

**‘A Response from the Public’
Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham**

**Barking & Dagenham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
Consultation - Proposals for Urgent Care Services and the
Broad Street ‘Walk-in’ Service**

21st May 2013

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Foreword

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham carried out a number of engagement sessions, in various public settings, with the local community. We asked for peoples' views and opinions concerning proposals put forward by Barking & Dagenham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) about urgent care services and the closure of the walk-in service at Broad Street Medical Centre. The consultation period set by the CCG for their proposal ends on 21st May 2013.

This document represents a collective public response to the consultation and is a random sample which has been anonymised. This has been conducted impartially - Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham have no organisational view.

Summary

Of the 200 people asked, 85% would rather use their GP if they could get an appointment in a timely way.

Almost 70% of people did not always get an appointment with their GP quickly enough. There was a source of constant frustration in not being able to do so and of lengthy delays in getting calls answered via the GP practice telephone answering services.

Almost 70% of people said they did not want Broad Street walk-in service to be closed. There is fear and concern that sufficient alternative urgent care services would not be in place.

Over 50% of respondents did not know of any other urgent care services apart from those at Broad Street walk-in centre.

The public are unaware and confused about what urgent care is available and when it should be used; terms such as A&E, urgent care, minor injury, polyclinic, walk-in centre and 'out of hours' services are a source of confusion in the public's mind as these all seem interchangeable and vary in the services they provide.

Out of the 200 people questioned, almost 70% were unaware of the CCG's public consultation exercise concerning urgent care services and their proposal to close the service at Broad Street walk-in centre.

Anecdotal evidence, though not quantifiable, indicated a strong feeling that Dagenham would be left with less services and that they would be inferior to those provided in the Barking area of the borough.

Methodology

Representatives from Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham attended Broad Street Medical Centre, Church Elm Lane Medical Centre, Dagenham Library and the Community Voluntary Sector (CVS) Open Day to consult with local people on the proposals for urgent care services and the closure of Broad Street walk-in centre.

In total, Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham engaged with 200 individuals who completed the questionnaire. The questions asked were as follows:

- 1)
 - Have you used a walk-in centre in the last 12 months? If so, which one have you used?
 - Why would you choose to use the walk-in centre?
 - Do you use the walk-in centre during your working hours?

- 2)
 - Do you know of any other urgent care services?
 - Have you used any other urgent care services? If so, what service did you use?
 - Are you aware of the GP 'out of hours' service?
 - Are you aware of the new NHS 111 service?

- 3)
 - Are you satisfied with booking urgent appointments to see your GP? If not, please explain why.
 - If it was easier to see your GP, would you choose to be seen by your GP or would you go elsewhere?

- 4)
 - The CCG are undertaking a consultation to close the walk-in service at Broad Street - were you aware of this consultation?
 - If Broad Street walk-in centre closes, where do you think you would go?
 - Please tell us your views on the proposal to close down Broad Street walk-in centre.

Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham would like to thank the public and the staff at the various centres for their assistance and co-operation during the completion of these questionnaires.

Context of the Survey

During the course of our survey, we provided explanations to participants about why we were carrying it out. We advised that we were collecting peoples' views to produce a report which would be passed to the CCG for inclusion in the responses to their consultation about their proposals for urgent care services. We also told participants that this report would be made publicly available when it was completed. These points were discussed with individuals before they completed the questionnaire.

At the various sites we visited, we advised that the CCG had produced a booklet detailing their proposals and providing their own survey questionnaire. If they were on display at the locations we visited, we brought this to the attention of the people we spoke to and where they could get it.

Clinical Commissioning Group Case for Change

- Walk-in services do not encourage better health.
- A&Es, urgent care centres and walk-in centres do not provide the best care for many conditions.
- The system is complicated.
- The services are expensive to manage and run.
- There needs to be a simpler, better system so that local people can get the urgent care they need.

