



## Healthwatch Greenwich

Enter and View:

**New Eltham Medical Centre**

**Blackfen Road**



161 Blackfen Road

Sidcup

DA15 8PZ

020 8859 5881

May 2018

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# 1. What is an Enter and View?



Part of the local Healthwatch programme is to carry out Enter and View visits. Local Healthwatch representatives carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. 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 we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

## 2. Our approach

To collect information, we produced a patient questionnaire which included a clear explanation of who we are and why we carry out visits. We emphasise to all patients that participation is voluntary. We also create an observation form for Authorised Representatives to complete, which gather their views of the service from a patient's perspective. We always check with staff if there are individuals who we should not approach or who are unable to give informed consent. We also follow a strict safeguarding policy.<sup>1</sup>



Please note that our reports relate to findings observed on specific dates. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Our safeguarding policy can be accessed here: [www.healthwatchgreenwich.co.uk/safeguardingconcern](http://www.healthwatchgreenwich.co.uk/safeguardingconcern)

## 3. Visit details

Date and time of visit	22 May 2018
Authorised Representatives	Anna Jones and Clive Mardner
Run by	Dr J Lal's Practice
Number of registered patients	8854 (across 2 sites - Thaxted Road and Blackfen Road Branch surgery)
Number of Clinical Staff	3 GPs (2 male and 1 female), 2 practice nurses (1 full time and 1 part time).
Who we spoke to	8 patients

## 4. CQC ratings

<b>Overall Good</b>  <a href="#">Read overall summary</a>	Safe	Good ●
	Effective	Requires improvement ●
	Caring	Good ●
	Responsive	Good ●
	Well-led	Good ●

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) carried out a comprehensive inspection of New Eltham Medical Centre (Thaxted Road and Blackfen Road Branch) on 5 November 2017. They rated the surgery as 'Good' overall

## 5. Our observations

### 5.1. Building observations



The outside of the building was tidy and attractive, and has a pleasant looking, well-kept front garden. The surgery is clearly identifiable with a large sign on the front lawn.



### 5.2. Arriving at the surgery



Transport links to the surgery are good, as there is parking on the same road and there are bus stops directly outside. There is disabled access to the surgery as a ramp leads from the main road to the electronic front door. It is clear where to go on arrival as the reception area is placed inside the main waiting room. Both reception staff were friendly and helpful on our arrival.

### 5.3. Waiting for an appointment



The surgery's main waiting area was small but clean and tidy. It had a pleasant atmosphere, with pictures hung on the wall and tidy noticeboards and leaflet stands. There was a health monitor in the main waiting area, which is free for patients to use if they ask reception staff for a token. A toilet was available near the waiting area which was clean and well-kept and had disabled access and baby-changing facilities. Hand sanitisers were available at the main reception area.

Electronic check-in was not available in the waiting room, and there was no electronic call system for appointments. Waiting times were not displayed in the main area. However, when we spoke to the practice manager she informed us that they are currently looking into installing this. The waiting area offers little privacy, as the reception area is directly in front of all the seating which face it. The waiting area is not very child-friendly, with no toys or books.



We saw no signposting towards the surgery's online booking system or any translation services, or towards the GP access hubs. We did not see any information provided in alternative formats such as Easy Read. We also noticed that some information on display was out of date.

#### 5.4. Ways to feedback

We did not notice a comments and suggestions box in the main waiting area. Although there was a poster for the Friends and Family test on the noticeboard, we did not see any slips available for patients to complete. Similarly, there did not appear to be any signposting towards the surgery's patient participation group (PPG).



## 6. Patient feedback

### 6.1. Access and hygiene



Everyone we spoke to on the day felt that the surgery was always kept clean and tidy, and rated the hygiene of the practice as either good, very good or excellent. Similarly, the patients we met were happy with access, as they could either walk in easily or find parking nearby.

### 6.2. Appointment booking and punctuality

The patients we spoke to gave mixed feedback about the availability of appointments at the surgery. Although some told us it was not unreasonably difficult to get an appointment, others said it varied and that at times they had to wait weeks. Availability seemed to depend on the urgency of the patients' needs; one patient explained that although she sometimes had to wait a while for an appointment for herself, if it concerned her baby they booked her in quickly. Similarly, another lady told us that when her need had been urgent, they had offered her a same day appointment; 'if you have a real need they are there for you... I think they're doing the best they can with the resources they have'. One of the patients we spoke to rated the booking system as 'poor' and told us that in the past they had ended up attending the local Accident and Emergency department as a last result. Another told us that it took a while to get through on the phone to make an appointment in the first place. No one we spoke to at the surgery had been given any information about Greenwich GP Access Hubs or knew what they were.



