



# Enter and View

GP Practice  
Porters Avenue Health Centre  
26<sup>th</sup> February 2019

**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            | Porters Avenue   |
| Service Provider           | GP service   |
| Authorised Representatives | Manisha Modhvadia (Lead Officer)<br>Val Shaw (Authorised Representative)<br>Bonnie (Trainee Authorised Representative)   |
| Author of report           | Manisha Modhvadia  |
| Announced/Unannounced      | Unannounced  |
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### 2.2 Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham would like to thank the patients and practice staff at the GP practice 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.

## 3.2 Strategic drivers

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

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

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



## 3.3 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 unannounced, therefore prior notification was not sent to the service provider.

### Day of the visit

- Healthwatch arrived at the practice and we introduced ourselves to the receptionist and explained who we were and why we were there. The receptionist was very friendly and said he would let the manager know.

Healthwatch visited the practice three times as during the first two visits the practice was quiet and Healthwatch were unable to speak to more than 3 patients. The third time 10 patients were spoken to. In total we spoke to 13 during the course of the visits.



The practice staff did co-operate with us and everything went smoothly without any problem and we would like to thank the staff and the manager at the practice.

- Patients were approached at random and asked if they were willing to complete the questionnaire by themselves or with a representative helping them; patients were encouraged to ask any questions for clarity. The authorized representatives briefed patients on the role of Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham.
- There were not many patients present in the morning surgery, therefore we waited a little while in the surgery 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 and anonymous.

Each patient was offered a leaflet with contact details in case they wanted to make contact after the visit.

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## 4 Summary of findings

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Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham authorized representatives undertook the visit to speak with patients about their experiences of the services received. We spoke to 13 patients on the day of the visit.



Evidence gathered from speaking to patients during the visit shows that there are positive aspects to the service that is offered including:

- A walk in service is available Monday to Friday
- Adequate seating area
- Screen which displays the room and name of the patient.
- Most patients happy with the amount of time the GP spends with them.
- Some patients being able to make a routine appointment to see the doctor between a few days to a week.
- Patients describing GPs as good.

However, areas of improvement include:

- Telephone lines not being answered or patient's not being able to get through. Waiting times to be seen when accessing the walk in service.
- Receptionist not coming across as caring
- Privacy within the waiting area.

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## 5 Service Provision

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### General information

The GP Practice shares the building with other community services.

### Opening times

Monday: 8am to 8pm

Tuesday: 8am to 8pm

Wednesday: 8am to 8pm

Thursday: 8am to 8pm

Friday: 8am to 8pm

Saturday: 9am to 12pm

- Healthwatch authorized representatives observed that there was a notice board which displayed some information on various services and conditions.
- There is a touch screen available for patients to book in for their appointment- however at the time of the visit this was not in working order.
- There are toilet facilities for patients.
- There is also a seating area for patients.
- Automatic doors into the premises





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## 6 Findings

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

Out of the 13 people we spoke to on the day, three people commented that they waited between 5-10 minutes, ten people said they waited for over 10 minutes. Those who waited over 10 minutes were not pleased with the amount of time it took to get through to the practice by phone.



#### Comments from patients

- *Too long by the time they answer there is no more appointments left.*
- *Average*
- *Hard to see why it take too long on phone*
- *Long time, at least 20 min, very bad on phone. Ringing but don't answer it.*
- *Frustrating*
- *Very easy to get through*

### Routine appointments

Feedback shows that waiting times for a routine appointment varied, four patients said they waited for a week or less, six people said they waited between 1-2 weeks and three people said they waited for more than 2 weeks. None of the patients thought there were any issues with how long they waited for a routine appointment.

### Booking appointments

Patients said there are a number of different ways to book appointments including online, phone and face to face. But majority of people preferred to book their GP appointments face to face or online. However, for urgent appointments there is a walk in service and this is the method patients need to use for urgent appointments. Although for many the walk in service poses challenges

Patients spoke about the walk service which runs in the mornings for urgent same day appointments. Feedback on this shows that although the concept is good, it does not work for most patients.