Clinical Commissioning Group Proposals

- To encourage people to use their GP as their first point of contact.
- Achieve the savings they know they will need to protect other health services in the borough.
- Improve the likelihood of people registering with and accessing health services through their GP practice.
- Make the system more efficient by removing duplication.
- Patients who cannot be seen by their GP would still be able to attend other walk-in services at Barking Community Hospital, Loxford Medical Centre or urgent care centres at Queens, King Georges or Newham hospitals.
- If the walk-in centre at Broad Street was closed, more people would be encouraged to register with or visit their GP and the local CCG would make savings of around £530,000 per year to safeguard other health services in the borough.

The Public's Response to the Questions

1) Where and why people used a walk-in centre:

Have you used a walk-in centre in the last 12 months?

Yes	No
136	64

If yes, which walk-in centres have you used?

Barking	2
Barking Community Hospital	2
Broad Street walk-in centre	72
Upney Lane walk-in centre	8
Queens hospital	3
Mardyke walk-in centre	2
Goodmayes	1
Thurrock	1
Chose not to respond	45
TOTAL	136

Why would you choose to use the walk-in centre?

17 people indicated that they would use the service in an emergency or if their GP was closed.

48 people commented about the convenience of the walk-in service in relation to where they lived.

65 people pointed out they had difficulty getting appointments with their GP.

18 people gave their view that the walk-in service was a fast, helpful, good service.

11 people said they used the walk-in service for specific medical reasons.

4 people said they wouldn't use the walk-in centre at all.

2 people didn't want to use A&E.

1 person said they didn't know why they would choose to go to the walk-in centre.

These are some of the comments people made about why they chose to use the walk-in centre:

“This walk in centre has provided my family with the best service. The attention my son has received here has saved his life more than once.”

“Because it’s convenient and always see you if you cannot be seen by your GP.”

“Can’t get an appointment with GP, use WIC rather than go to A&E.”

“Because it is easy to get to and saves time going to the hospital.”

“I could not get an appointment at my GP’s full stop, let alone an emergency appointment. An A&E car park was queuing off to the main road (Queens).”

“People get unwell all of a sudden; no-one knows when they will be ill. My GP surgery is always booked so I take myself or my children to the walk-in centre.”

2) Using other urgent care services:

Do you know of any other Urgent Care Services?

Yes	No	Did Not Reply
81	116	3

Have you used any other Urgent Care Services?

Yes	No	Did Not Reply
68	123	9

If yes, what service did you use?

A&E	19
Queens	6
Upney Lane	5
GP	5
NHS Direct	5
Hospital	3
Ilford	2
Grays Court	2
Ambulance service	2
Barking Hospital	2
Broad Street	1
Mardyke	1
Queens WIC	1
Porters Avenue	1
Moorfields Eye Hospital	1
Homecare	1
Chose not to say	11
TOTAL	68

Are you aware of the GP 'out of hours' service?

Yes	No	Did Not Reply
104	92	4

Are you aware of the new NHS 111 service?

Yes	No	Did Not Reply
94	103	3

3) GP urgent appointments - how are they working for people?

Are you satisfied with booking urgent appointments to see your GP?

Yes	No	Sometimes	Did Not reply	Not GP Registered
64	76	55	3	2

If you are not satisfied, please explain why.

76 people indicated that they could not get an appointment on the day they needed to.

8 people said they had encountered rude staff and had to wait too long for an appointment.

5 people said they were told they had to wait for 2 weeks to get an appointment.

2 people were told they had to wait for a month to see their GP.

1 person wrote that they were told at the surgery to phone 999 or go to A&E to be treated.

1 person said they were not registered with a GP.

These are some of the comments made by people about why they are dissatisfied with booking urgent appointments at their GP:

"I can never get an urgent appointment."

"Normal appointment waiting time is up to 2 weeks. I can never get an urgent appointment."

"Sometimes it's difficult to get a last minute appointment. Walk-in centres are sometimes the only option."

"Fully booked and you are asked to go to the walk-in centre."

"I am not able to book an appointment with my GP as the receptionist will not allow me to."

"I'd love to hear what the CCG think I should do when it takes a week to see my Doctor and I am told not to use the local hospital except for dire emergencies."

