



Enter & View Report

Whipps Cross University Hospital
Phlebotomy Department
Area 1, Outpatients Department
Whipps Cross Road, Leytonstone
E11 1NR

Date:

AM Visit - Monday 4th November 2019

PM Visit - Monday 11th November 2019

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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Report Details

Address	Phlebotomy Department Whipps Cross Road, Leytonstone, London E11 1NR
Service Provider	Barts Health NHS Trust
Contact Details	David Hastings Phlebotomy Services Manager
Date/time of visit	AM Visit - Monday 4 th November 2019 PM Visit - Monday 11 th November 2019
Type of visit	Announced visit
Authorised representatives undertaking the visits	AM Visit: Lead Representative - Jacqueline Da`Prato Sally Curtis Hyacinth Osborne PM Visit : Lead Representative - Jacqueline Da`Prato Athena Daniels Margaret Igglesden
Contact details	Healthwatch Redbridge 1 st Floor 103 Cranbrook Road Ilford Essex IG1 4PU 020 8553 1236

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Redbridge (HWR) would like to thank the staff at Whipps Cross Hospital for their assistance during our visit.

Disclaimer

Please note this report relates to findings observed during our visits made on Monday 4th November and Monday 11th November 2019. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all patients and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time of the visits.

What is Enter & View?

Part of the local Healthwatch programme 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. These visits aim to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement or capture best practice which can be shared.

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 patients (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.

Purpose of the visit

Healthwatch Redbridge (HWR) conducted an Enter & View visit to Whipps Cross Phlebotomy Department in response to the proposal to review Phlebotomy Services to be carried out by Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Group (BHRCCG). The visit was conducted to provide Healthwatch Redbridge with independent research to enable us to respond appropriately to the consultation when it takes place.

The visit will allow us to assess whether the current service meets the needs of the patients.

Methodology

Prior to the visit, HWR contacted the service provider, Barts Health Trust to inform them of the proposed visits. The service provider was written to and given prior notice the visit would be taking place within a two week time frame.

At the first visit, the representatives arrived at the Phlebotomy department at 8.30am. The lead representative introduced herself and her team and asked to speak to the Phlebotomy Services Manager.

The manager arrived within a few minutes. He was keen to explain the services and answer their questions.

On the second visit the representatives arrived at the Phlebotomy department at 1.30pm. The lead representative briefly spoke with the manager who explained that the service was very busy and consequently it would not be possible to speak to staff.

At the end of the visit, the lead representative informed the manager they were leaving and thanked them for their assistance.

At a later date, a member of the Healthwatch Redbridge staff team revisited the service to take photographs, and to speak to the manager to obtain clarification regarding signage.

The manager was also informed that a draft report would be sent shortly and he would have the opportunity to request any factual inaccuracies be corrected prior to publication.

Visit surveys and observations

At the first visit, representatives spoke with two members of staff (there were four phlebotomists on duty), plus the manager and patients, using a standard set of questions to find out about their experience of the service. We were mindful of not interfering with service provision so we ensured we did not disturb phlebotomists taking blood.

General observations were also carried out by representatives to assess whether the premises were fully accessible for people with a range of physical or sensory impairments.

Results of the visit

Observations made outside the premises:



- The Phlebotomy Service was not clearly signposted from the car parks. The signs that were noted by representatives directed people to Outpatients or other services, and there was no mention of the Phlebotomy Services.
- There are bus stops on both sides of the road near the Outpatients department (where Phlebotomy is based).
- Despite there being four car parks across the whole of the Whipps Cross site however, parking is limited and it can take time to find a suitable space.

Trust Response: Whipps Cross site management have a clear understanding of the limitations that the site has when concerned with this provision and is continually working to improve.

There are 16 accessible parking spaces near the Outpatient Department. It is also possible to drop patients off directly outside the Outpatient Department. There is level access from both accessible parking spaces and the drop off point.

