



Enter and View

Five Elms Medical Practice, Dagenham
16th July 2018

healthwatch
Barking and
Dagenham
Delivered by LifeLine Projects

Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Contents | 2 |
| 1 Introduction | 3 |
| 1.1 Details of visit..... | 3 |
| 1.2 Acknowledgements..... | 3 |
| 1.3 Disclaimer | 3 |
| 2 What is Enter and View? | 4 |
| 2.1 Purpose of Visit..... | 4 |
| 2.2 Strategic drivers | 5 |
| 2.3 Methodology | 5 |
| 3 Summary of findings..... | 7 |
| 4 Service Provision..... | 8 |
| 5 Findings..... | 9 |
| 6 Recommendations..... | 15 |
| 7 Service provider response..... | 16 |



1 Introduction

1.1 Details of visit

| Details of visit: | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Service address | Five Elms Medical Practice Five Elms Road Dagenham RM9 5TT |
| Service provider | Five Elms Medical Practice |
| Service area | GP service |
| Date and time | Monday 16 th July 2018 |
| Authorised Representatives | Manisha Modhvadia (Lead Officer) Val Shaw (Authorised Representative) Dorothy Stokes (Trainee Authorised Representative) |
| Author of report | Manisha Modhvadia |
| Announced/Unannounced | Unannounced |
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1.2 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham would like to thank the service provider, service users, visitors and staff for their contribution during the visit.

1.3 Disclaimer

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



2 What is Enter and View?

- The Health and Social Care Act 2012 allows local Healthwatch to carry out Enter and View visits.
- Healthwatch representatives are recruited and trained to carry out visits to observe specific settings and give feedback.
- During a visit information is gathered through the experiences of service users, their relatives, friends and staff to collect evidence of the quality and standard of the services being provided.
- Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service, but equally they can occur when services have a good reputation.
- The visits enable us to share examples of best practice and make recommendations where improvements are needed from the perspective of people who experience the service first-hand.
- An opportunity to give authoritative, evidenced-based feedback to organisations responsible for delivering and commissioning services.
- The visits assist local Healthwatch to alert Healthwatch England or the Care Quality Commission to concerns about specific service providers of health and social care.

If you are interested in finding out more about Enter and View visits or Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham then please visit:
www.healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk

2.1 Purpose of Visit

Our purpose was to observe and engage with patients who access the services at Five Elms Medical Practice. The main areas being looked at were:

- Access to services
- Care and treatment
- Staff conduct



2.2 Strategic drivers

This visit was undertaken as a direct result of feedback received from the local community.

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham have received consistent feedback from local people about access to GPs in the area. Key points raised have included access to urgent GP Appointments, only speaking to the GP about one issue at a time and staff conduct.



One of the practices highlighted was Five Elms Medical Practice. Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham undertook the visit to gain a clearer picture of the issues shared with us.

2.3 Methodology

Before the visit

- Enter and View Representatives undertook a pre-meeting to look at the feedback that was provided by the community.
- The information was used to devise a questionnaire reflecting the issues identified. The questions were used as prompts to speak to patients on the day of the visit.
- A date was set for the visit. The visit was an unannounced, therefore prior notification was not sent to the service provider.

Day of the visit

- Healthwatch arrived at 9.45am at the premises. We spoke to the Practice Manager and introduced who we were and why we were there. The manager had heard of Healthwatch.
- The manager asked us to wait while she dealt with a patient and then invited the representatives to her office where we were able to ask questions.
- Patients were approached at random and asked if they wanted to complete the questionnaire by themselves or with a representative helping them; patients were encouraged to ask any questions.
- There were not many patients present in for the morning surgery, therefore the manager suggested that we return in the afternoon in order to speak to more patients.



To enable respondents to give their views without the fear of their personal details being shared or having an impact on the services they receive, Healthwatch explained the following as part of the Enter and View visit:

- Participation is voluntary, and individuals are not required to answer any questions that they do not want to.
- Participation or non-participation does not affect access to the service patients are currently receiving
- Information collected is kept strictly confidential.