Similarly, feedback about the punctuality of appointments was mixed. One lady told us that she sometimes waits up to thirty minutes to see the GP, but that she does not mind. Others felt that punctuality was good, with one patient explaining that he usually only has to wait five to ten minutes past his appointment time. However, one patient explained that although the nurse was usually punctual, GP appointments typically ran around fifteen minutes late. She told us, 'I don't really like waiting; if they give you an appointment time I think you should be seen then'. Another patient said he typically had to wait twenty minutes over his scheduled appointment, and that once he had been seen forty-five minutes late. One person noted that communication could be better from

reception staff, and that when they know are running late they should let patients know in advance.

### 6.3. Treatment received by staff



Most people we spoke to were pleased with the treatment they received from their GP, rating them as either good or very good. One lady was particularly impressed with the treatment received from her GP, explaining that when she had gone in for a physical concern, he had also taken the time to explore her mental wellbeing and ended up referring her towards Time to Talk. This had left her feeling well-cared for and ‘like I’m not just a number’. Another patient described their GP at the surgery as ‘a good listener’, and others felt that their GP knew them well. Only one person we spoke to was unhappy with the treatment they received from one of the GPs and had therefore asked to see someone different.

Similarly, most people were happy with the treatment they received from the nurse at the practice; although one told us that it would be preferable to see the same nurse each time, ‘otherwise you have to explain your story all over again’.

Descriptions of the reception staff included ‘friendly and helpful’. One lady we spoke to did comment that the reception staff often seemed to be under-pressure, and another patient told us that he often had to wait to speak to reception when he arrived at the practice or rang the surgery, but that once he did they were generally helpful. We heard more mixed feedback from one patient who told us that although most of the reception staff were helpful, there was one member of staff that she had found to be particularly abrupt in the past. This patient noted, ‘when people are already feeling ill, you really don’t need someone being stuffy with you’.

Another patient we spoke to had experienced difficulties with his online booking account, which had not been set up correctly.

### 6.4. Involvement in decision making and information provision

Most patients we spoke to felt involved in the clinical decisions which were made about their care and the amount of information they received from clinical staff. One person did feel that there could be more information offered in the GP appointment. However, another



told us that the GP was ‘very informative, if they’re discussing something with you’, and another commented that ‘they explain everything to me’.

No one we spoke to was aware of the surgery’s patient participation group.

### 6.5. Medication and prescriptions



The patients we spoke to generally found it easy to get their prescriptions via the practice, and one person told us that she could always approach the nurse and have an open discussion with her if she had any concerns about her medication. We only heard one concern, which was from a patient who felt that if he needed to see a doctor about his medication, there might end up being a delay due to the difficulties booking appointments.

## 7. Overall satisfaction

Patients rated the surgery and the treatment they received as good, very good or excellent overall.

Comments included; ‘I think it’s a great surgery’; and ‘it’s a lovely surgery compared to past surgeries I’ve been at. Everyone is friendly and helpful’. The main problems patients communicated were around the availability, booking and punctuality of appointments.





## 8. Recommendations

### **Recommendation 1: Improve access to appointments**

One of the main concerns reported to us was the long waiting time for general appointments. We suggest the surgery looks at how they can improve this. Proactively telling patients about the GP Access Hubs when they ring for an appointment may help, as well as advertising the NHS 111 service.

### **Recommendation 2: Install electronic check-in in the waiting area**

We heard that the surgery's reception can be hard to reach on the phone and are often busy when patients walk-in. Introducing an electronic check-in system may help to free up some of the receptionist time.

### **Recommendation 3: Address the issue of appointment delays**

The surgery should work to improve the punctuality of their appointments, as most people we spoke to commonly had to wait past their allocated time. Where there are delays, this should be communicated to patients clearly as they wait.

### **Recommendation 4: Improve signposting in the waiting area**

We would encourage the surgery to remove out of date information and include signposting towards the GP Access Hubs, any translation services the surgery uses, their patient participation group and their online booking system.