Observations made inside the premises:

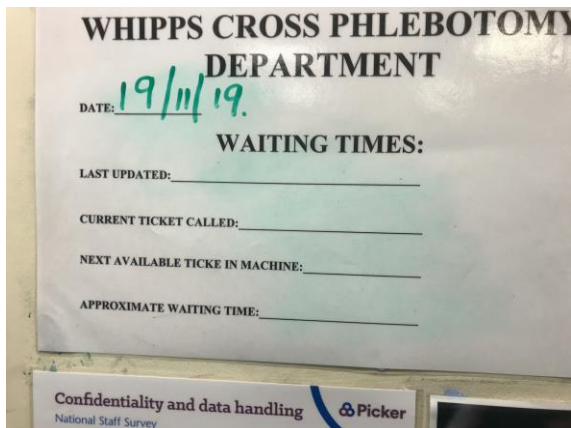


- When walking through the main building there are periodic signs highlighting where the Phlebotomy Service is situated.
- There is a ticket machine in the main waiting area which was in use during both visits.
- At times during the visit it was noted that there were a few people standing due to a lack of adequate seating. However it was not clear whether this was due to other clinics running at the same time using the same space.
- There is a water machine available with cups. It was noted that on occasion there was only one available cup.

- Two representatives identified there were obstructions such as walking aids and wheelchairs making it hard to freely manoeuvre in the area:

“Uneven floor, too crowded - whole area trip hazard due to wheelchairs, crutches and lack of space between chairs and walls”

- The sign to Area 1 is quite small and high up. It could be missed by people wanting to use the service.



- We were pleased to note that there was a visual image on the toilet door as well words, however this could be slightly larger.
- There is an electronic screen inside the main waiting area. If there are no seats available and you are sitting in the corridor, there is also an electronic screen which shows the ticket number.
- There is a sign informing Waltham Forest residents of other community phlebotomy sites. The CCG have commissioned North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT) to provide this GP Phlebotomy Service for Waltham Forest residents.
- With regard to concerns and complaints there are various signs in the waiting area informing people how to raise their concerns
- The noticeboard stating the waiting time was updated hourly, however representatives felt that it was too small. When speaking with the

manager of the service Healthwatch staff were told that there were plans in place to enlarge the sign.

Trust Response: The signage in Phlebotomy is regularly reviewed. The General Manager acknowledges Healthwatch’s issues around this particular signage and will consider enlarging the sign as soon as possible.

- One of the two unisex toilets was out of use during the first visit, but by the second visit it was back in use.
- There are no fire exit signs in Area 1. The first notable fire exit sign is in the corridor outside Area 1.
- During the second visit, the representatives felt the waiting area was too cramped as there were other clinics running at the same time due this space being shared with Outpatients



“Too many people here - makes people feel uncomfortable”

Speaking with staff members (see Appendix 1 for questions):

There were four phlebotomy staff on duty. The lead representative spoke to two staff during the morning (AM) visit, due to the service being busy in the afternoon (PM).

- Both members of staff stated, that the service is not usually fully staffed due to holidays, sickness.

Trust response: Like all NHs services there are issues around capacity and demand, however the service does endeavour to ensure that adequate staff are available to cover the Outpatients department area in Whipps Cross Hospital. During periods of high demand the service will often try to draw staff from inpatient areas to facilitate cover in outpatients, however this is subject to demands in the acute wards which take priority. The service has four stations available in outpatients department and through the requisite daily planning, at least three stations are operational during peak times.

- Staff provide information on alternative community phlebotomy sites.
- The service is assessed using general surveys and feedback is generally positive:



“Regular patients were positive about the quality of staff and ease of blood taking within the service.”

- There are specified times and staff for children’s blood tests and other clinics such as Warfarin.

- Staff commented that they very rarely have to remove tickets from the ticket machine even when the service is very busy. However, if tickets are removed they signpost to Community sites.
- Staff commented that patients that work, would like an out of hours Phlebotomy Service e.g. early morning and late evening.

