

Enter and View Report

Ealing Community Diagnostic Centre January 30th 2024.



A report by Healthwatch Ealing

“It's separate from the hospital; I don't even feel like I'm sick.
It's just like visiting a GP or pharmacy”.

- Service User

Contents

1. Visit Background.....	5
2. About the Visit.....	6
3. Executive Summary.....	7
4. Full Findings.....	8
4.1 Observations	9
4.2. Resident Feedback	13
4.3. Staff Interviews	15
4.4 Management Feedback.....	17
5. Recommendations	18
6. Glossary of Terms.....	21
7. Distribution and Comment.....	22

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Visit Details	
Service Visited	Ealing Community Diagnostic Centre

Manager	Mark Titcomb
Date & Time of Visit	10:00 AM January 30 th 2024
Status of Visit	Announced
Authorised Representatives	David Crawley, Carleen Duffy, Yee Phyo, Ruchi Wadhwa
Lead Representative	David Crawley

1. Visit Background

1.1. What is Enter & View?

Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to undertake 'Enter & View' (E&V) visits.

Mandated by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the visits enable trained Authorised Representatives (ARs) to visit health and care services – such as hospitals, care homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, and pharmacies.

E&V visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but can also be made when services have a good reputation.

During the visits we observe service delivery and talk with service users, their families, and carers. We also engage with management and staff. The aim is to gain an impartial view of how the service is operated and being experienced.

Following the visits, our official 'Enter & View Report', shared with the service provider, local commissioners and regulators, outlines what has worked well, and makes recommendations on what could work better. All reports are available to view on our website.

1.1.2 Safeguarding

E&V visits are not intended specifically to identify safeguarding issues. If safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with

safeguarding policies. If at any time an authorised representative (AR) observes anything they feel uncomfortable about they will inform their lead who will inform the service manager, ending the visit.

If any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer, they will be directed to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.

1.2 Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on this specific visit. It is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed on this date.

1.3 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Ealing would like to thank the service provider, service users and staff for their contribution and hospitality in enabling this E&V project to take place. We would also like to thank our ARs, who assisted us in conducting the visit and putting together this report.

2. About the Visit

2.1 Ealing Community Diagnostic Centre

On January 30th 2024 we visited the Community Diagnostic Centre (referred to as the CDC from this point onward) at Ealing Hospital.

The service is operated by the London North West University NHS Trust.

2.2 Online Feedback

Recent feedback via the Friends and Family Test for the Outpatient Services for the North West London ICB has a 93% Positive rating, a 4% negative rating, and 3% neutral.

2.3 Purpose of the Visit

Enter and View visits enable Healthwatch Ealing to form an impartial view of how the service is operated and how it is impacting local residents. This report is a part of a Healthwatch England Initiative to examine CDC locations across the country as the service is in its infancy.

3. Executive Summary

This section of the report details the key findings from our observations and the resident and staff feedback collected during our visit.

Observations

What has worked well?

- Private areas for patients to change and leave their belongings provide comfort and privacy during scans.
- Large comfortable chairs in the waiting area enhance patient comfort and experience while waiting.

What could be improved?

- Addressing national staff shortages of trained radiologists to increase appointment availability and reduce wait times.
- Improving patient guidance and signage to prevent confusion and ensure patients go to the correct department for their appointments.
- Enhancing staff training in empathy and communication to provide more sympathetic responses to patients who experience difficulties during their visit.

Patient Feedback

What has worked well?

- Patients told us that their appointments were on time.
- We were told that they found the staff to be professional, communicative, and respectful.
- Patients did tell us they liked how the CDC was separate, and that it made them feel like they were not sick.

What could be improved?

- Respondents did voice concern about how easy it was to find the CDC. One did express difficulty finding it and said that they should make it clearer in the future.
- Patients did mention to us they found that there was a lack of parking, in particular disabled parking. A disabled patient was not able to use any of these spaces and had to walk further.
- Another patient told us they found the parking lot confusing, both in layout and for payment.

Staff Feedback

What has worked well?