"Unless urgent medical appointments can be guaranteed by GPs then the walk-in centres are vital. I have used them and also my children and they have received medical care that has lessened their condition which would have got worse if they had to wait for a GP appointment."

If it was easier to see your GP, would you choose to be seen by your GP or would you go elsewhere?

Seen by GP	Elsewhere	Did Not Reply	I Don't Mind	Either GP or WIC
170	14	14	1	1

If elsewhere, please tell us where

Walk-in Centre	5
A&E	3
Upney Lane	1
Upminster Road	1
Broad Street Medical Centre	1
Private (if I could afford it)	1
GP	1
Don't know	1
TOTAL	14

4) The proposal to close Broad Street and the consultation process:

The CCG are consulting on proposals to close the walk-in service at Broad Street. Were you aware of this consultation?

Yes	No	Did Not Reply
61	134	5

If Broad Street closes, where do you think you would go?

A&E	48
Don't know	43
Queens	29
GP	26
Upney	32
King Georges Hospital	7
Somewhere local	5
Five Elms	2
Mardyke	2
Harold Wood WIC	2
Porters Avenue	1
Pharmacy	1
Church Elm Lane	1
Rainham	1
Fanshawe	1
Loxford	1
Thurrock	1
TOTAL *	203

3 people gave more than 1 option

The Clinical Commissioning Group has proposed to close down Broad Street walk-in centre. Please tell us your views on this. (People were made aware of the CCG's proposals for alternative services)

200 people that responded to this question:

127 told us that they did not want Broad Street walk-in service to close because it was an important local service for minor injuries and illness; that it would put more pressure on other services, especially the hospitals and GPs and that it is accessible at weekends, over Bank Holidays and is accessible outside of GP working hours.

2 people said that they could understand the proposal to close the service; however A&E and GP services would be busier as a result.

15 people wanted the service to remain open and wanted to see improvements at GP surgeries and other health services.

10 people said the walk-in service was always busy, so why close it?

5 people indicated that there was a strong push to get people to use the walk-in service and now they want to remove it - suggesting it would be a waste of public money.

2 people remarked that they felt it was nothing more than a money saving exercise.

39 people said they wouldn't know where to go if the service closed.

These are some of the comments made by people about the CCG proposal to close down the Broad Street walk-in centre:

"If I can see my GP in an urgent situation, then it's alright"

"I can understand why they would consider closing it down as there are limitations (accidents, types etc) However the A&E departments would become a lot busier and this may deter people from seeking medical help"

"This is not good for Dagenham in view of how much it is needed by the community. There is a very large number of people and families that are in need of a walk-in centre in Dagenham."

"It is a vital service that may have not been needed had there been a viable alternative."

"The walk-in centre is in a great location for people in Dagenham to reach. The GPs are always busy and the staff are rude. The walk-in centre staff are very polite and see you in reasonable time. Do not shut!"

“We do need one in Dagenham with a Doctor, especially at weekends and Bank Holidays - Dagenham needs the same facilities as Barking. Barking is not very easy to get to if you have no transport, especially for elderly people.”

“I am disgusted. It makes a mockery of services. All the advertising and big push to use walk-in centres and then to take them away is stupid. What a waste of money!”

“It would leave us with the option of travelling to Barking (Upney Lane) or travelling to Wood Lane which is quite a long distance for us living in Heathway.”

“Closing the Broad Street walk-in centre is going to put pressure onto other NHS services and service users. Patients should have a choice of where they go for their treatment.”

“It would be a shame if it closed. They provide a good service - staff are helpful and quick. The CCG consultation has not been advertised widely enough.”

“It would be a big loss to the area. The loss of this facility would put a bigger burden on Queens Hospital and make waiting times even longer.”

Conclusions and Recommendations

Our questions were designed to find out and determine when and why people were using urgent care services, including the Broad Street walk-in centre and whether people were aware and understood what urgent care services were available for them to access. We asked how people felt about the proposed closure of the walk-in service at Broad Street and where they would go to find alternative services.

People indicated that they used a variety of services, with over 50% using the walk-in services at Broad Street.