Trust response: Although some patients may have expressed their wish for the service to change its core hours to facilitate earlier opening and later closing times, this is purely anecdotal and the service currently has no data to currently support this. The service has not received any complaints from patients regarding the opening and closing times at Whipps Cross Hospitals

- On a later date a member of the Healthwatch team spoke to the manager and was told that the service has busy periods in which he will try to ensure the maximum number of Phlebotomists are available. He also informed our team that some Redbridge patients attend this service but mostly they attend the Wanstead Hospital Phlebotomy service.

Speaking with patients (see Appendix 2 for questions):

AM Visit

- Representatives spoke with 21 patients (who had yet to be seen by a phlebotomist), 11 of these had been waiting for 5 minutes and 5 of these had been waiting for 15 minutes or longer. The longest wait at that time being 40 minutes.
- When asked, patients told us they felt 15 minutes was a reasonable amount of time to wait.
- Just over half of the people we spoke to have regular blood tests at this site. Of these 8 people said that the waiting time was the same as usual, with 3 saying it was busier than usual.
- 7 people said they had problems travelling to the site, with 3 of these identifying parking as being an issue



“Parking difficult - limited spaces. Charge of car park high. Parked in a side road”

- 15 of the patients were local, travelling approximately 15 minutes to the service. The remaining 6 were travelling for up to 90 minutes from areas such as Enfield and Hertfordshire due to being under the care of consultants at Whipps Cross Hospital
- 4 of the patients we spoke to were Redbridge residents. These patients told us that they were having a blood test at Whipps Cross because they have either been referred by a Consultant or they use a specialist service within the hospital.

PM Visit

- Representatives spoke with 30 patients (who had yet to be seen by a phlebotomist), 14 of these had been waiting for 5 minutes and 10 of these had been waiting for 15 minutes or longer. The longest amount of time being 40 minutes.
- When asked, patients told us they felt 25 minutes was a reasonable amount of time to wait.
- Just under half of the people we spoke to have regular blood tests at this site. Of these 3 said it was quieter, 3 said the waiting time was the same and 7 said it was busier than usual.
- 11 people said they had problems travelling to the site, with 10 of these identifying parking as being an issue.

“By car. Parking always is a problem. 10 mins plus to find”

“Parking difficult - limited spaces. Charge of car park high. Parked in a side road”

- 23 of the patients were local, travelling approximately 15 minutes to the service. The remaining 7 were travelling for up to 90 minutes from areas such as Hertfordshire due to being under the care of consultants at Whipps Cross Hospital or for specific blood tests
- One third of the patients we spoke to were Redbridge residents. It is generally acknowledged that 30% of Redbridge residents use Whipps Cross Hospital. Half of these told us that they were having a blood test at Whipps Cross because they have either been referred by a Consultant or they use a specialist service within the hospital.

- Generally we found that Redbridge residents were aware that there is a Phlebotomy Service at Wanstead Hospital and Waltham Forest residents were aware of the community sites (St James Health Centre, Silverthorne Medical Centre and Langthorne Health Centre)

Feedback from patients across both visits:

Throughout our visits, two main themes emerged. Patients commented that waiting times were too long (8 responses), whilst other responses praised the quality of the staff and service (7 responses).



“Everyone very helpful.”



“Waiting too long”



“Improved - less people. Improvement in last 6-9 months”

Recommendations

- The hospital should ensure that appropriate and adequate signage is provided from the car park, bus stops and drop off points. Clearer signage should be provided within the phlebotomy area itself.

Trust response: No specific signage within in the Outpatients building regarding identifying the Phlebotomy service in its own right is acknowledged and will be worked on by the Facilities Manager.

- Information such as complaints leaflets, should be available in a range of accessible formats.
- The hospital may wish to consider providing additional parking spaces across the site.
- The hospital may wish to consider identifying a more suitable space with additional seating to house the Phlebotomy Service. This would include enough space for wheelchair users and people with prams to be able to manoeuvre freely and not block pathways.
- The hospital should ensure that there are fire exit signs situated within the Phlebotomy waiting area (Area 1).
- The hospital should consider an Out of Hours Phlebotomy Service to meet the needs of working patients.