- Overwhelmingly it was expressed to us that teamwork was the thing that people enjoyed the most about their job.
- Staff have told us that teammates make their day better and that they are able to work in a hard efficient manner because of them.

What could be improved?

- Respondents have told us that they found the scheduling of patients to be too close together.
- Schedules have been described as “tight” as a result of this.
- Staff mentioned that language barriers were an issue for them when communicating with patients.
- A new member of staff told us they hadn’t received new staff training.

4. Full Findings

During the visit, we collected responses from 8 service users during our visit.

It is important to note that the full CDC site was not in operation during our visit and that at the time of writing, it is scheduled to be fully open by mid-June 2024. We aim to do a follow-up visit at that time.

This report is based on their collective feedback, plus notes and observations made at the visit.

We would like to thank the staff and management for their time and for their warm welcome and cooperation.

4.1 Observations

During our visit, our team of Authorised Representatives made observations on Entry and General Accessibility, General Environment, Safety and Visiting, Personal Care and Activities, and Staffing and Management. We have highlighted both good practice and areas for improvement.

Entry, Getting to Appointment, and General Accessibility

Notes

- Ealing Hospital, where the CDC is based, has several bus stops outside of it.
- There is ample parking, and blue badge parking right outside of the main entrance.

What has worked well?

- The location of the main entrance is well signposted.
- There are clear indicators for where pedestrians should walk.
- To make sure that patients attend their appointments, reminders are sent via the post and by text message. Patients are called 2 days before appointments. The email option hasn't been explored yet.

What could be improved?

- Patients have told us they find parking confusing, especially when it comes to paying for parking.



MRI Suite Environment

Notes

- This section currently houses in a temporary space. The current machines will be moved over to the full CDC building before the planned opening in mid-June.
- Two out of the three machines were in operation during our visit.
- Self-check is unavailable in this suite due to the nature of MRI scans requiring a safety check before commencing.
- This section cannot take in patients who are bedridden and/or have no mobility due to the magnets in the machines.

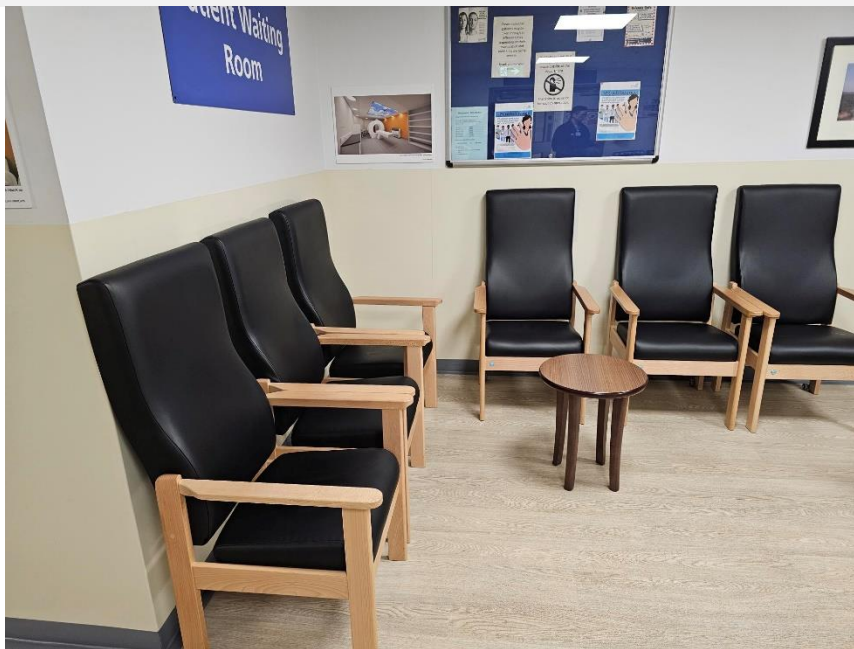
What has worked well?

- The suite was very clean, tidy, and organized.

- There are private areas for patients to change and leave their belongings while they undergo their scan.
- There are large comfortable chairs in the waiting area.
- Signs leading to this area are large and clear.

What could be improved?

