



# Enter and View

Laburnum Health Centre, Dagenham  
1<sup>st</sup> November 2018

**healthwatch**  
Barking and  
Dagenham  
Delivered by LifeLine Projects

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## 2 Introduction

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### 2.1 Details of visit

Details of visit:	
Service Address	Althorne Way, Dagenham RM10 7DF
Service Provider	Laburnum Medical Centre
Date and Time	1 <sup>st</sup> November 2018 - 10.30am to 12.15 pm
Authorised Representatives	Richard Vann (Lead Officer) Val Shaw (Authorised Representative)
Author of report	Richard Vann
Announced/Unannounced	Announced
Contact details	Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham Lifeline House Neville Road Dagenham RM8 3QS <a href="mailto:richard.vann@healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk">richard.vann@healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk</a> 0800 298 5331

### 2.2 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham would like to thank the patients and practice staff at Laburnum Medical Centre for their help and contribution during the visit.

### 2.3 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.

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## 3 What is Enter and View?

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The Health and Social Care Act 2012 allows local Healthwatch to carry out Enter and View visits. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/28/section/221>

- 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 so that good practice can be shared.
- The visits enable Healthwatch to share examples of best practice and make recommendations where improvements are needed from the perspective of people who experience the service first-hand.
- Healthwatch is given an opportunity to give authoritative, evidence based feedback to organisations responsible for delivering and commissioning services through enter and view observations and feedback from service users.
- 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, becoming an authorised representative for Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham, then please visit:

[www.healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk)

### 3.1 Purpose of Visit

Healthwatch carries out Enter & View Visits to monitor services based on feedback received from the public. This year, one area of service that Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham is focusing on for patients' experiences is local GPs.

This visit is part of a programme of visits and will look at areas of service that include:

- Appointment Waiting Times
- Consultation Times
- Staff Conduct
- Urgent appointments
- Quality and standards of information

### 3.2 Strategic drivers

This was an announced visit. We spoke with residents from Barking and Dagenham who use this service.

The following areas were highlighted:

- The way that staff communicate with patients
- How long people wait for appointments
- Inaccurate medication
- Impersonal consultations with the GP



### 3.3 Methodology

#### Before the visit

- Before the visit, Healthwatch wrote to the practice to inform them of our intention to visit, giving the date. Representatives discussed how the visit would be conducted; how patients would be engaged on the premises and any issues arising from the visit that might need to be addressed.
- The feedback we received from patients was in response to a questionnaire developed by Healthwatch, that reflected the issues people using GP services across the borough of Barking and Dagenham told us about. When speaking with patients, representatives were on hand to support them to complete the questionnaire themselves (This can be found in Appendix A).



## Day of the visit

- Healthwatch arrived at 10.30am and the lead representative spoke with a receptionist to introduce themselves and why they were there. The receptionist was expecting us and was helpful and courteous.
- Healthwatch were given access to all areas of the building - there was no intention to take photographs during this visit and so permission was not sought.
- Representatives spoke with people as they arrived and waited for their appointment. Each person was asked if they wanted to participate.
- It was explained that taking part in the Enter and View visit was voluntary, that individuals were not *required* to answer any questions they didn't want to, and that it wasn't necessary to give personal information to participate, unless they wished it to be included.
- Whether patients chose to participate or not did not affect the service that they were there to receive.
- Information collected from the visit would only be used to summarise the outcomes.
- If a patient wanted to contact Healthwatch after the visit, details were exchanged.



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## 4 Summary of findings

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Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham representatives were at the surgery for almost two hours and spoke with 16 patients, two student doctors training at the practice and one of the reception staff.



There was a mixture between patients who had been registered with the practice for a number of years and a couple of people who were attending the service for the first time.

The overall response from people about their experiences of using the service and interacting with the staff, was a positive one.

12 people rated their experience as either good or very good. One patient wasn't happy on the day due to a delay in their appointment time - it was running 10 minutes late - but did say that it was usually very good.

For routine appointments, patients indicated that their waiting times varied from less than one week, with a couple slipping over to two weeks. None of the patients we spoke with waited more than two weeks for their appointment.

The practice uses a triage process where the GP rings the patient to assess whether they need to come into the surgery or be guided to another service. A member of staff advised that they aim to have all surgery appointments covered within a week. Healthwatch was told that this method for providing appointments, has significantly reduced the number of patients that do not attend.

None of the patients we spoke with indicated that the time they got to speak with the doctor about their health matters was unsatisfactory. One patient did comment that they find when they have their consultation, the GP doesn't make eye contact and engage with them.