Service Provider Responses

We would like to thank the General Manager for Outpatient Services at Whipps Cross Hospital for providing the responses made.

Healthwatch Redbridge has incorporated them within this report where appropriate.

Distribution

- Whipps Cross Hospital & Barts Health NHS Trust
- Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Group
- Redbridge Health and Wellbeing Board
- Redbridge Health Scrutiny Committee
- Care Quality Commission
- Healthwatch England
- Healthwatch Waltham Forest

Appendix 1 - Observations

Observations/Questions	
Getting to the Service:	
There is sufficient and clear signage to the premises being visited: signs are clear, unobstructed and easily readable	Yes No Comments:
Is this site easily accessible? E.g. there is parking outside and public transport nearby (can you see bus stops)?	Yes No Comments:
Within the premises:	
Is there a ticket machine?	Yes No Comments:
Is the ticket machine in use or have the tickets been pulled? ***If the tickets have been pulled, please note the time you are doing this observation/visit	Yes No Comments:
Are there sufficient chairs in the waiting room? Is anyone left standing because they have run out of chairs?	Yes No Comments:
Is there a facility for patients to access water either in the waiting	Yes No Comments:

room or nearby in a corridor?	
Are there trip hazards/sharp edges/furniture in pathway (both permanent & temporary)	Yes No Comments:
Are there signs in various formats including pictures (e.g. on toilet doors)? Are they clear/contrasting/pictures?	Yes No Comments:
Does the service have an electronic screen to inform the patient it is their turn (their ticket number has come up)?	Yes No Comments:
Is there a poster/leaflet informing patients about other phlebotomy sites?	Yes No Comments:
Is there a poster informing patients how they can raise any concerns/complaints they might have?	Yes No Comments:
Further Comments:	
Please provide any other relevant information about this site	

Appendix 2 - Questions for Staff members

1. Do you normally work on this site?

Yes No

2. In your opinion, are there sufficient staff members to support the phlebotomy service on this site?

Yes No

Please explain

3. Have there been any changes to the number of staff members in the last six months?

Yes No

Please explain

4. Do you provide patients with a list of alternative centres to go to for their blood test?

Yes No

Please explain

5. How do you assess how patients feel about this service?

Please explain

a. What sort of concerns do patients raise with you? ***Prompt for representative – waiting time, quality of service, staff attitude, cleanliness of phlebotomy area

b. What sort of compliments do patients give you? ***Prompt for representative – quality of service, staff attitude

6. Do you offer specific times for specialist Phlebotomy needs such as children, fasting etc.?

7. When you are really busy, are you having to withdraw tickets at any earlier time than usual?

Yes No

Please explain

8. If you have to withdraw tickets before the service officially closes, do you signpost patients to any other Phlebotomy centre?

Yes No

Please explain

9. Is there anything else you would like to share with us about the Phlebotomy service?

Thank you for completing the survey.

Appendix 3 - Questions for Patients

1. How long have you been waiting today?

2. How long do you feel is a reasonable time to wait?

3. Do you have regular blood tests here?

Yes No

***If no, skip to question 5

4. If you are a regular user of this service, is it:

Quieter than usual?

About the same?

Busier than usual?

5. Did you have any problems getting to this site? E.g. transport, cost

Yes No

***If yes, please explain

6. How far are you travelling to come here today?

6a. Which Borough are you from? (Redbridge, Barking & Dagenham & Havering).

7. Is this your nearest Phlebotomy centre?

Yes No

***If yes, please explain

8. Are you **aware** of any other Phlebotomy centres in Redbridge?

Yes No

***If yes, please explain

9. Do you **use** any other blood test centres?

Yes No

If yes, which one?

10. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the Phlebotomy Service?

Please explain your answer

Thanks for completing this survey



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