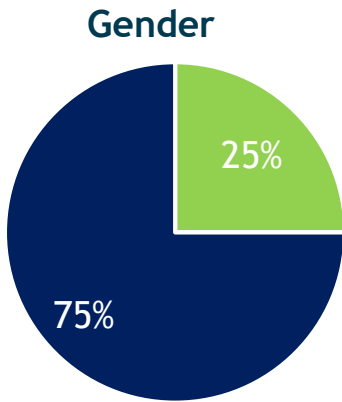
## 9. Provider response

All providers are given the opportunity to review our Enter and View reports prior to publication, check for factual accuracy and provide a formal response.

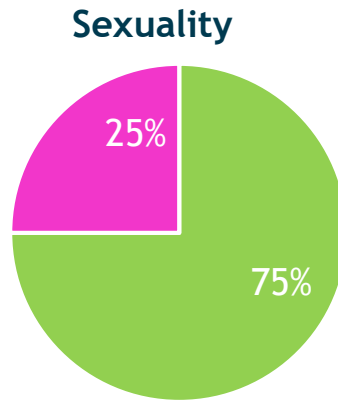
No comments were received by the time of publication.

# 10. Demographics

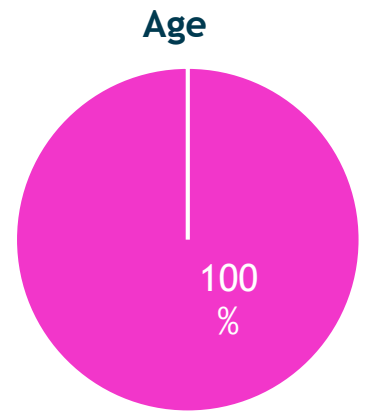
Of the people we spoke to on the visit:



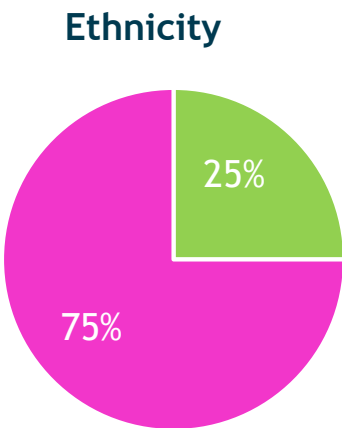
- Female
- Male
- Not known



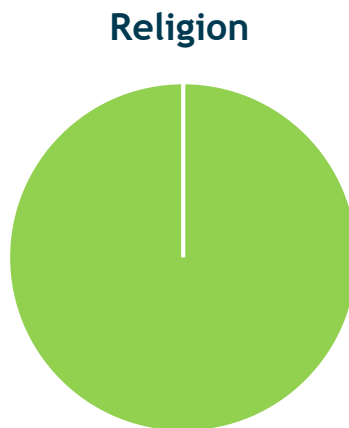
- Not answered
- Heterosexual



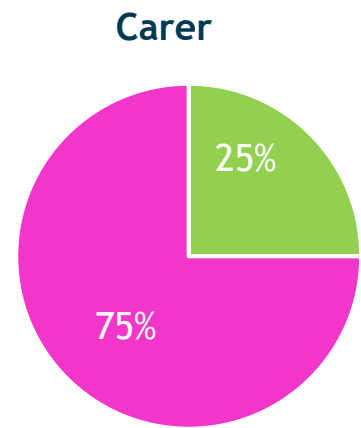
- Not...



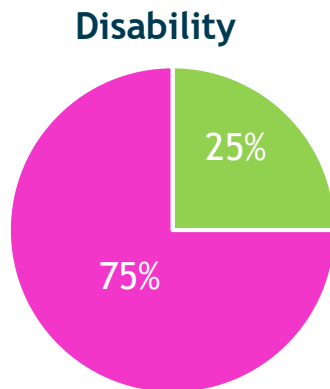
- White: UK/ Northern Irish
- Not answered



- Not answered



- Non carer
- Not answered



- Non-disabled
- Not answered

# 11. Contact us

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*If you require this report in an alternative format, please contact us at the address above.*

**We know that you want local services that work for you, your friends and family. That's why we want you to share your experiences of using health and care services with us - both good and bad. We use your voice to encourage those who run services to act on what matters to you.**

**We are uniquely placed as a national network, with a local Healthwatch in every local authority area in England.**

We confirm that we are using the Healthwatch Trademark (which covers the logo and Healthwatch brand) when undertaking work on our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

## **Acknowledgements**

Healthwatch Greenwich would like to thank the service provider, service users, visitors, and staff for their contribution to the Enter and View programme. Healthwatch Greenwich would also like to thank the Healthwatch volunteers and representatives who assisted with the visits.

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