



**Enter & View
Report**

**Understanding complaints procedures
across GP Practices in Redbridge**



This report is available to download from our website, in plain text version, **Large Print**, and can be made available in Braille or audio versions if requested.

Please contact us for more details.

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What is Enter & View?

Part of the local Healthwatch programme¹ is to carry out Enter & View visits. Enter & View visits are conducted by a small team of trained volunteers, who are prepared as 'Authorised Representatives' to conduct visits to health and social care premises.

Enter & View is the opportunity for Healthwatch Redbridge to:

- Enter publicly funded health and social care premises to see and hear first-hand experiences about the service.
- Observe how the service is delivered, often by using a themed approach.
- Collect the views of service users (patients and residents) at the point of service delivery.
- Collect the views of carers and relatives through evidence based feedback by observing the nature and quality of services.
- Report to providers, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Local Authorities, Commissioners, Healthwatch England and other relevant partners.

Enter & View visits are carried out as 'announced visits' where arrangements are made with the service provider, or, if certain circumstances dictate, as 'unannounced' visits.

Enter & 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 a service does well.

Section 221(2) of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/28/section/221>



Service Provider	All GP Practices in Redbridge
Contact Details	Practice Managers and GP Practice staff across the 46 GP Practices (see appendix 1 for a detailed list of practices in Redbridge)
Date/time of visit	5 May - 18 June 2015
Type of visit	All announced visits
Authorised representatives undertaking the visits	Authorised Representative Team: Abdullah Al Junaid - Volunteer Coordinator Harmander Singh - Projects Coordinator Natalie Rowe Suresh Vashistha Chandra Patel Anne Bertrand Chesing Lee Suhasini Winter Bushra Tahir Ann Atkins Kiran Kaur Chris Muttiah
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Purpose of the visit

During the first part of this year, Healthwatch Redbridge (HWR) received a number of calls from members of the public who wanted information on how to raise complaints within their respective GP practices.

HWR has a responsibility to provide an information and signposting service for people to correct information about health and social care services. In order to carry out this function, we needed to ensure we held the appropriate information.

We are also seeking to understand how we, as an organisation, might be able to support the development of the new 'Accessible Information Standard'² which was approved on 24 June 2015.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Redbridge would like to thank all the 46 GP practices and their staff for their contribution to the Enter & View programme.

Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed during visits made from **5 May 2015 to Wednesday 18 June 2015**.

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 visits.

² www.england.nhs.uk/accessibleinfo



Accessible Information Standard

By 31 July 2016, all organisations that provide NHS or social care must follow the standard by law and there are a number of things they must do before then.

The aim of the standard is to make sure that people who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss get information that they can access and understand, and any communication support that they might need.

As part of our Healthwatch Redbridge work programme for this year, we are using the accessible information standard as a tool to review current information provided by local health and social care organisations.

Methodology

In March 2015, we conducted a telephone survey to identify individual complaints procedures at each of the 46 GP practices in Redbridge.

A simple telephone survey was created and asked:

- Do you have a complaints procedure?
- If yes, where is it displayed?
- How do patients raise a complaint and who would they raise it with?
- How can patients access the complaints procedure?

The survey information was used as the basis for the Enter & View visits which were conducted using the same survey. Representatives were asked to check and verify the information received. We were also able to observe where the information was displayed and make contact with the practice and, in some cases, to collect a copy of the information where available.

Through the Enter & View Visits we hoped to:

- Confirm the information we held in order to provide patients with the most up to date information in regards to raising concerns with their respective practices;
- Identify good practice; and
- Build stronger working relationships with practices in the borough.

We also used these visits as an opportunity to provide some of our newer Enter & View Representatives with more experience of undertaking visits.

All practices were sent information to inform them of our intent to carry out the E&V visits. In order to ensure we did not disrupt practice services, we worked with individual practices to identify a suitable time to carry out the visit.



Individual reports were sent to each practice so that providers had an opportunity to request any factual inaccuracies be corrected prior to the publication of the combined report.

The information contained in this report incorporates and anonymises the responses received from individual practices.

Result of Visits

When comparing information received; it was noted that, on average a third of responses differed between what we were told through the telephone survey and when conducting the visit.

All practices confirmed that they had a complaints procedure however the information was presented to patients in a number of different ways.

Provision of information

- **37 practices (80%)** display their complaints procedure on a notice board or wall in the reception area or waiting room.