Each patient was offered a business card with contact details in case they wanted to make contact after the visit. A Healthwatch leaflet was also provided.

3 Summary of findings

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham authorised representatives undertook the visit to speak with patients about their experiences of the services received from Five Elms Medical Practice.



We spoke to 18 patients on the day of the visit.

Evidence gathered from speaking to patients during the visit shows that some improvements have been made at the practice. According to patients waiting times to book an appointment have improved, a booking screen is available so patients can book-in themselves and do not need to wait for the receptionist.

However, areas of improvement include:

- Patient's waiting for long from their appointment time to seeing the GP.
- Staff conduct
- Sharing information with patients about the out of hours services
- Telephone lines not being answered or patient's not being able to get through.

4 Service Provision

General information

The GP Practice is set within a medical centre, located in a populated residential area close to a parade of shops that includes a community pharmacy.

The GP Practice shares the building with other community services.

Opening times

Monday: 8.30am to 7.30pm

Tuesday: 8.30am to 6.30pm

Wednesday :8.30am to 7.30pm

Thursday: 8.30am to 6.30pm

Friday: 8.30am to 7.30pm

Saturday and Sunday: Closed

- Healthwatch authorised representatives observed that there was a notice board which displayed a wide variety of information including what medications can no longer be prescribed and the out of hours' service at the walk in centre.
- There was also a leaflet rack which displayed a number of booklets on different health issues.
- There is a touch screen available for patients to book in for their appointment.



5 Findings

Routine and Urgent Appointments

The practice manager told Healthwatch Representatives that the surgery provided a number of ways in which patients could book routine and urgent appointments, these included over the telephone, in person and using the online booking system.

Recently patients were disappointed that they are no longer able to book online appointments for their children who are under 16 years of age. On a few occasions parents had booked an appointment for themselves and then brought the child in to be seen. The practice manager highlighted that some parents are unhappy with the limitations of the new system and that this is outside of the control of the practice.

The manager also indicated there had been a drop in the number of patients booking appointments online, since the new system had been implemented as patients were having issues with booking appointments online. Although the problems had been easily resolved by resetting the passwords, this had put people off from using the system. The practice is encouraging patients to register. However, Healthwatch did not see any notices up about the benefits of using the online system or about its availability.

In terms of urgent GP appointments, 6 appointments per GP, per session are set aside each day. If a patient calls on the day and there are no urgent appointments available, then the GP will call the patient and decide if the individual needs to come into the surgery.

Patients indicated that there were a number of methods available at the practice to book both a routine and urgent appointments. A breakdown of the responses is shown in the tables below:

Routine appointments

| Options | Telephone | In person | Online |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| Available options | 18 | 18 | 13 |
| Patients' preferred options | 18 | 9 | 9 |

Patients told representatives that their preferred method to book a routine appointment was by phone however it was a challenge to get through.

Urgent appointments

| Options | Telephone | In person | Online |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| Available options | 17 | 17 | 9 |
| Patients' preferred options | 16 | 11 | 9 |

A few people were unaware that they could book appointments online.

Patients said:

"I can never get through on the phone, so for me face to face is best, however I am one bus ride away, so I don't win either way. I also did not know I could even book an online appointment"

"I just come into the practice as live close by. I find it easier to come in than phone, as I know I am more likely to be seen"

"I didn't know I could book online"

How long do you have to wait to book a routine appointment?

Feedback shows that waiting times to book a routine appointment varied. Six patients said they waited for less than a week, six waited between 1-2 weeks, a further three people said they waited three weeks and three people said they waited one week.

Patients said the availability of appointments had improved over the recent months.

"There has been some improvement in being able to get an appointment"

"The service has improved but the staff attitudes is a hit and miss"



Getting through on the phone

For many patients their preferred option was to book an appointment over the phone. However, it was evident that getting through on the phone to the practice was a challenge. 11 people said it was not easy to get through, while two respondents said on the occasions that they had called the response was quick. A further five patients said sometimes it's easy and other times it's not.



