



# NHS Treatment in Private Facilities

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## INTRODUCTION

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham is the voice of local service users. Our role is to ensure that the views of local residents are heard by decision makers, and that their opinions influence the way that services are delivered. We are independent and therefore do not have a pre-set agenda or a pre-determined interest in influencing the outcome of the results of a consultation.

Healthwatch decided to investigate the provision of NHS treatment in private facilities such as the North East London Treatment Centre (NELTC) situated in the grounds of King George Hospital, Holly House (Buckhurst Hill, Essex) and Spire Roding Hospitals (Redbridge) following some members of the public highlighting negative issues they had experienced.

In order to do this, Healthwatch contacted the CCG with some questions that resulted from the response from Barking and Dagenham residents on Streetlife.

Copies of this report are available by contacting Barking and Dagenham Healthwatch on 020 8596 8200 or by emailing [info@healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk).

Copies are also downloadable from our website:  
[www.healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk).

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Healthwatch Barking & Dagenham approached members of the public on Streetlife about whether they had ever received NHS treatment in a private facility and how they had found the experience:

**‘Healthwatch Barking & Dagenham would like to get feedback from people who have received treatment (a knee or hip replacement maybe!?) on the NHS but in the private facility.**

**We would love to hear how you felt the experience was like and your opinion of the service.**

**Also, perhaps you know someone who has had the same op either totally privately or in an NHS facility? What difference was there in the service you received, if any?’**

We heard back from 6 service users altogether.

Most praised the service they received in the private facility they used:

- *‘It was excellent, like being in a hotel, very personal service. I didn't feel like I was on a conveyor belt. If ever I need anything done again I'd like to go there.’*
- *‘You do NOT feel as though you are on a conveyor belt, my named nurse came to sit with me until the "dreaded hour" arrived because I was nervous. [,..] later I ate my delicious salad - no comparison to NHS food whatsoever.’*
- *‘The main difference from a NHS hospital was that parking was free. The doctor I saw would, on another day, have been working in a NHS hospital.’*
- *‘The quality of service given could not be faulted. You actually do feel like you're a person and not an inanimate object on a conveyor belt. The personal element is very important and intricate part of patient CARE. This does appear to be missing in modern NHS hospitals.’*
- *‘In both cases each I was happy with the service and the attention which contrasted a bit harshly with my sister's treatment in NHS hospitals.’*

Some comments reflected that receiving private treatment is not always the best route whilst others raised questions:

- *‘Having worked in both the NHS and the privates sector I have to say that the main reason why private care is better is simply because the private sector cherry pick the conditions that they are prepared to treat. The conditions treated tend to be quick turnover, not long stay, highly dependent patients.’*
- *‘Ever thought about who’s there to look after you should an emergency occur outside of office hours in private care? We dialed 999 on more than one occasion!’*
- *‘These [private] establishments are very good at deal with ACUTE conditions and not long term illnesses or the elderly?’*
- *‘How much do private hospitals charge the NHS for these procedures? Does it cost the NHS the same as providing the treatment ‘in-house’ or does it cost more?’*

Healthwatch Barking & Dagenham, raised some of these questions with the CCG regarding NHS treatment in private facilities as follow:

- **Do NHS patients receive exactly the same service as private ones in those private facilities?**

*Yes, NHS patients receive the same service.*

- **Who has ‘legal responsibility’ for anything that may go wrong for a patient? Is it the NHS or the private provider?**

*The private provider has legal responsibility of patient should anything go wrong.*

- **What is the cost for the NHS (for a knee replacement for example)? - What would the cost of the same treatment be if performed in an NHS facility?**

*All our providers operate under PbR (Payment by Results) which means that tariffs are agreed for each procedure. The same tariff is paid to NHS and private providers, adjusted by MFF (Market Forces Factor) which is determined by geographical location.*

- Does the NHS use ‘block bookings’ in those facilities?  
*Block arrangements are not in place for these providers.*
- For our information we asked the CCG how many people have chosen to receive NHS treatment in a private facility in 2013/2014 and so far in 2015?

*Barking and Dagenham CCG are unable to provide information regarding choosing to receive NHS treatment within a private facility.*

*We are able to supply the number of patients that have been treated within the private sector.*

*Please view the table below*

<i>• Years</i>	<i>• 2013/14</i>	<i>• 2014/15</i>	<i>• Grand Total</i>
<i>• Inpatient</i>	<i>• 2,093</i>	<i>• 2,360</i>	<i>• 4,453</i>
<i>• Outpatient</i>	<i>• 8,099</i>	<i>• 11,572</i>	<i>• 19,671</i>
<i>• Grand Total</i>	<i>• 10,192</i>	<i>• 13,932</i>	<i>• 24,124</i>

## CONCLUSION

The overall positive response from service users has indicated that most people are happy with the NHS treatments they have received in private facilities and that complaints about this service are only isolated cases.

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham will therefore not make any recommendations or pursue this at this stage but will revisit the subject if we hear of serious complaints.