Here are some of the comments from patients;

- **Speaking with the GP:** “they just stared at the computer screen in front of them whilst talking at me rather than with me. I found it very rude”
- **Appointment Time:** ‘The system here works well for me, it is very good - the doctor phoned me and then gave me a time to come down for the appointment. It is difficult to get an appointment at 2pm when you try to ring’
- **Booking Online Appointments:** ‘I don’t have or use a computer so I can’t book online’
- **Waiting Time:** ‘Sometimes it’s hard getting an appointment within a week, especially when you want to be treated now’
- **Getting Medication:** ‘I rang up, kept an eye on my child for the symptoms as asked by the doctor - came in and the appointment was ok, was given medication and got them straight away from the pharmacy next door - no problems!’



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## 5 Service Provision

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### General information

- The practice has a register of 9,900 patients - it is well established in a busy, well populated area near a leisure centre, a local university site and an area that is undergoing a programme of extensive housing re-development close to a large shopping supermarket.
- Opening times for the surgery are: 9.00am to 12.00 pm and 1.30pm to 7.15pm on Mondays. Tuesday to Friday is 9am to 7.15pm. There is no weekend service
- Parking for patients is difficult on local streets due mainly to the ongoing building work. A short walk away is a car park meant for the use of the leisure centre and there is limited parking in the local supermarket. There is a hub for buses that runs past the surgery - for those who can use public transport, there is no shortage of bus options.
- Entering the surgery is fully accessible with automatic, level access doors. The first impression inside the waiting area is how spacious and light it is. The seating is arranged in a comfortable way for patients and there was a TV monitor advertising various services in the local area. A 'self-booking in' screen mounted on a pillar in the middle of the waiting area enabled patients to sign in quickly. Representatives felt that overall, the waiting area was a comfortable space for people to wait.
- There was lots of information displayed around the surgery for patients to access if they wanted to. This was done in an organised way that was easy for people to read.
- Notices were on display advising patients of where they can get an appointment outside of surgery hours to see a doctor.

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## 6 Findings

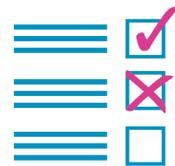
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### Getting through to the surgery by telephone to make an appointment.

Most patients said that they were able to get through on the telephone to make an appointment. A couple of patients indicated that getting through on the phone after 2pm was the most difficult time to get calls answered. The phone back triage service is meant to support patients and assess if they need an appointment at the surgery. If patients can't get through, the assessment can't take place.

### The waiting times for the next available appointment.

From the 16 patients that representatives spoke with, most of them told Healthwatch they waited for a week or less. There were occasions when patients said they had to wait up to 2 weeks.



### How well patients were treated by the staff at the practice.

None of the people Healthwatch spoke with indicated that they were treated rudely or with disrespect by the staff on the reception. The feedback was either good or very good. One patient said they felt that one of the GPs was rude during a consultation because he wouldn't turn and face them or make eye contact when speaking with them.

### Information on urgent appointments during evenings and weekends.

During the visit Healthwatch found information displayed on the walls advising patients of what to do if they needed an urgent appointment during evenings and weekends. The majority of those we asked said they knew where to go at those times. Services for NHS 111 were clearly displayed. None of the patients Healthwatch spoke with referred to any issues concerning this matter.

### Having long enough time to consult with the doctor about health matters.

When asked about this, none of the patients said they didn't have enough time to discuss their health issues with the GP. One patient said that they don't get to see a regular GP and see different doctors at appointments. This was an issue for them as continuity was important.



### Accessing GP services online.

Three patients told Healthwatch that they had tried using the online facility to book an appointment and that it had worked well for them. Other patients said they prefer the person to person contact by telephone or face to face. A couple of patients said they didn't have access to a computer.

### Patients' overall experiences of using this service.

There were no negative comments about the overall experience of using this service. The people Healthwatch spoke with were satisfied that the service was working for them.

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"A bit of a delay this morning but the service here is usually very good"

"I very rarely need to come here; when I do it works well for me"

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### Methods available at the practice to book a routine GP appointment

Out of the 16 patients, some chose more than one option:

Telephone - 13; Text - 0; In person - 0; Online - 3

### Length of time waiting for a routine appointment

Less than a week - 2; One week - 12; One to two weeks - 2;

### Urgent Appointments and the methods that are available to book one

Telephone - 4; Text - 0; In person - 0; E-Mail - 0; Other - 0; Never had to do it - 12

When no urgent appointments are available, does the surgery signpost you to other services?

Yes - 16; No - 0; Sometimes - 0

Is there information in the surgery about 'out of hours' services?

Yes - 16; No - 0

Does your GP limit your discussion to one health issue per appointment?

Yes - 0; No - 16

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## 7 Observations

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Healthwatch spoke to a member of staff who was very helpful with their feedback and explained that the practice uses a telephone triage process where the GP rings the patient back to assess whether they need to come into the surgery.

The triage system runs from 9am to 11.30am each morning. The staff member felt that a positive outcome of the triage was that patients are nicer and less aggressive towards the staff.

Prior to the visit, Healthwatch saw that the last CQC report in 2017 was rated 'good' overall. Some recent online comments about the appointments and the way staff conduct themselves towards callers were negative and raised some concern.