Out of the 18 people we spoke with on the day, seven of those had to redial when trying to get through to the practice, six waited 5-10 minutes before they got to speak to a receptionist over the phone and two people waited for over 10 minutes. There were only 2 people who indicated that they waited less than 5 minutes to get through to the receptionist.

"Much too long"

"Not happy"

"Phone in the morning, but the time you call it's all fully booked"

"I have seen the phone ringing and the receptionist is sitting there and no one answers it."



Signposting

During the visit authorised representatives asked patients if practice staff signposted them to other services when the practice was unable to offer them an urgent appointment. From the 18 patients we spoke with on the day:

- 8 said the reception staff gave them advice about other health services they could access
- 5 patients had not been offered any information at the time of trying to make an appointment
- 5 patients said it was dependent on who they spoke to.

Healthwatch representatives asked patients if the surgery had any information about the out of hours' services within the practice, 14 people said yes and 4 said no.



Healthwatch representatives observed a film by the Clinical Commissioning Group about the GP hubs. A phone number was also provided for the service. However, the contact information was in small text and this could be one of the reasons that individuals have not noticed the information provided.

There was also a poster on the noticeboard providing details of the walk-in centre at Barking Hospital.

Healthwatch representatives asked patients if the surgery offered a good range of early am, evening and weekend appointments:

- 8 people said yes
- 8 said no
- one patient said she only works on the weekends so it's easy to get an appointment during the week, however it can be a challenge for her husband as he works out of the area

Online Booking System

On the day of the visit, 9 patients told representatives they had not used the online booking system and 9 people said they had. Those who did use the service found it to be useful and quick.

Patients who had not used the online booking system, had various reasons:

- 3 people said they did not know this option was available,
- 3 people said they did not wish to use the system as they struggle with computers
- 1 person was not sure how to use it.
- 1 person told representatives they did not have access to the internet.
- 2 parents said they have used the online system for themselves but can no longer use it for their children, they felt this was an area that needed to be looked into as they find the online system a good way of accessing GP appointments.



Experience of the GP

During the visit, 18 patients shared their experiences with us, of those:

- 14 said the GP only dealt with one issue per appointment
- 3 patients indicated this was not the case.
- 1 person said sometimes the GP only addressed one issue but at other times he was quite happy to discuss more.
- 1 person said that one issue per appointment is a waste of resources as you would need to make 2 or 3 appointments if you have a few health issues.

Healthwatch representatives also spoke to patients about the amount of time they had with the doctor and if they felt this was adequate:

- 4 patients felt there was not enough time to discuss all issues,
- 1 patient said “the GP should see you for your allocated time, not for one issue only”.
- The majority of the patients (11) people said the GP gave them enough time to talk about their health concerns,

Waiting at the practice to been seen by the doctor



Feedback indicates that people wait at the practice between 10-45 minutes from their appointment time to seeing a GP.

People commented that sometimes they have even been asked if they want to wait as the GP is delayed or make another appointment.

However, patients were clearly dissatisfied with the waiting times, especially those who had experienced waiting for longer than 30 minutes.

A few patients said when it was an urgent appointment they did not mind waiting between 30-40 minutes but they felt this was too long for a routine appointment.

Staff conduct

Patients said this all depended on which staff member you spoke with, whilst some were good others were not as helpful. Feedback indicates that staff do not always come over as caring or helpful to patients.

Some receptionists did not smile and say good morning. Healthwatch observed one receptionist who came across as much more pleasant than another.



Quotes from patients

“There is no real care, it's basically a paid job, come and just get paid for not doing your job”

“One or two are okay, one's attitude is not so great but the practice will keep them”

“Some of them are polite and others terrible and rude”.

“Very friendly and helpful”

Patients highlighted that the doctor was good most of the time but at times if the surgery was running late, they felt rushed. The issue of one appointment per issue was also raised.