The process as explained by patients:

- Individuals have to come to the doctors in the morning, speak to the receptionists who makes notes of the urgent health issue on to the system.



- The patient then has to wait in the practice for the GP to take a look at the details and assess if they will be seen or not.

Feedback shows that the individuals should be given the option to go home and the receptionist to call them once the GP has made an assessment. Some patients were waiting from 8am that morning and when we spoke to them it was 9.30am, with no idea if they would be seen or not.

Patients accessing the walk in service were very dissatisfied with the way the system worked as they waited for long periods of time, not knowing if the GP will see them or not. This was particularly challenging for those with young children and the elderly.

### Signposting



There was a poster displayed on the display board advertising the HUB service and advising patients of what to do if they needed an urgent appointment during evenings and weekends.

When we asked patients if their information within the surgery about any out of hours' services, 10 people said they have seen information within the practice and others said they had not.

The noticeboard could be better utilized to inform patients of out of hours' services and also other local health and care services they can access.

### Online Booking System

On the day of the visit, eight patients told representatives they had not used the online booking system and five 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:

- One person said they did not know this option was available,
- Three patient told representatives they did not have access to the internet.
- One patient said they had not registered with it yet
- Three did not share their reasons.





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

Nine patients described their GP as good, another four patients said their GP was ok. In terms of nurses six patients spoke to described their nurse as excellent or good

and three described their experience with the nurse as poor.

Eight people indicated that their experience with the receptionist was poor three people said they are okay. Patients said receptionists came across as not caring, or wanting to help. They didn't smile and felt like it was just a job they had to do. It was also felt that receptionists are a barrier to speaking to practice manager.

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

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

- Ten patients said the GP only dealt with one issue per appointment
- Two patients indicated this was not the case.

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

- The majority of the patients (10) people said the GP gave them enough time to talk about their one health issue.
- One patient said they were not given enough time to discuss all the issues
- Two patients said it was dependent on how busy the practice was.

Healthwatch representatives observed that the practice has highlighted on their electronic screen that GPs can only deal with one issue per appointment.

## Waiting at the practice to be seen by the doctor

Feedback on how long patients wait at the practice from their appointment time to seeing their GP varied. The results in the table below shows the results of what patients said.

| How long did you wait to be seen:           | Less than 10 minutes | Between 10-20 minutes | 20-40 minutes | Over 40 minutes |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| When you have booked an urgent appointment? |                      |                       | 5             | 8               |
| When you have booked a routine appointment? | 4                    | 6                     | 2             | 1               |





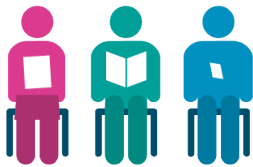
Patients who waited between 20-40 minutes were clearly dissatisfied with the waiting times, especially those who had experienced waiting for longer than 30 minutes.

Patients accessing the walk in service were very dissatisfied with the way the system worked as they waited for long periods of time, not knowing if the GP will see them or not. This was particularly challenging for those with young children and the elderly.

#### Comments from patients

- *If you book an appointment, you are usually seen 20 minutes + the time you booked*
- *Waiting in the line- waiting time at walk in depend on how many people are here*
- *Waiting depends on how busy the surgery is.*
- *Could be waiting for urgent as long as routine one*
- *If you are little late, you have to wait until the GP will see you*

#### WAITING ROOM



#### 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 and the practice staff are not considerate if patients whisper.



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## 7 Recommendations

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Most patients were generally happy with the service they were receiving, patients highlighted that although they could only speak about one issue per appointment, they were given enough time to discuss that one issue. Most patients also described the GP as good.

Issues that need improvement from the patient perspective includes, a better way to deliver the walk in service, phones to be answered and receptionists to be more welcoming. On the basis of the feedback we have made the following recommendations.