Note:

- *Of these practices, 25 had no other form of information available for patients.*

- **9 practices (20%)** did not display information about their complaints procedure.

Notes:

- *2 practices informed us they are not allowed to place information on the walls due to Landlord restrictions and therefore provided it via their website.*
- *1 practice told us they kept the complaints procedure on the computer.*
- *1 practice explained that their notice board was going through a refurbishment. We note this should have been completed by the date of our visit and was overdue.*
- **2 practices (4%)** provide complaints information within a leaflet and on their website.
- **9 practices (20%)** provide complaints information within a leaflet and on a poster.
- Only **1 practice (2%)** provided their complaints information on a poster, within a leaflet and on their website.



Raising a complaint

Representatives confirmed the following procedures were in use across GP practices within Redbridge.

- 25 practices (54%) said they attempted to deal with patients' complaints in the first instance by offering the individual an opportunity to resolve the issue by speaking with the Practice Manager.
- 8 practices (17%) told us patients **must** raise their complaint by writing to the Practice Manager.
- 12 practices (26%) told us patients can raise their complaint by initially speaking with the reception team.
- 1 practice (2%) did not wish to answer this question.

Making a complaint

Although most practices were quite clear on their complaints procedures, a number of practice staff seemed unaware or confused in regards to what their practice would provide.

- 27 practices (59%) display complaints information and request that patients ask for a leaflet at reception or speak to the Practice Manager first.
- 10 practices (15%) told us that patients would have to initially write to the Practice Manager in order to receive a copy of the complaints procedure.
Note:
 - *This appeared over-complicated and a barrier for complainants.*
- The 9 practices (20%) not displaying information about their complaints procedures told us that they would **expect** patients to ask for information at reception.
Note:
 - *It was unclear how patients would know that a complaints procedure existed or what the process was.*
- 2 practices (4%) did not answer this question.
Notes:
 - *Reception staff at 1 practice told us they were too busy to answer the question.*
 - *1 practice did not wish to answer the question.*



Complaints Leaflets

At the visit, Enter & View Representatives requested a copy of each practice's complaints leaflet.

- 10 practices (22%) provided a copy of their complaints information or practice leaflet.

Having reviewed the information provided:

- All 10 leaflets contained some out of date or incorrect information.

Notes:

- *Where advocacy information was detailed, it provided contact information for an organisation that is no longer providing this support (e.g.: Pohwer).*
- *Some leaflets referred to and provided telephone contact details for organisations that no longer existed (e.g.: Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) and Primary Care Trust).*

- All 10 leaflets would not meet a standard level of accessibility³ for a number of reasons.

Notes:

- *The font size on most leaflets was too small although 12pt font is the smallest recommended, 14pt (as in this report) is recognised as the best suited. Most were lower than 12pt.*
- *Some leaflets used text which was not clear ('Times New Roman' was used where a typeface such as 'Arial' would be recommended).*
- *Some leaflets used UPPER CASE TEXT which can be difficult for some people to read.*
- *Some leaflets contained hyphenation at the end of lines which should be avoided.*
- *Some leaflets had very long sentences and paragraphs which are quite difficult to read.*

- 1 practice leaflet had some graphics included, however these did not always relate well to the information trying to be conveyed.

1 practice provided a copy of a generic leaflet from the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO). Whilst this leaflet did not provide local contact details, it was very easy to read and understand.⁴

³ <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/private-and-public-sector-guidance/public-sector-providers/human-rights-guidance/a-guide-to-the-un-disability-convention/part-2-know-your-rights/article-21-freedom-of-expression-and-opinion-and-access-to-information>



Online Information

5 practices told us they provided their complaints information via their website.

Healthwatch Redbridge reviewed the online information and found the following:

- **Practice A:**
 - Complaints information was quite brief (115 words).
 - The web link to additional information did not work.
 - Patients are requested to contact the Practice Manager in the first instance when making a complaint.
- **Practice B:**
 - Difficult to locate the complaints information; discovered under the page for 'practice policies'.
 - Complaints information was quite brief (85 words).
 - Patients are requested to contact the Practice Manager in the first instance.
- **Practice C:**
 - Complaints information was quite brief (198 words).
 - Patients are requested to write to the Practice Manager in the first instance.
- **Practice D:**
 - Complaints information was easy to locate and informative (210 words).
 - The information was displayed directly after information regarding acceptable patient behaviour and the right to withdraw treatment or remove a patient from the GP list.
 - Patients are requested to write to the Practice Manager in the first instance.
- **Practice E:**
 - Difficult to locate the complaints information; discovered under the page for 'practice policies'.
 - Complaints information was quite brief (85 words).
 - Patients are requested to contact the Practice Manager in the first instance.