Privacy

Concerns were raised that there is no confidentiality within the waiting room. Some patients commented that receptionists ask the medical reason for booking an appointment, but because the waiting room is open plan everyone else can hear what is said.

Booking in for appointments

The practice had a touch screen for patients to book in for their appointments. Most patients felt this was a good addition which was not previously available.

We observed an individual who did not hear her name being called and displayed on the screen, when the nurse came out to call her, she was told the names are now shown on the same screen as the screen providing health information and service information. However, there is no information about this and therefore people are confused.



6 Recommendations

Although the surgery has had difficulties, patients acknowledge that some improvements had recently made:

- It is a little easier to make a GP appointment
- the practice now has a touch screen booking in system
- there is health information on the leaflet racks.

However, there are areas of concern which have been highlighted within the report and therefore we recommend the following:

Recommendations for the practice:

- Although there is information available on the screens about the GP HUB, the text on the last screen containing the contact information needs to be bigger as the font size is too small to read at a distance.
- There is some good information displayed on the board, however the information about the walk in centre can easily be missed. Clear and colorful information about the out of hours' services patients can access should be displayed on the information board.
- Continue to encourage patients to use the online system and advertise the system clearly on the display.
- The receptionists should attend customer service training which may assist them to communicate with patients effectively, including those patients who are frustrated and unhappy.
- Patients highlighted that there was no privacy when discussing private and personal information in the reception area. The practice should put a notice up informing patients that a private space is available should they wish to have a discreet conversation.
- Waiting for a receptionist to answer the phone was an issue highlighted during the visit, Healthwatch recommend that one receptionist is dedicated to answer the phone during busy times.



7 Service provider response



Five Elms Medical Practice

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Health Watch Barking and Dagenham

3 September
2018

Dear Manisha

Thank you for your report on Five Elms Medical Practice, please find below our response to your recommendations:

Information displayed on the electronic system within the Practice is very limited. The screens were commissioned by the CCG and most of the content space has been taken up by them. This means there is very little space for the surgery to advertise our specific services. Information on the display board is also limited as there are certain leaflets and posters which need to be displayed. This issue was discussed at Patient Participation Group meeting held on 30th August 2018 and the outcome was that patients preferred the white board which we used as an interim measure whilst waiting for the new screens. We are going to put the white board back in the reception area as an added information tool.

The reception team also signpost patients to other services as appropriate. However, we do acknowledge we have new members to the team and training is ongoing. All administration staff undertake customer service training and this is up dated yearly.

The on line services are advertised on the web site, on both the electronic display screen and the poster area and the reception team ask patients as the deal with them to sign up for on line services. As highlighted in your report, most of our patients are reluctant to use the system, even though those that do find it beneficial. As discussed



on the day, since the new system does not allow children to use on line services, parents have also declined to use it. We are looking into the prospect of using a member of the Patient Participation Group for an afternoon to encourage patients to use the system by using a laptop to sign patients up within the surgery.

We acknowledge our patients are still having difficulty getting through on the telephone to book appointments during busy periods. Again this was discussed at the Patient Participation Group meeting and it was suggested that we revert back to allocating times for certain needs. Our patients can telephone any time of the day for results, medications etc. It has been agreed to implement time bands to help with patients needing to book appointments. We have three telephone lines open at busy times and three receptionists answer the telephones in the morning. During periods of staff annual leave there is an option for the Secretary and the Practice Manager to answer phone lines if needed.

With regards to the reception area being open, all staff are aware there is a clinical room in which they can speak to patients to aid confidentiality and privacy. However, we agree a notice should be in the reception area to inform patients as well. Also, we are implementing hazard tape and walking stickers on the reception floor to help with keeping patients away from the desk to aid privacy.

We found your report helpful in our Patient Participation Group Meeting.

If we can be of any more service, please do not hesitate to contact me

Kind Regards

Jo Cumber

Practice Manager