We asked respondents about their preference for seeing their own GP and what barriers they faced when trying to access the services. As a result of questions we asked in the survey, we found that, overwhelmingly, people want to use their GP for urgent care needs. They told us that barriers to this included not being able to get urgent appointments; waiting for long periods of time on GP telephone answering services and having to deal with rude and unhelpful front line staff.

There is a fear in peoples' minds that if the walk-in service is closed at Broad Street, there will not be sufficient urgent care services in place to meet the demands and standards for residents in Dagenham.

People are suspicious and doubtful as to whether the CCG will be able to meet the promises of providing better urgent care services as a consequence of the changes they are proposing to make; some people find it difficult to believe in the proposals that are being put forward and that it is nothing more than an exercise in saving money.

As a result of this survey, Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham recommend that:

1. The CCG needs to actively challenge the way in which they promote all the urgent care services to the public. This includes their locations, what services they provide and when they provide them during their opening hours (e.g. the times when they hold particular clinics during opening hours). Healthwatch Barking and Dagenham feel that this needs to be done as a matter of priority and carried out regardless of the decision about the future of the Broad Street walk-in centre.
2. There needs to be easier access to urgent care services at GP surgeries. The CCG should look at the barriers that are faced by people in being able to contact and see their GP in a timely way and act to improve the situation.
3. The CCG should inform the public as soon as possible if Broad Street walk-in centre is to be closed. They should give clear information as to how the services will be placed elsewhere.
4. The CCG should consider conducting public consultations in a way that supports and enables more people to respond to them and attracts more interest from the public. The Healthwatch Barking & Dagenham team found it difficult initially to find the consultation document on the CCG's website. Hard copies of the consultation were observed by us, at Broad Street walk-in centre, only from our second visit onwards. This was on 7th May. This shortened the consultation period for members of the public who had no access to the internet or no knowledge that the consultation was taking place.

Demography

Age

16-24 years old	25-36 years old	37-50 years old	51-65 years old	66-75 years old	76+ years old	Prefer Not to Say
19	51	46	39	13	13	19

Gender

Male	Female	Transgendered	Prefer not to say
63	129	0	8

Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual	Bisexual	Homosexual	Lesbian	Gay	Prefer not to say
167	5	2	0	3	23

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

No	Yes	Prefer not to say
135	48	17

Mobility Impairment	Hearing Impairment	Visual Impairment	Learning Disability	Age related impairment	Speech Impairment	Mental health	HIV/Aids
12	7	5	4	6	0	7	0

Wheelchair User	Learning Difficulty	Autism & ASD	Dementia	Behaviour that challenges	Other intellectual impairment	Severe medical condition	Other	Prefer not to say
0	4	2	0	0	0	13	3	2

What is your religion or belief?

No religion	Atheist	Buddhism	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam	Judaism
56	2	1	103	3	5	0

Jain	Sikhism	Prefer not to say	Any other religion or belief
0	4	16	10

How would you describe your ethnicity?

White British	White English	White Irish	White Scottish	White Welsh	White - any other white background
92	29	2	0	0	12

Black or Black British - African	Black or Black British - Caribbean	Black or Black British - Other Black background	Traveller - Romany	Traveller - White Irish
18	14	1	1	1

Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	Asian or Asian British - Indian	Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	Asian or Asian British - Other Asian Background	Asian or Asian British - Chinese
2	6	3	0	0

Mixed - White and Asian	Mixed - White and Black African	Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	Mixed - Any Other Mixed Background	Other	Prefer not to say
0	0	0	1	4	14

Are you an unpaid carer?

Yes	No	Prefer not to say
15	161	24

Pregnancy and Maternity

Are you breastfeeding?

Yes	No	Prefer not to say
3	194	3

Are you pregnant?

Yes	No	Prefer not to say
2	195	3

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Divorced	Married	Separated	Single	Widowed	Prefer not to say
14	70	4	56	10	46

Do you live in Barking & Dagenham?

Yes	No	Did Not Reply
167	20	13

Do you work in Barking & Dagenham?

Yes	No	Did Not Reply
65	108	27

Are you a refugee/asylum seeker?

Yes	No	Did Not Reply
0	173	27