

GP Patient Information Audit - London Borough of Lewisham

Healthwatch Lewisham carried out a research project to assess the consistency and accuracy of GP out-of-hours answerphone messages, website information and complaint procedures across the London Borough of Lewisham. Healthwatch Lewisham carried out a comprehensive review of all public facing information provided by the borough's 43 GP practices.

Out-of-hours services are defined by the CQC as: *Primary Care Services provided for patients with urgent care needs that cannot wait until their GP practice reopens, between the hours of 18:30 to 08:00, as well as weekends and Bank Holidays. These include NHS 111, A&E, Urgent Care Services and Extended Hours Services.*

Healthwatch set out to:

- investigate patient experience of using both online and telephone information
- identify how comprehensive and accessible online information is
- identify if complaints procedures are clear and supportive of patients.

Findings

- There is a lack of consistency in telephone and website information for patients in Lewisham.
- 51.5% of those surveyed had used the out of hours services as recommended by their GP practice telephone messages. The majority of these patients had chosen to use A&E.
- Of those who had used out of hours services, 52.8% were satisfied with the service provided locally and felt their health needs had been met.
- 68.2% of patients surveyed stated they had never consulted their GP practice website for information regarding local health care services.
- GP telephone messages were often recorded with a significant amount of background noise which affected the clarity and audibility of the public facing messages.
- There was good provision for people for whom English is a second language, with over 140 language provision on many GP websites.
- There was limited use of online services for either booking appointments or signposting information in the sampled population.
- Sydenham Green Group Practice had excellent patient information around how to make a complaint.

Key Recommendations

Healthwatch Lewisham recommends that all GP practices within Lewisham incorporate the following recommendations:

- All information on GP answer machines should be recorded in one message, without patient's having to press buttons for further information.
- Further work is needed to increase awareness of the GP out-of-hours services within Lewisham to improve patient experience and patient outcomes. Further promotion of the new extended access service for patients would be beneficial.
- We also recommend that Lewisham GP practices update their website information regularly to enable patient access to accurate information and the appropriate out-of-hours service. A chart, such as the following at The Surgery, Lee Road, is a useful visual aid.
- GPs practices that have the facilities in place should allow patients full access to view their medical records online.
- GP practices should ensure that sufficient details regarding complaints procedures are made available online and displayed in all reception and waiting areas.
- All information should be made available in additional languages on GP practice websites, as per the Accessible Information Standard.
- NHS symptom checker would be a valuable addition to GP practice website.
- To support self-management, the provision of self-care information on websites is a useful tool to empower people to take greater control of their health.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT NHS SERVICE...

