

Barking and Dagenham Clinical Commissioning Group

Changes to GP Services

'GP Hub' Focus Group



## **(1) Introduction**

Barking and Dagenham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) asked Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham to host a focus group to listen to and give feedback about, proposals to set up and provide additional GP services in the borough.

This is a summary report of participants' feedback and of the questions raised during the session. The CCG have provided a written response to the questions raised and these are included in the summary.

The group was attended by 18 people made up of Local Residents; Other Service Providers; Healthwatch representatives; General Practitioners (GPs); Staff from the CCG and the Nuffield Trust.

**The changes are to be introduced in two stages;**

- **Stage 1 - Extending GP hours during the week from 6.30pm to 10pm.**
- **Stage 2 - Providing GP services at weekends from 8am to 8pm as well as continuing the services as at stage 1.**

Dr Jagan John provided an overview of the Prime Minister's Challenge Fund and of the primary care transformation in the borough. Along with Dr Alex Duodu - they spoke about what the 'GP Hub' might look like.

**Key points:**

- The GP Hub will initially be a pilot scheme - it will be tested to see how well it works and provides a service that meets the needs of the population in Barking and Dagenham.
- The GPs have formed a federation called 'Together First' that is made up of a group of 27 out of the 40 practices in the borough. The aim of Together First is to forge closer working partnership between the practices.
- To access 'Hub Services' patients will use the NHS 111 Direct contact number.

- A key decision is where the hub would be situated in Barking and Dagenham. Initially, it was advised to be based at King George's hospital, Goodmayes - the suggestion from the GP Federation since the focus group, is that the preferred location is Barking Community Hospital.
- The longer term plan is that the staff within the hub will be made up of professionals that provide expertise across various clinical services.
- Using computer technology was suggested as a way to carry out some consultations - either by e-mail or Skype.
- The Nuffield Trust are researching, evaluating and providing feedback about the changes for both stages 1 and 2, over a 2 year period.

## **(2) Current Issues and Comments Raised By Local People**

### **What people said about current services...**

- 'Opening times are not long enough'
- 'There is only one telephone line to ring the surgery on'
- 'All I get is a voicemail message when I ring my doctors. It seems to be on all day from 8am til 8pm'
- 'Some GPs seem to be working better than others across the borough when they should all be working well and together to give the best service'
- 'The issue for me is when staff on reception are being rude to patients - too much power over other people, given to the wrong people, without the wisdom to use it properly'
- 'More should be done to accommodate people with caring responsibilities'

- ‘Want to see the same GP so you get to know them and they get to know you’
- ‘GPs should be open everyday and not closed practices on selected days during afternoons’

### **What people said about seeing the Doctor...**

- ‘I want to be able to access GP appointments when I need to’
- ‘GP appointments at weekends please - I’m fed up with having to wait 2 weeks to get one’
- ‘Locum doctors don’t want to get to know you, speak at you and rarely look at you when speaking with them’
- ‘I prefer face to face consultations, but don’t mind telephone consultation’
- ‘A better appointment system should be put in place so people phoning can get through straight away’
- ‘I would like to see the same GP, but I guess it depends on whether my health issue is urgent’
- ‘Bring back the personal touch - GPs don’t even look you in the eyes anymore; they talk at you rather than with you’
- ‘Face to face consultations are better - a phone call is ok as long as it is a regular doctor - no locums or doctors that don’t have a connection with people in the borough’
- ‘Want to see the same GP so you get to know them and they get to know you and more female GPs should be available to see’

## What people said about services provided by the Hub...?

- 'There should be more than one hub site in the borough so people who might struggle, don't have to travel long distances on public transport - especially when it is dark during the winter time'
- 'NHS 111 direct needs to make sure they get you to the right person straight away otherwise the service will not work well for people'
- 'There should be a hub centre for urgent care during evenings and weekends - cant see this working in GPs surgeries'
- 'You should be able to see a nurse for an appointment when really you don't need to see a doctor'
- 'Would like to see blood tests available at the hub - like the walk-in-centre used to'
- 'There should be hubs in Barking and in Dagenham'
- 'The contact number should be a free phone number or a small standard one off charge - not a premium number when the NHS is supposed to be free at it's source'
- 'People need to been seen quickly and a good service would depend on how quickly the GP can access a patient's records'
- 'People don't want to have to repeat the same information time and time again when having to deal with different doctors'
- 'Email and Skype are not ideal or accessible for a lot of people in the borough - a new service should adapt to the personal needs of everyone'
- 'There should be a service provided after 6pm on Saturdays'

- ‘If I cant see the GP face to face - a better alternative would be by text or e-mail’
- ‘Email consultation is good only if you can afford the equipment’
- ‘Hubs should be situated near good transport service links’
- ‘If you haven’t got a computer, you haven’t got a option to e-mail or use skype’
- ‘If I cant get an appointment face to face, a phone call is ok for me - it shouldn’t be made difficult to get an appointment quickly’
- ‘I think the idea of the hub is excellent, as it could take some pressure off accident and emergency and the core GP appointment system. I understand it has to start small as a pilot scheme but would hope it would employ multiple GPs and nurses otherwise the impact on the wider GP services would be minimal’
- ‘The plan for a complex care team would be very welcome. There are a number of people with complex physical health problems who have to deal with several different consultants appointments whilst already dealing with anxiety and depression. One team would reduce complexity and support general well being’

### (3) Questions Raised and CCG Responses

This is what local people were asking for a response to...