- 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.
- Also, in regards to privacy the practice should implement walking stickers on the reception floor to help with keeping patients away from the desk to aid privacy and put a notice up, so patients stay behind the line until the patient in front has finished communicating with the receptionist.
- Continue to encourage patients to use the online system and advertise the system clearly where patients can see it. This will be beneficial for new patients too.
- Patients said the walk in service was a good way of accessing urgent appointments, however they were frustrated with the way the walk in service is run and feedback shows that people are waiting long periods of time to be told if the GP will see them or not. Therefore, it is recommended that GP looks at all the cases and informs individuals at the beginning of the session if they will be seen, or let them know they need to book a routine appointment.
- In regards to the above recommendation, patients should also be asked if they would like to go home and the GP or receptionist can call them back to let them know if they will be seen, so they do not need to wait in the practice.
- Majority of the patients felt that receptionist was rude and unwelcoming Management need to address the issue with receptionists and look at undergoing customer service training to ensure receptionists



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## 8 Service Provider Response

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We would firstly like to thank Healthwatch for their visit and supportive feedback. We are always looking to improve the service we offer our patients and welcome the opportunity to continue to do so by adopting where appropriate the findings identified during this visit and through other forms of patient feedback such as national/local patient surveys and our patient participation group.

We have listed the above recommendations, indicated with (R) and below each recommendation responded with action undertaken (A)

R- Patients highlighted that there was no privacy when discussing private and personal information in the reception area

A- We always try and offer to discuss private information in a separate room should a patient request, If it is appropriate we also do offer this to patients. To reinforce this the practice has put up notices informing patients that a private space is available should they wish to have a discreet conversation. Additionally we will display on the electronic patient messaging board that should patient wish to discuss any items in private please inform a member of the reception team.

R- Also, in regards to privacy the practice should implement walking stickers on the reception floor to help with keeping patients away from the desk to aid privacy and put a notice up, so patients stay behind the line until the patient in front has finished communicating with the receptionist.

A- We will put barrier near the reception area to maintain patient's privacy. Notices re standing back from reception have been displayed.

R- Continue to encourage patients to use the online system and advertise the system clearly where patients can see it. This will be beneficial for new patients too.



A- Our reception team inform every patient when they come for new patient registration or when they come for their prescription request that this service is available. Our Health care Assistant also advises patients to collect their online login detail from reception after their appointment. We have also messaged patients to collect online login details for booking an appointment and requesting script via online and more information can also be found on our practice website at [www.portersavenuedoctors-dagenham.nhs.uk](http://www.portersavenuedoctors-dagenham.nhs.uk)

R-Some patients said the walk in service was a good way of accessing urgent appointments, at the same time patients felt that the waits can sometimes be too long. Four patients said they were frustrated with the way the walk in service is run. The manager of the practice explained that the process of booking an appointment did not require Individuals waiting to be told if the GP will see them as they would be told at the reception when they first book in. Therefore, Healthwatch recommend the practice explaining the process to new patients and existing patients so they understand the way the walk in service is delivered.

A- The Walk-in service is available for all registered patients of the practice. The process is to fill the walk in slip and pass it to reception team. Patients will then be seen on a first come first serve basis (unless an urgent clinical need is identified). These are un-booked appointments therefore waiting time will be between 8.00-10.30. Our reception team do inform the process of the walk-in service to patients but we will review how the system is communicated and adjust to ensure clarity. We would also remind patients that for routine requirements the standard forward booking process should be used.

R- It needs to be made clear to patients that the walk in service runs between 8am and 10.30 and they will be seen between these times. Adding a line about this to the posters about the walk in service may assist with this

A- We have amended our posters to make it clear to patients that our walk in service runs between 8am-10.30am and they will be seen between this times.

R- Some of the patients felt that receptionist was rude and unwelcoming Healthwatch recommends that the management should address the issue with receptionists and look at undergoing customer service training to ensure receptionists.



A- We always take patient's feedback seriously. We also discuss in our administration meetings to review and reflect the communication with patient's in order to continually improve.