⁴ http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/27625/FINAL_Tips_on_making_a_complaint_Leaflet.pdf



Recommendations

From our findings we believe the following recommendations would be useful in supporting practices across Redbridge:

- Complaints information should be made available in a variety of formats. As the minimum, we would recommend that **ALL Practices** provide information as a poster, in a leaflet and on their practice website. Where practices have an information screen in the public area, complaints information could also be included
- Posters, leaflets and website information should be simple to understand and be accessible for disabled people (clear fonts, large print, easy read with photo symbols etc).
- Website settings should ideally conform to accessibility standards (such as W3C AA⁵). Websites should provide clear labelling, plain language and have an ability to change text size and background colours for contrast options. An information video (with British Sign Language, audio and subtitles) would be an excellent addition to a website to support patients.
- All information should be kept up to date and reviewed regularly to ensure current contact details and messages are correct. We would recommend an annual review of information to ensure this.
- Practices should allow people the option of making their complaint in person. The requirement to only accept a complaint in writing may be a barrier to some people.
- All frontline staff should be trained in complaint handling to effectively assist a person with their complaint. A positive and standardised approach by all staff can lead to better complaint resolution at an early stage.
- Practices might wish to consider the development of a generic complaints information pack (available as a poster, leaflet and web pages) that could be downloaded and edited to provide practice specific information. Healthwatch Redbridge would be pleased to advise on such information and support its development.
- Finally, we would like to engage with Redbridge CCG and GP Practices to understand how they are planning to implement the Accessible Information Standards from July 2016.

⁵ <http://www.w3.org/WAI/>



Service Provider Responses

All practices were given the opportunity to respond to their individual report. Their views were noted and, where appropriate, amendments have been included within this document.

Information has been anonymised for publication purposes.

Distribution

- Redbridge GP Practices
- Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- Redbridge Patient Engagement Forum (part of CCG)
- Redbridge Patient Participation Groups (PPGs)
- Redbridge Health Scrutiny Committee
- Redbridge Health and Wellbeing Board
- Healthwatch England
- Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
- Care Quality Commission





Appendix 1

GP Practice	E&V contact for visit
Aldersbrook Surgery	Practice Manager
Balfour Road Surgery	Practice Manager
Barkingside Medical Centre	Receptionist
Castleton Road Health Centre	Receptionist
Chadwell Health Surgery	Receptionist
Clayhall Clinic	Practice Manager
Cranbrook Surgery	Practice Manager
Eastern Avenue Medical Centre	Practice Manager
Fencepiece Road Medical Centre	Doctor
Fullwell Cross Medical Centre	Receptionist
Gants Hill Medical Centre	Practice Manager
Glebelands Medical Centre	Receptionist
Goodmayes Medical Practice	Practice Manager
Goodmayes Medical Centre	Practice Manager
Granville Medical Centre	Practice Manager
Grove Surgery	Practice Manager
Hainault Surgery	Receptionist
Ilford Lane Surgery	Practice Manager
Ilford Medical Centre	Practice Manager
Mathukia's Surgery	Doctor
Newbury Group Practice	Practice Manager
Oak Tree Medical Centre	Practice Manager
Pauls Surgery	Receptionist



Queen Mary Practice	Practice Manager
Roding (Lane) Surgery	Practice Manager
Rydal	Receptionist
Seven Kings Practice	Practice Manager
Southdene Surgery	Practice Manager
Spearpoint Surgery	Practice Manager
St Clement's Surgery	Practice Manager
The Broadway Surgery	Practice Manager
The Courtland Surgery	Receptionist
The Doctors House	Doctor
The Drive Surgery	Doctor
The Elmhurst Practice	Receptionist
The Evergreen Surgery	Receptionist
The Forest Edge Practice	Practice Manager
The Fullwell Avenue Surgery	Practice Manager
The Heathcote Primary Care Centre	Practice Manager
The Palms Medical Centre	Receptionist
The Practice	Deputy Practice Manager
The Redbridge Surgery	Receptionist
The Shrubberies Medical Centre	Practice Manager
The Willows Practice	Receptionist
Wanstead Place Surgery	Practice Manager
York Road Surgery	Receptionist/Practice Manager



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