A&E or 999	999 Accident and Emergency (A&E) departments should only be used in a critical or life-threatening situation. A&E departments provide immediate emergency care for people who show the symptoms of serious illness or are badly injured.	Dial 999 and go immediately to your nearest A&E department. The Lewisham A&E is at Lewisham Healthcare NHS Trust, Lewisham High Street, London SE13 6LH. Call 020 8333 3000 or visit www.lewisham.nhs.uk
Urgent Care Centre (UCC)	If you have an urgent and severe but non life threatening illness or condition that you are unable to wait to see your own GP then attend the UCC. Always consider an alternative service appropriate for your needs – THINK FIRST, CHOOSE WELL.	Visit the Lewisham UCC at Lewisham Healthcare NHS Trust, Lewisham High Street, London SE13 6LH. Call 020 8333 3000 or visit www.lewisham.nhs.uk
GP Walk-in Centre	If you are unable to get an appointment with your GP and have a minor injury or medical condition that is not life threatening but you need to be seen then visit the Walk-in Centre. If you do not have a GP please contact our PALS Team on 0800 587 7027 who will be able to assist you.	The GP Walk-in Centre is located at the Waldron Health centre, Amersham Vale, New Cross, London SE14 6LD. Open everyday between 8am and 8pm. Call 020 3049 2370 for more information.
GP, out-of-hours GP	If you have an illness or injury that will just not go away, make an appointment with your GP. They provide a range of services by appointment and will be able to assess your immediate needs as well as refer you into a specialist service, such as outpatients, if necessary. They also know your medical history so are best placed to manage you – THINK FIRST, CHOOSE WELL.	If your surgery is closed, call the usual practice number and you will be given the number to call or be automatically diverted to the South East London Doctors on Call (SELDOC) service. This service is based at Dulwich but out-of-hours appointments can be provided closer to home.
Dentist	All Lewisham dentists are accepting NHS patients. For help finding your nearest dentist call 0300 300 0026 or text SMILE to 64746.	For out-of-hours dental emergencies call 020 8299 5509.
Pharmacist Find your local 24 hours pharmacist at www.nhs.uk	As well as dispensing prescriptions, your pharmacist can provide you with advice about a range of common conditions such as aches, colds, skin conditions, allergies and rashes.	A number of local pharmacies in Lewisham offer free medicines for a range of conditions, without appointment (subject to prescription charges, if applicable). Free emergency contraception is also available at some local pharmacies. If you text pharmacy to 64746 you will receive three free text with details of your nearest pharmacy.
NHS Direct Helpline 0845 46 47 www.nhs.uk	For confidential health advice and information around the clock call 0845 46 47. Calls cost a maximum of 5p per minute from a BT landline. Calls from mobiles and other networks may vary. Your service provider may charge a minimum cost per call. A confidential interpretation service is available in many languages.	For internet information on all aspects of health and health care go to www.nhs.uk This website allows you to check your symptoms, check hundreds of conditions and treatments and find telephone numbers and addresses for most NHS organisations, including hospitals and GPs. Text phone 0845 606 4647.
Self-care	Self-care is the best choice to treat very minor illnesses and injuries. A range of common winter illnesses and injuries can be treated at home simply by combining a well stocked medicine cabinet with plenty of rest.	Make sure that your medicine cabinet is well stocked with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paracetamol • Aspirin (not for under 16yrs) • Plasters • A thermometer • Rehydration mixture • Antihistamines • Anti-diarrhoea medicine • Indigestion remedy

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Demographic Information

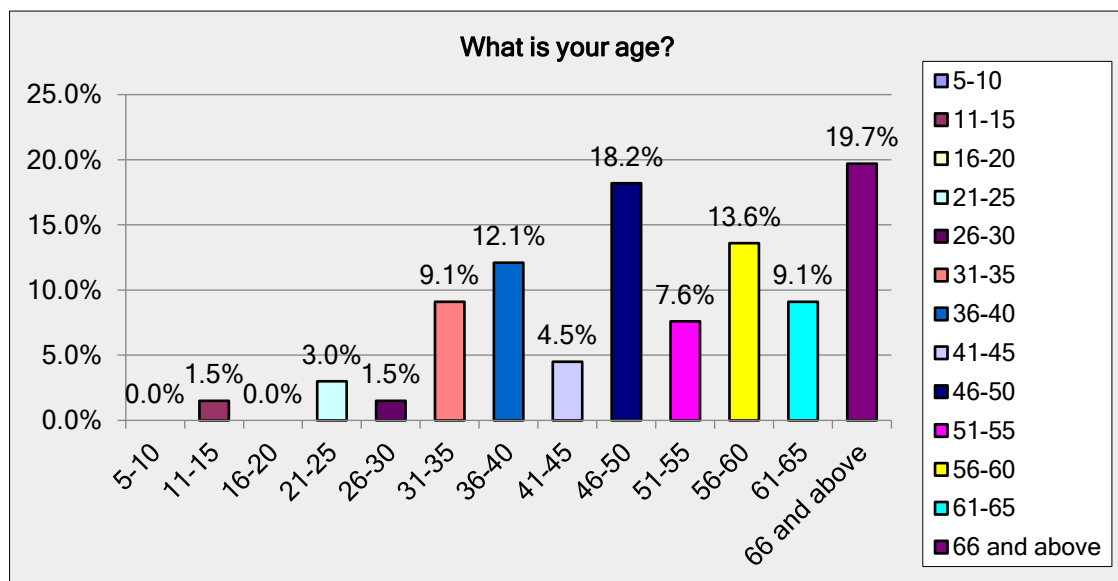
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The following breaks down the demographic information for the 68 respondents to the 'out-of-hours' questionnaire.

Gender

- 83% - female
- 15% - male
- 2% - prefer not to say

Age



Sexuality

- 74% - heterosexual
- 26% - gay or lesbian

Disability

- 82% - not disabled
- 18% - considered themselves to be disabled

Ethnicity

How would you best describe your ethnicity?