- Directional signs were not available in other languages.
- There have been instances where patients have confused acute site imaging/MRI scan areas with the CDC community imaging areas
- A member of staff told us that they were not giving as many appointments as they would like due to a staff shortage.



Ultrasound Suite

Notes

- It should be noted that this is a temporary space and will be expanded when the full CDC is opened by mid-June.
- There is no self-check in at this time.

What has worked well?

- The space is well lit, tidy, and clean.
- Signs leading to this area are clear.
- Water was made available for patients in the waiting room.

- The area was well signposted, with the restrooms having dementia-friendly signage.

What could be improved?

- During our visit, a patient went to the wrong department for an ultrasound, the in-patient area that they had used in the past. When the patient did arrive to the correct place, staff did not seem to be sympathetic to their tardiness. “Well, that is very late, let’s see if we can fit you in”.



4.2. Service User Feedback

At the visit we collected feedback from 8 service users.

Staff

- Patients told us that their appointments were on time.
- We were told that they found the staff to be professional, communicative, and respectful.

Communication

- When asked what they would improve about their experience, patients told us they would have liked to have follow up information and another said they were not told when they could expect results.
- One patient mentioned they would like to see were all information is provided in writing.
- Most patients told us they did not have any issues with communication.
- One patient who did not speak English as a first language was offered an interpreter.
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Travel to the site

- Most of the patients we spoke with mentioned no problems when travelling to use the CDC. Most either drove themselves or used TFL bus services.
- Patients did mention to us they found that there was a lack of parking, in particular disabled parking. A disabled patient was not able to use any of these spaces and had to walk further.
- Another patient told us they found the parking lot confusing, both in layout and for payment.
- Most of the patients we spoke with lived locally, the furthest one had to travel was from Greenford.

Getting the appointment

- Patients we spoke with told us they did not have long waits to get an appointment. Some had to wait as long as 2 weeks, while others just had to wait two to three days.
- Most of our respondents were referred to the CDC by their GP, but some were referred by a specialist.

- Most respondents told us that they were not given a choice in where they would get their scan. However, most of these respondents also did not express any ill will towards that fact. One person told us they would have liked to have a choice.
- One patient would have preferred going to a different closer hospital for their scan.
- Those who were given a choice in where to get their scan chose the CDC because it was more convenient for them.
- Patients were not given a choice when it came to the time of their appointment.

Thoughts and Opinions of the Community Diagnostic Centre.

- A strong majority of patients we spoke to did not know what a CDC was.
- When asked about their expectations regarding a CDC, most did not have any, but those who did expect it to be a part of the main hospital.
- Patients did tell us they liked how the CDC was separate, and that it made them feel like they were not sick.
- When asked about the benefits of a CDC, patients told us that they believed the site would be more convenient for getting more scans done.
- Patients waiting for their appointments told us they would like to see more seating made available.
- Would not like to go to a shopping centre.
- People told us that they found the environment to be quiet, calm, and very clean.

Selected Comments

Thoughts on the CDC

"It's separate from the hospital; I don't even feel like I'm sick. It's just like visiting a GP or pharmacy".

"They can accommodate more patients more conveniently".

Thoughts on Staff

"They spoke to me very nice, very polite and kind."

"The woman that called was very helpful and the staff here are good."

4.3. Staff Interviews

During the visit we received feedback from 9 staff members, from varied roles including radiographers, administrators, and department assistants.

Selected Comments

“Everyone (in the) department works together as a team. Coming together to help patients is very important.”

Training

- Trainings include MRI Screenings, CT Screenings, X-Ray Trainings, and Management.
- The effectiveness of training was described as Very Good by the majority of respondents.
- New hires told us they felt like they required more training.

What they enjoy about the job

- Overwhelmingly it was expressed to us that teamwork was the thing that people enjoyed the most about their job.
- Staff have told us that teammates make their day better and that they are able to work in a hard efficient manner because of them.

Support

- When asked about reiving enough support from your peers and management, the majority said yes, however one person said somewhat.

How Do You Usually Feel at the End of a Shift?