- Q) Is it intended that people will use the hub as a substitute for their own GP practice?

*A) No. The Hub will be open weekday evenings and over weekends (i.e. outside of practice 'core hours'). This pilot project is about local GPs working together in a new way to provide additional GP appointments for Barking and Dagenham patients during the evenings and at weekends. This new model of primary care delivery is an extension of current services, not a replacement for them.*

- Q) What about home visits to those who are unable to get out of their homes?

*A) If patients require a home visit outside of practice core hours and are not able to come to the Hub this would continue to fall under the (current) Out of Hours service.*

- Q) Will you be monitoring where most patients are coming from to use the hub?

*A) Yes. The GP Federation 'Together First' will monitor Hub activity as will the CCG which GP Federations report to at regular contract review meetings. In addition the Nuffield Trust is an independent research body that has been commissioned to evaluate how well the Hub pilot model works.*

- **Q)** With the current system not working well for people over 75, what are you going to do about this to make sure the new system will work far better for elderly people?

*A) The NHS guidance for 2014/ 15 requires that every patient over the age of 75 has a named GP.*

*Health and Social Care both within Barking & Dagenham (but across the wider Barking, Havering and Redbridge area) are working together to improve integration and the coordination of care for patients with a focus on those aged 75 and over.*

- **Q)** Where at King Georges Hospital is the hub located and what other options are you looking at in the borough, other than Barking Community Hospital?

*A) The Hub service will not be located at King George's hospital; it will run from Barking Community hospital.*

*The Complex Primary Care Practice called Health 1000 (which is separate from the Hub) will initially be based on the King George hospital site, next to Spearpoint surgery.*

- **Q)** With 10,000 new homes being built to the South of the borough over at Barking Riverside and also for the residents living in the North of the borough on the Marks Gate estate - how will one hub serve a population explosion and residents that have to reach it from the extreme travelling areas of the borough?

*A) Currently NHS England Regions commission primary care services for the patient population in their area. The Hub model is a pilot project which will develop over time so there is potential for more than one Hub to be in operation. The CCG will continue to review need.*

- Q) How much choice will people have when seeing a GP?

*A) Patients who come to the Hub will only be able to see the clinician/s working there at the time. The Hub service is an extension of primary care services so choice will be limited to local clinicians (who work on a rota basis).*

- Q) If you have different things wrong with you, 10 minutes will not be enough time - will this change under this new service?

*A) Initially the Hubs will deal with urgent care needs only. However once the full patient record becomes available, routine appointments will be offered as well as urgent ones. Appointments will be 10 minute slots, however the time spent with patients will vary by clinician and patient need.*

- Q) Under this new service how will people with complex medical needs be given the same access to it as everybody else?

*A) The Hub will offer the same access for all patients.*

*However the complex primary care practice (Health 1000) is currently under development. The starting point has been to identify 1000 patients who have the most complex care needs. Patients will be contacted and will have a discussion with their GP about whether they want to be registered with this practice.*

- Q) How long, for a good quality service, should patients expect to wait for a GP to respond to an e-mail?

*A) We asked participants what they thought of the idea of having email consultations at the consultation event. If this is taken forward in the future, response times are something that would have to be determined at that point.*

- Q) Would Skype be run on an appointment system?

*A) We asked participants what they thought of the idea of having video-conferencing e.g. Skype consultations at the consultation event. Again if this was taken forward in the future how it would operate would have to be determined then.*

- Q) How will the hub link together with the Community Treatment Team?

*A) The Hub will link with the Community Treatment Team (CTT) as other GPs services do now. GPs locally are aware of the new services and refer to these every day. The teams work with the patient's GP to ensure appropriate, effective and co-ordinated care. At the completion of treatment the patient's GP also receives a discharge summary detailing the care provided, outcomes and ongoing support needs as appropriate.*

- Q) How many GPs will be providing a service in the hub during evenings and weekends?

*A) The intention is there will be a skill mix of clinicians (e.g. GPs, nurses) working at Hubs which can be refined as they develop, in order to best meet patient needs.*

- Q) If you are registered with a GP outside of the borough catchment area but are a resident of Barking and Dagenham; will you still be given a service at hubs situated in the borough?

*A) The hub is run by GPs who work in the borough and the funding is based on the patient population registered with Barking and Dagenham GP practices only. Therefore this small number of patients would not be able to access Hub services, no.*

- Q) When can we expect the service to be up and running and when can it be used?

*A) Together First aim to open the Hub services in November.*

- Q) Please clarify - if people in hospital have been assessed and advised about needing complex care services - will they have it in place before being discharged?

*A) A Joint Assessment & Discharge Team has been developed between Barking & Dagenham, Havering and BHRUT (Barking, Havering & Redbridge University Trust hospital). This team works in the hospital and ensures that proactive care planning is in place to prepare patients for discharge.*

- Q) How will the hub service fit with ambulance or paramedic services that offer or decide to go to Accident and Emergency?

*A) The Hub service is an extension of existing primary care services. Patients who have a primary care health need should not need an ambulance or to attend A&E.*

**Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham would like to thank everyone who participated in this event.**

**Further copies of this summary report can be found on-line at - [www.healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.org.uk](http://www.healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.org.uk)**

**Email - [info@healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.org.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.org.uk)**

**Telephone - 0208 526 8200 if you would like a paper version.**