there are no ports available. The plug facility is inadequate. There is also the question of getting the heating up and running (at the time of the visit, connected work was being carried out on the roof). The surgery is on the north side of the building and can get very cold – all staff have been working with outdoor coats on! There are no locks on doors or cupboards, creating a potential risk to equipment and other assets, also including a lack of privacy. This is regarded as a serious requirement.

Prescriptions are sent electronically with the usual time lapse. Test results, including bloods, have a 24/48 hour turn around by the doctors. Patients are advised accordingly. The Practice has access to blood tests and scans etc. on site if needed. The Parking Eye service can be adjusted if a patient needs to come back later in the day for these tests to avoid the four-hour time limit for parking.

There is no charge for travel immunisation, but a charge is made for letters for insurance and DVLA purposes. No minor surgery is carried out here. It was noted that transfer of medical notes between practices can be difficult but is getting better.

The telephone system is not yet working fully, resulting in some patients appearing to be left waiting at number one in the queue. When necessary and appropriate, patients are referred to the Same Day Access Hub or NHS 111. There are between 15 and 20 “Did Not Attends” each month – sending text reminders is not working.

Complaints are dealt with in the time frame allowed, with follow ups if things are not resolved. There is no Patient Participation Group at the moment, as getting a group of patients together for the purpose is proving difficult. Following the move from the previous premises, a new website, run by a different company, has been set up and is regularly updated.

All training is completed on line and face-to-face in-house, including the changing procedures within the NHS. Staff huddles are carried out on a regular basis as and when things need updating.

Development plans for the practice are working towards solving issues and developing dementia awareness. The patient charter is not happening yet but will be dealt with later in the year.

All patients over 70, those who have learning disabilities and those who have for long term conditions, including asthma, are invited for health checks. Getting these patients to come into the surgery can be very challenging

but the practice offers support for carers to help with this. Dr O'Moore told the team that he enjoys carrying out home visits.

The team were able to speak to individual members of staff separately. They seemed very confident and to be enjoying their roles, and confirmed that training takes place all the time, online and face-to-face. They felt very supported in their roles and attended practice meetings when called forward and were aware of the mission statement for the surgery. Patient confidentiality is adhered to strongly and people are asked to identify themselves when picking up scripts or calling the practice.

The Team were unable to speak to any patients on this occasion.

Conclusion

Summing up the visit, the team felt that, after a challenging move for the practice, things are beginning to settle down. There is still more to do, which can only be achieved as and when time permits, and when various improvements have been put in place. Notwithstanding that, the team felt that everyone was confident and compassionate. The team found the visit enjoyable.

However, there were so far nowhere near the numbers of people in the building that had been expected.

The team recognised that securing improvements in the provision of electrical, IT and telephone facilities, and additional storage space is outside the control of the practice but hope that it will be possible for the Hub's owners to make suitable arrangements for those essential enhancements.

Recommendations

Whilst appreciating that many of following points are not within the practice's direct control, the team consider that there are a number of issues that need to be addressed in the near future:

- The heating facilities need to be brought into use
- Locks are required on all doors and cabinets to ensure that the risk to equipment and other assets are avoided and that patient confidentiality is not compromised
- More cupboards are needed for storage; the existing provision of one flimsy cupboard without a suitable lock is totally unacceptable
- Space is needed for a records storage room
- The phone system needs to be more accurate and updated.
- Electricity, IT and telephone points are needed in each room

- Surgery signage needs to be included at the main entrance

The team recognise that securing improvements in the provision of electrical, IT and telephone facilities, and additional storage space, is outside the control of the practice but hope that it will be possible for the Hub's owners to make suitable arrangements for those essential enhancements.

Acknowledgments

Healthwatch Havering thanks Dr O'Moore and his colleagues at the practice for their co-operation before and during the visit.

Participation in Healthwatch Havering

Local people who have time to spare were welcome to join us as volunteers. We need both people who work in health or social care services, and those who were simply interested in getting the best possible health and social care services for the people of Havering.

Our aim was to develop wide, comprehensive and inclusive involvement in Healthwatch Havering, to allow every individual and organisation of the Havering Community to have a role and a voice at a level they feel appropriate to their personal circumstances.

Members

This was the key working role. For some, this role will provide an opportunity to help improve an area of health and social care where they, their families or friends have experienced problems or difficulties. Very often a life experience has encouraged people to think about giving something back to the local community or simply personal circumstances now allow individuals to have time to develop themselves. This role will enable people to extend their networks, and can help prepare for college, university or a change in the working life. There was no need for any prior experience in health or social care for this role.

The role provides the face to face contact with the community, listening, helping, signposting, providing advice. It also was part of ensuring the most isolated people within our community have a voice.

Healthwatch Havering Friends' Network

Join our Friends' Network for regular updates and other information about health and social care in Havering and North East London. It cost nothing to join and there was no ongoing commitment.

To find out more, visit our website at

<https://www.healthwatchhaverling.co.uk/advice-and-information/2022-06-06/our-friends-network-archive>



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