The surgery has a positive and open communication, working with the local pharmacy which is right next door to the practice. It emerged through conversation Healthwatch had with one of the Pharmacists that prescription errors occasionally happen. However, being in such close proximity means they get resolved very quickly.

The Pharmacist explained that some of the healthy living advice and monitoring they undertake, often based on consultations the GP next door, has had a positive effect on individuals. This includes BMI and smoking cessation services. They provide flu injections free of charge for diabetic patients, people over 65 and people in care homes.

One of the Healthwatch representatives spoke with two student doctors who were training at the Practice. They explained that it was well organised, with a full timetable of learning opportunities to work with patients. As trainees they spend 15 minutes with each patient appointment. They found patients open and willing to talk and that they "love" the late appointments.

Children and elderly patients are given a priority when booking urgent appointments and it is recognised that accessing the online service can be a barrier for some elderly people. It was also raised how difficult the system can be for people who are deaf and hearing impaired.



Although there is very little privacy for people to discuss personal issues with staff at the reception, there is a consultation room connected to the waiting area where patients can go with staff for more privacy.

People with pushchairs or wheelchair users would have no difficulty moving around in the space of the waiting area. The facilities for patients are fully accessible.

Patients either put their repeat prescription requests into a letter box when the centre is closed or come in and hand them to the receptionist.

A 'zero tolerance' policy was on the wall that describing the expectation from the practice about how patients should behave towards staff. There was however, no information on it about the behaviour patients could expect from staff.



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## 8 Recommendations

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Overall, Healthwatch representatives felt that this was a positive visit based on the feedback provided by patients. The triage service seems to work well for the practice as well as reducing the waiting times that patients have to wait for their appointments.

Compared with other GP Practices that Healthwatch has visited, the waiting times at this practice are not as long. As representatives spoke with a tiny proportion of the registered patients, that consideration should be taken with some caution, given that there are recent negative comments about the service online.

### Online Reviews - Laburnum Health Centre

**Triage appointments:** From the information provided, there is a positive outcome for patients to be helped and directed to the service they need at the first time of asking.

There is some concern that patients struggle to get through on the phones in the afternoons. Healthwatch recommend that the practice looks at the impact this has on the triage system. Healthwatch requests that the practice sends information about the flow of people through the triage process over a normal week.

Having accessible information and services for all patients is a minimum requirement - Healthwatch asks the practice to provide evidence of how the triage service is fully accessible to patients who are deaf and hard of hearing.

**Zero Tolerance Policy:** The practice should consider including in their policy a standard of conduct that clearly sets out what behaviours patients can expect from the staff.



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## 9 Service Provider Response

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This is the response Healthwatch received from the practice. There were no further comments.

**From:** FRANKLIN, Linda (NHS BARKING AND DAGENHAM CCG)

[<mailto:linda.franklin2@nhs.net>]

**Sent:** 20 December 2018 13:47

**To:** Richard Vann <[richard.vann@healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk](mailto:richard.vann@healthwatchbarkinganddagenham.co.uk)>

**Subject:** Re: Healthwatch Barking & Dagenham Visit Report

Hi Richard

The Practice Manager has read this report and is happy with it.

Regards

**Linda**

**Laburnum Health Centre - 020 8984 9862**

**Monday - Thursday 9-2**

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## 10 Appendix A

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The following questions were used by Healthwatch representatives to gather responses from patients during the visit.

- How long have you been a registered patient with this surgery?
- When you contact the surgery for an appointment, how easy is it to get through and get a response that you are satisfied with?  
Always  
Sometimes  
Never
- When making an appointment, how long were you told you would have to wait for the next available one?  
Days  
Weeks
- How well were you treated by the staff at the practice?  
Poorly  
Good  
Very Good  
Excellent
- If you needed to see a GP urgently, would you know where to go?  
Yes  
No  
Where would you go? (Please use the space below)
- In your view, does the time you get for appointments deal with your needs in a satisfactory way?  
Yes  
No  
If 'No' please say why
- Have you tried to access your GP services on-line?  
Yes  
No  
If yes, how well did it work for you?
- Overall, what is your experience of using services and dealing with staff at this practice?  
Poor  
Fair  
Good  
Very good  
Excellent



- What methods are available at your practice to book a GP routine appointment?

Telephone  
Text  
In Person  
E-Mail  
Other

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

Less than 1 week  
1 week  
1 to 2 weeks  
2 + weeks

- What methods are available at your practice to book a GP urgent appointment?

Telephone  
Text  
In Person  
E-Mail  
Other

- Please use this space to make any comments in regards to urgent appointments:

- If your unable to get an urgent appointment, does the surgery support you by signposting you to other services?

Yes  
No

- Is there information within the surgery about out of hours' services?

Yes  
No

- When you attend an appointment, does your GP limit your discussion to one health issue each visit?

Yes, No

**Have  
your  
say**