- When asked how they felt at the end of shift, the majority of our respondents told us that they were feeling neutral. 1 being very energised, 1 being energised, and 1 being drained.

Difficulties

- Respondents have told us that they found the scheduling of patients to be too close together.
- Schedules have been described as “tight” as a result of this.

Communicating with patients and their family

- When asked if staff are able to foster as much communication with the patient and their family as they can, staff told us that mostly they agree that they can. With 3 being neutral.
- When it comes to communicating with patients, language barriers were listed as the number one issue for staff. Interpreters
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Selected Comments

"We want to make the most of this £30 million investment".

"Our goal is to be the main hub for West London"

4.4. Follow Up Interviews

We conducted follow up interviews with three service users a few weeks after our initial visit to the CDC. The following are our findings from these interviews.

Selected Comments

"I had an MRI, the people who completed the scan were efficient, welcoming, explained what was going to happen. The appointment was received through the NHS app, which was brilliant for me"

"I liked the calm environment of the centre, it's not busy like the main hospital."

What they liked about the centre

- Patients we spoke with reiterated what they told us during the initial interviews, that they liked the calm environment of the centre, and that they found the staff to be good efficient workers.
- All three of our respondents told us that if given the choice they would return to the CDC, as it was quiet and convenient for them and the staff were friendly.

Receiving test results

- All respondents have received their results and got them within the expected time frame.
- They told us that communication about their results was very good, including next steps and what to expect in the future.

- Even in the case where a patient had missed calls, they received text messages regarding their results.

What they would change about the centre

- Respondents did voice concerns about how easy it was to find the CDC. One did express difficulty finding it and said that they should make it clearer in the future.
- A concern about digital exclusion was voiced. A respondent told us that they received their appointment information through the NHS app, and they were worried that older people might not be able to access this information as easily as they could. Alternate forms of communication should still be used as opposed to an environment where it all moves to the app.

4.5 Management Feedback

We also spoke with the matron of Ealing Manor Nursing Home, Lydia Kur, about a variety of topics.

Selected Comments

"We want to make the most of this £30 million investment".

"Our goal is to be the main hub for West London"

In Summary

Goals for the CDC

- The ultimate goal for this site is to help alleviate wait times for these appointments.
- We want to give people a choice, between the CDC and their nearest hospital.

Why this location was chosen

- Out of all of the proposed sites, this area had the lowest average travel time for residents of North West London.

Challenging Aspects?

- Reaching into economically deprived areas to let them know that this exists is challenging.
- We also want to know how people who are coming from outside of Ealing feel about travelling to this site.

Improvements

- The site is currently undergoing construction. Once that is finished in mid-June the CDC will have its own entrance and parking area. (including blue badge parking)
- We will ensure that the full site is disability compliant.

5. Recommendations

Healthwatch Ealing would like to thank the service for the support in arranging our E&V visit.

Based on the analysis of all feedback obtained, we would like to make the following recommendations.

Recommendations

Entry, Getting to Appointment, and Accessibility

- Patients have told us they find the parking confusing, especially when it comes to paying for parking.

5.1: Whilst the new parking lot is being constructed, consider this point. How could you make it so your own grandparent could understand it?

Response: We agree that the current temporary set-up and related signage is not optimal. However, please see 5.3 below. The completion of the works will allow us to open a designated drop-off/pick-up area for the CDC which will be beneficial to ease the navigation to the correct area, and signage will be updated alongside this work. We are confident that when fully open the CDC will be easy to locate, with a very clearly defined separate, standalone, accessible entrance, with clear signage to and from the main hospital.

- Patients have expressed that the CDC was difficult to find.

5.2: Ensure that directions are given in a clear concise manner in all appointment letters and where appropriate have staff on standby to direct people to the CDC within its first few months of full operation.

Response: We will also update the information on our website, which meets high standards for accessibility, is instantly translatable into over 130 languages, and written to be as simple as possible to understand.

We will work closely with our staff across the whole site, to ensure the purpose of CDC is well understood, and that any staff are able to correctly signpost to CDC.

MRI Suite Environment

- Directional signs were not available in other languages.

5.3: Where appropriate, ensure there are signs in other languages that can help navigate patients.

Response: While not expected to be completed by the time of CDC full opening, our Trust has begun a Trust-wide Wayfinding programme to review, update and enhance signage across all our sites.

Whilst we work on getting the long-term strategy right, we're making some interim measures to fix some of the most urgent issues with our signs.

These interim steps aim to make our signage clear, consistent, and compliant with government guidelines. We're applying these measures to all types of wayfinding signs, including new, existing, and temporary signage. This way, patients and visitors can find their way around more easily, hopefully reducing stress and frustration.

- There have been instances where patients have confused acute site imaging/MRI scan areas with the CDC community imaging areas.

5.4: The CDC needs to be better defined for patients. In their appointment letter an explanation of what it is should be included as well as its location. Even for the temporary site.

Response: We will review CDC patient letters to ensure the information and advice given is clear and concise.

We have worked closely with our GPs and primary care colleagues to ensure the referral pathway works, and to include the guidance to patients on what to expect. We have also provided regular updates to our Patient and Carer Participation Group, including in the newsletter, on the progress and purpose of the CDC. This work will continue and we look forward to our continuing work with Healthwatches to ensure all relevant messages are shared. We have also created a specific point of contact for GPs and primary care through our Primary Care Liaison team.

For schedule booking, it is expected that there will be some patients who do not attend their appointments, and to optimise the number of people being able to have their appointments as soon as possible, to ensure the CDCs support the wider purpose of reducing patient waiting times and diagnostic backlog which can cause inequity for our communities.

- A member of staff told us that they were not giving as many appointments as they would like due to a staff shortage.
- Other members of staff told us that they felt that their schedule to see patients was very tight, with little room for error.

5.5: Working with the London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust aim to recruit or train more MRI specialists to ensure that the CDC is working at its maximum possible capacity.

Response: We have an ongoing and ambitious recruitment plan for the CDC, for all the speciality roles we require to staff the unit. As part of our LNWH Trust we can utilise the expertise of our existing teams also.

Ultrasound Suite

- During our visit, a patient went to the wrong department for an ultrasound, the in-patient area that they had used in the past. When the patient did arrive to

the correct place, staff did not seem to be sympathetic to their tardiness.
“Well, that is very late, let’s see if we can fit you in”

5.6: As the CDC is being constructed and people are getting used to it, some leeway needs to be given. Having had multiple reports of patients getting lost or departments confused this is an issue that needs correcting immediately.

Response: We regret to hear that someone has had a poor experience of attempting to locate the US suite, and with staff communication. It will be our priority to ensure the awareness of the CDC continues to improve, and that our staff will know how to signpost correctly. We are also increasing the language support provided through the LNWH Charity bid that allocated up to £200k to be used in improving accessibility of language and translation in our areas, with resources designated also to CDC, reception and imaging areas to be able to better support ad hoc language needs.

- Staff told us that one of the difficulties they face in their work is language barriers between themselves and patients.

5.7: Patients should be made aware of their right to have an interpreter provided for them for NHS visits.

Response: It is absolutely key to us that our policy is followed on booking an interpreter request, and this is included in the pathway of referral being made.

- A member of staff we surveyed told us that they had not yet received new staff training

5.8: Ensure that all staff are properly trained in all aspects of their position prior to starting their role.

Response: All our staff receive a local workplace induction as well as a Trust corporate all-day induction. To support the functioning of the new CDC we have taken the deliberate approach to allocate staff who have already worked with us and are familiar with the site, to work with the new staff joining the CDC, to ensure a good skill mix is available and new joiners can rely on experienced staff for their local induction and support.

6. Glossary of Terms

AR Authorised Representative
CQC Care Quality Commission
Enter & View E&V

7. Distribution and Comment

This report is available to the general public, and is shared with our statutory and community partners. Accessible formats are available.

If you have any comments on this report or wish to share your views and experiences, please contact us.

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“Everyone in the department works together as a team.
Coming together to help patients is very important.”

- Member of Staff

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